

SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

<https://englishkyoto-seas.org/>

View the table of contents for this issue:

<https://englishkyoto-seas.org/2019/08/vol-8-no-2-of-southeast-asian-studies/>

Subscriptions: <https://englishkyoto-seas.org/mailling-list/>

For permissions, please send an e-mail to: english-editorial@cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp

SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

Vol. 8, No. 2

August 2019

CONTENTS

Articles

- Robert COLE Local Agency in Development, Market, and Forest Conservation
Maria BROCKHAUS Interventions in Lao PDR's Northern Uplands (173)
Grace Y. WONG
Maarit H. KALLIO
Moiria MOELIONO
- NAKATSUJI Susumu Land Use and Land Cover Changes during the Second Indochina
War and Their Long-Term Impact on a Hilly Area in Laos (203)
- Kanjana Hubik Dear Thai Sisters: Propaganda, Fashion, and the Corporeal Nation
THEPBORIRUK under Phibunsongkhram (233)
- Andrea Malaya An Ethnography of Pantaron Manobo Tattooing (*Pangotoeb*):
M. RAGRAGIO Towards a Heuristic Schema in Understanding Manobo
Myfel D. PALUGA Indigenous Tattoos (259)
- Trissia WIJAYA Chinese Business in Indonesia and Capital Conversion:
Breaking the Chain of Patronage (295)

Book Reviews

- Herdi SAHRASAD Yanwar Pribadi. *Islam, State and Society in Indonesia: Local Politics in Madura*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2018. (331)
- Edoardo SIANI Maurizio Peleggi. *Monastery, Monument, Museum: Sites and Artifacts of Thai Cultural Memory*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017. (335)
- Michael D. BARR Chua Beng Huat. *Liberalism Disavowed: Communitarianism and State Capitalism in Singapore*. Singapore: NUS Press, 2017. (338)
- Scott EDWARDS Anthony Milner, Abdul Rahman Embong, and Tham Siew Yean, eds. *Transforming Malaysia: Dominant and Competing Paradigms*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2014. (342)

Local Agency in Development, Market, and Forest Conservation Interventions in Lao PDR's Northern Uplands

Robert Cole,* Maria Brockhaus,** Grace Y. Wong,*** Maarit H. Kallio,[†]
and Moira Moeliono^{††}

Themes of inclusion, empowerment, and participation are recurrent in development discourse and interventions, implying enablement of agency on the part of communities and individuals to inform and influence how policies that affect them are enacted. This article aims to contribute to debates on participation in rural development and environmental conservation, by applying a structure-agency lens to examine experiences of marginal farm households in three distinct systems of resource allocation in Lao PDR's northern uplands—in other words, three institutional or (in)formal structures. These comprise livelihood development and poverty reduction projects, maize contract farming, and a national protected area. Drawing on qualitative data from focus group discussions and household surveys, the article explores the degree to which farmers may shape their engagement with the different systems, and ways in which agency may be enabled or disabled by this engagement. Our findings show that although some development interventions provide consultative channels for expressing needs, these are often within limited options set from afar. The market-based maize system, while in some ways agency-enabling, also entailed narrow choices and heavy dependence on external actors. The direct regulation of the protected area system meanwhile risked separating policy decisions from existing local knowledge. Our analytical approach moves beyond notions of agency commonly focused on decision-making and/or resistance, and instead revisits the structure-agency dichotomy to build a nuanced understanding of people's lived experiences of interventions. This allows for fresh perspectives on the everyday enablement or disablement of agency, aiming to support policy that is better grounded in local realities.

Keywords: agency, participation, rural development, forests, conservation, Lao PDR

* Department of Geography, National University of Singapore, AS2 03-01 1 Arts Link, Kent Ridge Singapore 117568; Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS), Kyoto University
Corresponding author's e-mail: coler@u.nus.edu

** Department of Forest Sciences, University of Helsinki; Helsinki Institute of Sustainability Science (HELSUS), University of Helsinki, P.O. Box 27, Latokartanonkaari 7, FIN-00014, Finland

*** Stockholm Resilience Centre, Stockholm University, Kräftriket 2B, SE-10691, Sweden

[†] Viikki Tropical Resources Institute (VITRI), University of Helsinki; Helsinki Institute of Sustainability Science (HELSUS), University of Helsinki, P.O. Box 27, Latokartanonkaari 7, FIN-00014, Finland

^{††} Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Situ Gede, Sindang Barang, Bogor (Barat) 16115, Indonesia

I Introduction

To be an agent means to be capable of exerting some degree of control over the social relations in which one is enmeshed, which in turn implies the ability to transform those social relations to some degree. (Sewell 1992, 20)

The structure-agency dichotomy is a deep-rooted theme across most disciplines of the social sciences, depicting “the tension between individual freedom and social constraint” (Rigg 2007, 24). Though much theoretical debate in this vein functions at some degree of abstraction, agency is fundamental to more immediate discourse surrounding inclusion, empowerment, and participation—terms that have proliferated over several decades in relation to bottom-up approaches to development, and more recently in natural resource governance (Parkins and Mitchell 2005), to the point of becoming “institutional imperatives” (Agarwal 2001). Local participation in projects is “argued to exert a strong impact on development outcomes,” often associated with perceived positive impacts of empowerment on governance, inclusive policies, and equitable access to markets, though these claims are not always empirically substantiated (Ibrahim and Alkire 2007, 395). A key focus of participatory or empowering development approaches is “inclusion in decision making of those most affected by the proposed intervention,” with effective participation sometimes considered on a collective rather than an individual basis (Agarwal 2001, 1623). One example of this is the widespread policy trend toward participatory or community-based forest management in developing countries (Islam *et al.* 2015), implying “a designation of power over forest resources to local people . . . to decide how their forests will be managed and for what purposes” (Tole 2010, 1312). While both support for and skepticism toward community-based forest management have emerged over recent decades, there is mounting evidence that participation of communities and benefits to local livelihoods are “more likely to contribute to conservation effectiveness than conservation without local participation” (Martin *et al.* 2018, 93).

Contradictions nevertheless arise where external actors attempt to impose ideals of participation and inclusion, whose realization rests on the extent that expression of agency is constrained by entrenched social structures (Sesan 2014). Even where legal mandates for public participation are in place, it is often the case in environment-related interventions that those with crucial local knowledge are limited in their ability to contribute to policy design by the nature of institutional procedures (Simmons 2007, 136). Understanding these dynamics is arguably central to idealized inclusive development in general, as well as more effective and equitable forest policies, in which agency is often entangled in local-level power relations and differentiated access to resources and infor-

mation (Brockhaus *et al.* 2014a; Gallemore *et al.* 2014; Kallio *et al.* 2016). “Inclusion” in such processes therefore implies the enablement of agency on the part of forest-dwelling communities to inform and influence how the policies and measures that affect them are shaped at different levels.

With this said, agency can often appear as something of a forgotten predecessor to participatory and inclusive notions of development, and is more commonly associated with decision-making in applied research or resistance in Marxian-influenced scholarship in agrarian contexts. In the research presented here, we seek to contribute to debates on participation in rural development and environmental conservation by returning to the structure-agency dichotomy that underpins these concepts, and assembling a nuanced understanding of people’s lived experiences of different forms of intervention. We argue that analysis of individual agency in response to social constraints remains highly relevant to understanding how such interventions are experienced, negotiated, adopted, or indeed rejected by those affected, particularly with respect to those interventions which aim to be participatory or inclusive.

The sections that follow apply a structure-agency lens to examine experiences of marginal farm households in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic’s (Lao PDR, or Laos) northern uplands in three distinct systems of resource allocation—in other words, three institutional or (in)formal structures. We apply this lens to consider: i) the degree to which farmers may shape their engagement with the different systems; and ii) the ways in which agency may be enabled or disabled by this engagement. We explore these questions using qualitative data from focus group discussions and household surveys conducted in two villages of Xone district, Houaphan province (see Fig. 1, Section III-2), which although geographically remote, are far from isolated from the influence of mainstream development practices, state policies, and market integration. The three examined systems are: i) livelihood development and poverty reduction projects;¹⁾ ii) a market-based structure for maize contract farming; and iii) direct state regulation under a national protected area. The article proceeds as follows: Section II explores relevant theoretical applications on the theme of structure-agency in agrarian and developing contexts, and how a structure-agency lens might be applied with the regards to policies and interventions affecting forest communities. Section III describes the study context in further detail, the field sites, and methods employed. Sections IV and V analyze and discuss the results of the focus group discussions and household surveys. Section VI concludes with reflections on the application of a structure-agency approach

1) This description is unavoidably broad owing to the volume of projects that have been undertaken in the area, and respondents tended not to strongly differentiate projects, organizations, or their purposes.

in considering realities for ideals of inclusion and participation, and implications for enabling more direct involvement by marginal households in influencing the policies and interventions that affect them.

II Structures as Systems of Resource Allocation

Individual-society relations are fundamental to the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of social science (Thompson 1989), forming the basis of thought in relation to the capacity of people to influence the circumstances of their existence (Emirbayer and Mische 1998). The common contrasting elements of the structure-agency tension are that, through the exercise of agency, individuals or groups may “act independently of and in opposition to structural constraints, and/or may (re)constitute social structures through their freely chosen actions,” while lack of agency implies passive adherence to structural constraints, and inability to choose otherwise (Loyal and Barnes 2001, 507). Viewing the social world from the perspective of agency prioritizes the extent of control individuals have over their lives (thereby assuming decision-making power), while the opposing perspective prioritizes structural factors that narrow individual choice (Rigg 2007). Giddens’ formative account, *The Constitution of Society*, conceptualizes structure as “rules and resources, recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems” (1984, 377), by which “structures shape people’s practices, but it is also people’s practices that constitute (and reproduce) structures” (Sewell 1992, 5). Sewell expands on Giddens’ framing to focus on the nature of the *resource allocation function* of social structures, arguing that structure “always derives from the character and distribution of resources in the everyday world” (*ibid.*, 27), with agency as the means of both its maintenance and transformation.

II-1 *Agency and Agrarian Change*

In agrarian societies, as wide expanses of rural Laos continue to be, agency has long been associated with peasant resistance to structural constraints, such as exploitative extraction of surpluses, arbitrary top-down policies, elite- or state-driven pressures on land and livelihoods, and resulting social differentiation (Scott 1985; Hart *et al.* 1989; Kerkvliet 2005; Caouette and Turner 2009; Hall *et al.* 2015). The exercise of agency in these forms is exemplified in the Southeast Asian context in Scott’s work on “moral economy” and everyday resistance (1976; 1985). While moral economy is concerned with social unrest resulting from the undermining of subsistence arrangements and violating peasants’ “notion of economic justice” (Scott 1976, 3), open rebellion is an exception to the norms

of everyday resistance (Scott 1985)—mundane, day-to-day struggles against exploitation through non-adherence to rules. The power of everyday resistance as a form of collective agency in response to top-down structural constraints is perhaps nowhere better depicted than in the widespread non-compliance that reversed Vietnam’s agricultural collectivization policies in the 1970s and 1980s (Kerkvliet 2005). Laos enacted a concurrent collectivization campaign in the late 1970s (see context, below), although coercion and the (albeit often grudging) participation of the population meant that its reversal was less a result of direct resistance than the urgencies of low productivity and food shortages (Evans 1995; High 2014). Because of general subservience to the directives of the centralized state, and in some cases, fear (High 2014), resistance took more evasive forms in Laos compared to Vietnam. These included smuggling farm output to cross-border markets, moving upland swidden cultivation deeper into remote mountains with less state control, and the mass exit of refugees across the Mekong river to Thailand (Brown and Zasloff 1986; Bourdet 2000).

Despite its value as an understanding of local agency in response to structural constraint, resistance can also be overapplied or “essentialized” into narratives which fail to provide a balanced reflection of people’s abilities to pursue positive outcomes from changing political and economic conditions (Forsyth 2009). In the post-reform re-engagement of Laos and Vietnam with the wider Southeast Asian region during the 1990s, and rapid expansion of transboundary investments in commercial agriculture and natural resources that followed, agency remains a key consideration in how the remnants of agrarian societies navigate structural changes to maintain and seek new opportunities (Michaud and Forsyth 2011; Turner 2012). Beyond everyday resistance, understanding responses to rural transformation can be enhanced by considering the relationship between individual agency and people’s perceptions of structural constraints (Drahmoune 2013), examined below in the context of development, market, and forest conservation interventions in Laos.

II-2 *Agency, Development, and Sustainability*

Applied understandings of agency have in many ways significantly expanded through recent focus in mainstream development literature on concepts of participation, inclusion, and empowerment, frequently in relation to human well-being. It is a measure of the leeway in these terms that they are often used in combination, if not interchangeably, while applying diverse definitions (on agency and empowerment, see Ibrahim and Alkire 2007). Much work on these themes draws from Sen’s widely influential capabilities approach (1999), which considers the constraining effects of deficient agency on human well-being, through limiting the ability of people to pursue the life they value. Several

significant advancements to the capabilities approach include the proposal of internationally comparable indicators for agency and empowerment (Ibrahim and Alkire 2007); quantitative study of the relationship between agency, dignity, and subjective well-being (Hojman and Miranda 2017); and of the suppressive effects of low agency (or “unfreedom”) on the relationship between wealth and well-being (Victor *et al.* 2013); with implicit links in each case to the central structure-agency tension between individual freedom and social constraint (Rigg 2007).

Although it is useful as a basis for policymaking to explore the effects on individual choices and well-being outcomes of constraints on agency in a comparable and systematized way, the meeting of subjective terms with numerical indicators is not without problems. Loyal and Barnes (2001) reject the possibility of finding a robust measure of agency at all, while Emirbayer and Mische (1998) portray the exercise of agency as an internal process, by which individuals prioritize between past iteration or habit, responding to immediate contingencies, and a “projective” capacity toward future possibilities. Meanwhile, agency has had an increasing tendency to be operationalized in the social sciences as “decision-making” (Kabeer 1999), though often with limited reference to the intangible circumstances surrounding individual decisions, and whether these may be enabling or disabling. In the context of sustainability, agency is considered a critical determinant of the response of individuals, households, and communities to external stressors, but rarely features in policy approaches which tend to remain predisposed to “objective,” distributional issues relating to resources and infrastructure (Brown and Westaway 2011).

Efforts toward participatory governance are one approach to correcting this imbalance, emphasizing the importance of diverse voices of those directly impacted by processes of change (Leach *et al.* 2010). Studying the representation of such voices in the context of protected area management in Indonesia, Myers and Muhajir observe that “people struggle to participate where governance structures ignore them by either an unwillingness or inability to advance community claims upward within the democratic structures” (2015, 379). This is exacerbated by technocratic interventions that tend to compartmentalize socio-political concerns into measurable and obtainable targets, while multi-level governance increases the complexity of realizing the participation of stakeholders at local level. Myers and Muhajir argue for “securing a voice for forest users . . . to participate in the decisions about land over which they lay claim” (*ibid.*). We now turn to agency in relation to forest conservation in greater detail, before exploring lived experiences of policies and interventions in the uplands of northern Laos.

II-3 *Agency in Forest Conservation Interventions*

The extent of agency on the part of forest-dwelling communities in relation to often externally designed (i.e., by national and/or international organizations) policies and interventions is an open question, and highly context-dependent. Referring to would-be inclusive forest management, Galvin and Haller observe that participatory approaches appear to have emerged as institutional means of “reconciling local people with conservationists, and conservation with development,” with the underlying objective of balancing participation with protection agendas (2008, 17). Even as community participation in managing local resources has become firmly embedded in mainstream development logics, policy support has often remained in the domain of rhetoric (Colfer and Capistrano 2005).

At global level, indigenous alliances have on the one hand been increasingly acknowledged in policy negotiations, though with less direct agency in terms of participation in shaping rules relating to interactions between people and forests (Schroeder 2010). At the national level, Brockhaus *et al.* (2014b) observe that while minority coalitions have focused attention toward environmental justice in some countries, including participation of indigenous peoples in policy processes, these are rarely framed in opposition to large-scale investments that impact forests, inadvertently reinforcing structural drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. Focusing at national and subnational scales in Vietnam, Thu *et al.* (in press) emphasize the gulf between actors engaged in the design and implementation of forest policies and swidden farmers living in forested upland areas, despite the latter being among the most affected, largely due to a state-led discourse that rejects the continuing existence of swidden cultivation, and thus blocks participation of farmers in policy processes.

Upland farmers in Laos have similarly faced a range of constraints set in place by policies in which they have minimal input, including resettlement of rural populations and land reclassification measures aimed at tightening control over access to forests and eradicating swidden cultivation (Baird and Shoemaker 2007; Hett *et al.* 2011; Castella *et al.* 2013). As part of these measures, Laos’ network of national protected areas (NPAs), nominally covering about 14% of national territory, resulted from shifts in policy since the late 1980s to maintain the surviving forest resource base after prolonged heavy logging (Ingalls 2017; Robichaud *et al.* 2001; Sirivongs and Tsuchiya 2012). Renewed policy emphasis toward protecting forests and biodiversity also meshed well with the rising global development focus on sustainability, which came to dominate aid priorities and strongly influence international project funding in Laos in the 1990s (Singh 2012). Reliance on forest land and resources for livelihoods among marginal rural populations living in proximity to the NPAs make local participation integral to their effective manage-

ment (de Koning *et al.* 2017; Sirivongs and Tsuchiya 2012). To this end, while beginning from an expert-led and exclusionary “fortress conservation” model of forest management (Ingalls 2017), soon after establishing the NPAs, the Lao government set in law a participatory approach to protected area management with the aim of involving and benefitting local populations (Rao *et al.* 2014). Despite the apparent meeting of interests between international donors and the state, Singh notes that “this interpretation is strongly challenged when the focus shifts from policy to practice” (2012, 40), and scientific approaches to conservation have tended to be persistently viewed as a foreign aspiration, concealing people’s everyday knowledge and the needs of local livelihoods.

Competing power claims inevitably underlie the enclosure of forests containing established communities, and local agency in Laos’ NPA system has in some cases been noted as more on the basis of opposition and subversion than participation (Ingalls 2017). Although aimed towards creating a model of “sustainable livelihood and conservation strategies which strongly advocates people’s involvement,” trust issues, contestation over resources, poor information flow to forest-dwelling communities, and unsustainable funding and political will have sometimes constrained ostensibly agency-enabling ideals (de Koning *et al.* 2017, 88). While NPAs play an essential role in conserving Laos’ forests, they do so in a complex policy arena in which technical interventions remain driven by international organizations, though as is the case elsewhere, often failing to engage powerful economic interests that underpin unsustainable exploitation of forests (Cole *et al.* 2017a), and in which local voices may go unheard.

Referring specifically to the Nam Et Phou Louey NPA in Laos (also the study location of the present article, see below), Martin *et al.* (2018) observe that despite livelihoods being in some cases severely curtailed by the enclosure of the forest, local communities nevertheless express broad support for the NPA. The high degree of receptiveness to internalizing messages on NPA restrictions and intended benefits is shown in the study to be due to perceived historic dependence on authority, such that “rules are followed not because they have popular support, but simply because they are the rules and are backed up by hierarchical power” (Martin *et al.* 2018, 103). De Koning *et al.* argue for rights-based decentralized governance as a pathway to collaborative management of protected forests in Laos, notwithstanding the needed “ongoing political will to consolidate and sustain these arrangements” (2017, 87). This argument might equally apply across diverse forms of development intervention, and we add that such inclusive ideals should be understood as rooted in the enablement of agency, underpinned by the conditions of interactions among the actors involved, and those of engagement and exchange of information and resources among would-be participants.

In the following sections, we consider how agency can be understood by people’s

lived experiences of three distinct rules-based systems of resource allocation that affect everyday life, as identified by respondents in two villages of Laos' mountainous Houaphan province. We defined such a "system" to comprise: i) resources and/or knowledge that are exchanged; ii) actors who instigate exchanges; iii) purposes for the exchange; and iv) social foci and tools that facilitate the exchange (in other words: what, among whom, why, where, and how exchanges occur). As such, these systems can be considered analogous to how social structures are (re)produced through actors' recursive actions, according to (or in defiance of) schemas of rules surrounding resource allocation (Sewell 1992).

While the livelihood development and poverty reduction projects and national protected area systems are policy-driven interventions, involving both national and international organizations, the maize contract farming system is primarily market-driven (albeit complying with state aims to commercialize the agricultural sector, and with limited local government involvement), and run by networks of Vietnamese and Lao traders. In the context of continued reliance on swidden agriculture among a majority of upland farmers in the studied communities, the interaction between these systems highlights long-running tensions between State objectives and local realities. As is commonly observed in upland areas of Southeast Asia, Laos' rural development policies have for decades sought to stabilize and ultimately eradicate swidden due to its perceived destructive environmental impacts and non-adherence to State-favored, sedentary practices (Heinimann *et al.* 2013; Kenney-Lazar 2013; Scott 1998; 2009). Moves toward intensive commercial agriculture such as maize contract farming are thus welcomed and indeed promoted by local governments as a more stable alternative to swidden (despite frequently accelerating conversion of land and forests), though upland farmers often continue to cultivate swidden rice as the main food crop, whether by necessity or choice (Heinimann *et al.* 2013; Vongvisouk *et al.* 2016).

III Study Context, Sites, and Methods

III-1 Context

Rural development has been an unwavering focus of government rhetoric and policy since the founding of the Lao PDR in 1975, with consistent aims to reinforce state legitimacy by improving living conditions and "modernizing" livelihoods; and to extend state authority over marginal rural spaces and integrate upland minorities into the mainstream (Évrard 2011; Singh 2012; Cole and Ingalls, forthcoming). During the post-war period of "high communism," these objectives were pursued through a collectivization campaign—envisaged to boost agricultural output and achieve food security, while also reordering

peasant society under a “legible” social structure (Evans 1988). To a large extent, these efforts proved ineffective, and coupled with the risk of general economic collapse brought on by Laos’ isolationism, led to an urgent push for reforms by the mid-1980s (the New Economic Mechanism), and subsequent re-engagement with the ensuing regionalization under the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Evans 1995; Stuart-Fox 1995; Pholsena and Banomyong 2006). Market reforms have underpinned long-term policy emphasis on agricultural commercialization as a foreseen fast-track to poverty reduction in rural areas, alongside the widespread resettlement of remote villages closer to roads and district centers, albeit with widely observed negative impacts among the poorest sections of society (Rigg 2005; Baird and Shoemaker 2007). ASEAN integration and infrastructure-building since the 1990s, in combination with the government’s decade-long policy on “turning land into capital,” have created inroads for large-scale transboundary land acquisitions, transforming land relations, and frequently increasing pressure on marginal land and livelihoods (Baird 2011; Ingalls *et al.* 2018a; Cole and Ingalls, forthcoming). These same processes of integration have gradually geared Laos’ rural economy toward the demands of neighboring China, Vietnam, and Thailand (Bourdet 2000; Rigg 2005), including for bulk agricultural commodities via a proliferation of cross-border contract farming arrangements (Cole *et al.* 2017b), as exemplified below.

With Laos’ global re-engagement came the significant presence and influence (particularly via aid funding patterns, see Singh 2012) of the international development sector, and sharpening discursive focus on participatory, inclusive, and sustainable development, environmental conservation, and more recently “green growth” (Kallio *et al.* 2018). However, the heavy emphasis of elite interests and foreign investments in land- and resource-intensive sectors places notions of sustainability firmly at odds with an economic model based on agricultural intensification and the exploitation of natural resources (Cole *et al.* 2017a; Ingalls *et al.* 2018b). Epitomizing the complexity of this tension is the forestry sector: at once a key source of revenue for the nascent communist government since the late 1970s; the focus of entrenched elite interests for large-scale land concessions, such as plantations; and of wide-ranging donor-funded forestry initiatives, including the extensive national protected area network (Robichaud *et al.* 2001; Cole *et al.* 2017a; Cole and Ingalls, forthcoming). Similar tensions are observed in other sectors that loom large in the sustainability agenda in Laos, notably water resources management, and are commonly framed as “trade-offs” between conserving the environment and rural livelihoods on the one hand, and harnessing resources for national development on the other (Friend and Blake 2009; Wong 2010). The level of local participation in such decisions may often be questionable, highlighting the fragility of terms such as

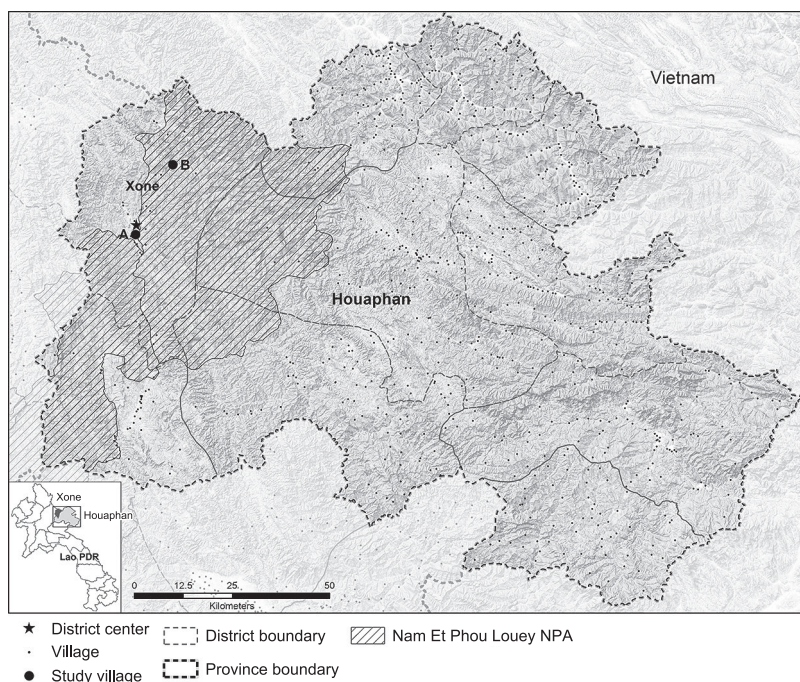


Fig. 1 Map of Study Sites, Xone District, Houaphan Province, Lao PDR

inclusive or participatory development, and the importance of understanding the varying extents to which plans made from afar may enable or disable agency among the people most directly affected.

III-2 Sites

The analysis that follows is based on data collected in 2013 in two villages of Xone district, Houaphan province, northern Laos (Fig. 1), anonymized as village A) and village B). The sites were selected on the basis of swidden cultivation being the dominant land-use system; the presence of significant forest cover; and the presence of factors affecting land access and the maintenance of forest cover—in this case, proximity to protected forest. Xone and the neighboring district of Hiem²⁾ collectively cover more than 3,750 km², approximately 70% of which is enclosed by the Nam Et Phou Louey National Protected Area (NEPL-NPA). Established in 1993 as part of the above-mentioned land reclassification and expansion of the NPA system, NEPL-NPA covers an area of 422,900 ha spanning

2) Shortly after the completion of fieldwork in 2014, the former district of Viengthong, containing the two study sites, was divided into two the new districts of Xone and Hiem. For this reason, some of the district-level data used here from the period of the research covers both the new districts.

Table 1 Characteristics of Study Sites

Village	Total HH	Ethnic Structure	Lao-Tai Spoken	Main Livelihood Activities	Distance from Major Road*	Distance from District Center
A)	147	Hmong	Village leaders only	Paddy/swidden rice, maize, buffalo	2.5 hours	0
B)	85	Majority Tai-Daeng, minority Lao-Tai	All	Paddy/swidden rice, maize, pigs	5 hours	2.5 hours

Source: Focus group discussions, 2013.

Note: * Travel times by unpaved road at the time of research, which may be reduced on completion of a new road (under construction at the time of writing) linking village B) both to the nearest major domestic road and directly to the Vietnamese border.

three provinces, of which the majority area is located in Houaphan. NEPL-NPA has been under active management since 2000, aimed at protecting forest and endangered wildlife, and promoting sustainable land-use via regulations endorsed at provincial and district levels in 2008 (Hett *et al.* 2011). While NEPL-NPA has a significant role in provincial-level forest governance in Houaphan, it has nevertheless been encroached by commercial maize cultivation since the rapid uptake of the crop by farmers in the 2000s (Vongvisouk *et al.* 2016). Agriculture is the main livelihood, commonly a combination of paddy and swidden rice, vegetable gardening, and maize, the main locally-produced commodity crop,³⁾ for which Xone district serves as a collection point for several Vietnamese- and Lao-operated businesses. Cultivation of maize expanded dramatically around 2010, when high demand in Vietnam fostered promotion of the crop by district authorities to support rural income improvement, while simultaneously encouraging traders and collectors to engage with farmers in Laos. In village A), maize was commonly grown on the available sloping land surrounding the village, in combination with a range of other livelihood activities including livestock and non-farm work in the neighboring peri-urban district economy. Although more remote than village A), village B) is also more self-contained, with a large area of paddy land and overall territory of 20,000 ha, including swidden fields mostly turned over to maize at the time of the research. Table 1 summarizes basic characteristics of the two sites.⁴⁾

III-3 Methods

Focus group discussions differentiated by gender and age were undertaken at each village

3) Unpublished district data, Viengthong District Agriculture and Forestry Office, 2013.

4) Focus group discussions, field notes, 2013

during May 2013. These activities first aimed to gain detailed accounts of historical structural conditions of resource allocation, particularly relating to land, along with general environmental, economic, and social characteristics at the two sites. Second, the discussions were designed to distinguish and prioritize social structures that dominated village life in the eyes of respondents, represented by the systems described above, comprising livelihood development and poverty reduction projects, maize contract farming, and NEPL-NPA. The three systems and networks of actors involved were then further explored in household surveys conducted from September to December 2013, with 40 randomly selected household heads per village. Resulting qualitative data were analyzed by focusing on patterns of participation in decision-making processes and resulting actions, the nature of interactions between actors and ability to influence decisions within the three systems, aspects of dependency and circumstances of non-participation. We do not claim that this approach offers a fixed measure of agency, though we argue that the value in applying a structure-agency lens lies in considering ways that agency might be enabled or disabled by structural conditions, which in the context of this study can be linked to respondents' ability to engage in and shape decisions and interventions that affect them.

IV Results

IV-1 *Historical Structural Conditions of Resource Allocation*

Differing historical trajectories in the two villages offer insights into the structural conditions of resource allocation, particularly in terms of differentiated access to land, and the influence of this on local livelihoods. Village A) was established through the resettlement of several remote Hmong hamlets since the late 1990s to land adjacent with present-day Xone district, in line with long-running government policy to relocate isolated ethnic minority communities in the uplands closer to roads and state services (Évrard and Goudineau 2004; Évrard and Baird 2017). The initial resettlement comprised 37 households, and more than 100 further households had since relocated there by 2013. Though an integral policy objective of village resettlement has been to contribute to the stabilization of swidden cultivation in the uplands (Baird and Shoemaker 2007), resettled populations must also navigate existing (formal and informal) land allocation regimes in the new location (Lestrelin and Giordano 2007). This process is differentiated not only between resettled and existing populations, but among the social strata of the resettled group, and among earlier and later arrivals. In village A), irrigated paddy land was allocated only to initial settlers, who were also commonly assigned various official roles,

thereby gaining positions of enhanced agency in local-level decisions. While the initial settlers and those following shortly thereafter were also able to access additional agricultural plots reallocated from neighboring villages, later arrivals received land only for housing construction. The allocation of land in village A) is thus observably embedded in a historically bound schema of rules, derived from a combination of government resettlement policies, local regimes of land allocation, and stratified social relations at different stages of resettlement.

Many households maintained former swiddens and *sanam* (secondary villages close to rice fields, built to accommodate peak labor requirements in the agricultural cycle) in the areas they previously farmed before resettlement. These were continuously occupied to some degree, sometimes for two to three months at a time by a varying number of individuals based on the size of household, and thus mobility between the village and the *sanam* was virtually constant. Villagers accessed *sanam* lands at different locations and distances from the new village, the furthest being more than 20 km away along mountain tracks. The need to retain distant former lands might on the one hand be viewed as demonstrating minimal agency in the face of constraints that the households had no control over—in this case barring some (especially late-comers) from accessing land in the new village. On the other hand, the act of sustaining a livelihood in a location far from the reach of local authorities, and in doing so operating on one's own terms, might also be viewed as a form of agency through passive dissent. Those cultivating the *sanam* swiddens continued to primarily grow rice as opposed to maize, since this was considered more practical for storage and transporting to market while providing a secure supply of food. Living in the remote *sanam* also entailed isolation from services and wider economic opportunities however, and thus “agency” in this case should be considered as actions within a severely limited field of options.

Village B) is the more established of the two sites, existing since the late nineteenth century. In accordance with the collectivization campaign set in place nationwide in the late 1970s (Evans 1988; Castella and Bouahom 2014), village B) was instructed to reorganize as a production cooperative. This entailed a reorientation from the former traditional mode of land allocation within the community (on a five-year basis according to household size), to the communal contribution of labor, and allocation of output among all households based on the labor invested. The cooperative model remained in place in the village until 1987 with the shift in national policy toward market-orientation, and despite the collectivization policy having been officially cancelled several years earlier due to general ineffectiveness (Evans 1995).

One direct local outcome of this transition was that all former privately owned paddy lands collectivized during the 1980s were returned to the previous owners. While those

who had not previously owned land were largely excluded by this process, some of the paddy area that had been expanded through collective efforts during the cooperative period was assigned as communal, and referred to as “village land.” Half of the collectively expanded paddy was initially reallocated among individual households and the rest held communally, eventually reducing to one-third in 2004. This land remained communal at the time of the research, though there were plans for further reallocation according to household size. The differing trajectories of the two villages, and resulting schemas of rules surrounding the distribution of agricultural land, underline ways that marginal upland communities in Laos have historically been subjected to shifts in policies in which they have minimal control, but which often carry dramatic and long-term impacts. As development policies and interventions designed at both international and national levels have increasingly emphasized participation and inclusion, whether this is subsequently reflected by greater enablement of agency among local populations remains a source of ambiguity.

IV-2 *Participation in Resource Allocation Systems*

Table 2 shows the share of respondents in the two villages reporting participation in the three systems of resource allocation. Our analysis further differentiates whether their self-described participation was confined to attending village meetings, implying presence during related decisions and receipt and/or exchange of information, or also included providing labor for specific system-related activities, implying more active engagement. The highest proportions of participation for both villages were in livelihood development and poverty reduction projects and maize contract farming. The maize system universally entailed both attending village meetings and labor (i.e., cultivating maize) among all who

Table 2 System Participation by Village

Village	Resource Allocation System	Participation		Type of Participation	
		Yes	No	Meetings Only	Meetings plus Labor/Activity
A)	Livelihood development and poverty reduction projects	39	1	27	12
	Maize contract farming	33	7	0	33
	NEPL-NPA	27	13	23	4
B)	Livelihood development and poverty reduction projects	28	12	4	14
	Maize contract farming	38	2	0	38
	NEPL-NPA	16	24	9	7

Source: Household surveys.

described themselves as participants. Responses were more mixed for livelihood development and poverty reduction projects, with a greater overall share of participation in village A), perhaps reflecting its proximity to the district seat of power, though participation was more active in terms of labor in the more remote village B). Participation in the protected area system was lower in both villages, particularly village B) which is located deepest within the boundaries of NEPL-NPA (see Fig. 1), and mostly entailed attending meetings only.

Respondents who described themselves as participants had varying knowledge of and interactions with the networks of actors involved in the three systems, in turn implying different levels of knowledge of how the systems function, and the distribution of responsibilities within them. Respondents who stated knowing one actor (or actor category, e.g. “district staff,” “foreign experts” or simply “the government”) tended to be the largest group, while those listing second and third actors tended to be respectively fewer. Respondents who personally knew actors referred in the majority of instances to maize traders or members of the village committee. The most commonly named actors were the village heads, who in turn were often the only residents of the two villages who stated that they personally knew local officials, demonstrating both their intersecting role in the functions of each of the three systems, and as gatekeepers to official information.

IV-3 *Livelihood Development and Poverty Reduction Projects*

Almost all respondents in both villages reported regular visits by staff of projects, one village A) respondent commenting that “they’re always coming here” [A4]. In village B), most respondents referred to each project by its purpose, such as “livestock project,” “poultry project,” or “assistance,” though source organizations were often conflated (e.g. a visit by a German development agency was described by one respondent as an “aid project of America” [B27]). The most commonly named project activities in both locations were those relating to the Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF),⁵⁾ understood by many respondents to be behind most village-level development activities, particularly construction of hard infrastructure such as local water supplies, clinics, and schools. Some respondents had contributed labor to the construction of these facilities, which in village B) included irrigation for paddy fields allocated to resettled villagers. Altruistic views of the visits by officials connected to the PRF were quite common among respondents, that “they develop the rural areas” [B7]; “they came here to develop our village” [B8]; and “to solve the poverty of the people” [B35]. Another village B) respondent elaborated on

5) The PRF is a grassroots development project, in which participating villages select from priority investment activities in terms of infrastructure and training, partially paid for by donor funding channeled through the project and managed and implemented by villagers (GoL 2003).

the rationale behind the PRF: “they want us to be happy and have a comfortable living . . . they just want us to make money” [B26]. In village A), perceived purposes of project visits tended to be more general, often referring to improving living conditions, some linking this to policy and geographical disparities, “because people in the highlands do not gain enough from government policy goals” [A28]. Others associated project visits with announcements and the promotion of various aims, including planting commercial crops, and the more idealistic “village solidarity” and “self-development.”

The village head was considered a focal point in both locations, convening meetings, channeling information to the village, mobilizing labor for projects, and explaining local needs to project staff, thereby exerting influence over outcomes at the village level. Specifically for the PRF, the village head was also considered responsible for gathering the opinions and concerns of villagers and appealing to the government to support development needs, for which funding and construction may then be considered. Village A) respondents were least aware of specific actors relating to livelihood development and poverty reduction projects, commonly depicted as unnamed external officials visiting the village head, who sought agreement with the “relevant organizations,” after which the “officials called on the village and assembled the villagers for development” [A16]. The procedures of working with projects were reflected on in more detail by the village head, which for the PRF would begin with a visit by an extension officer to survey the condition of the village, after which the village committee would send a written request for assistance to the “agriculture office,” which then “sent the project to help the village” [A35].

Respondents in village B) considered district officials to be responsible for announcing PRF projects, promoting agriculture, and being a source of funding and occasional rice donations, while provincial officials were considered responsible for gathering and announcing information. District government staff were perceived as the most influential actors in the delivery of development interventions to village B), and described by some respondents to be acting out of concern for local living conditions, providing guidance over how to improve the village, including construction of PRF infrastructure. Other respondents connected the work of district officials in the village to broader national development and poverty reduction narratives, “because now the society is more convenient than before, and to help villagers develop to improve [their] life” [B24] and “avoid being out of date” [B32]. Some focused more strongly on this modernization role, describing the efforts of the district as helping “villagers to make their lives more like in the town, with electricity, water supply” and birth control [B9]; as well as to “upgrade their living to be better than the old system, and give them the new system to bring income to the family” [B40], based on livestock raising and cash crops.

IV-4 *Maize Contract Farming*

Perhaps representative of this perceived “new system,” most respondents in both villages had actively participated in maize contract farming for about two to three years at the time of the research. Vietnamese traders and companies were considered to hold greatest influence over the maize system in village B), having initiated production of the crop in the village, though some respondents were only aware of “businessmen” of both Lao and Vietnamese origin. The diverse perceptions of importance of business actors included showing villagers how to produce maize, offering contracts, seed loans, and other credit, and collecting and transporting the harvest (including cutting feeder roads to hard-to-reach hillsides). Some respondents explained that the companies directly approached the village leaders to invite them to encourage villagers to engage in maize contracts. Others considered that district officials had played the most prominent role in promoting commercial maize production and authorizing maize companies to operate. In both villages, the village head continued to hold significant influence in the maize system for many respondents, introducing the companies to the village, acting as the facilitator of contracts, arranging meetings, and keeping records. The village A) head’s role extended to managing the engagement of different households in contracts and distribution of seeds supplied on credit by the company, and in some cases, guiding villagers on maize production, based on knowledge gained from the village cluster (sub-district) or other villages.

Of the more than three-quarters of respondents in village A) who grew maize, a majority were directly acquainted with business actors that introduced the contract farming system to the village. Varying accounts were given of how this process occurred, involving combinations of Vietnamese, Lao, and local Hmong actors, with kinship networks seemingly playing a prominent role. Many respondents considered that the Vietnamese company first cooperated with the district authority over the buying price, after which the district allowed the company to operate, local authorities encouraging people to “turn to new jobs to make progress, and stand on your own two feet” [A12]. Some even alluded to a kind of moral philanthropy on the part of the business actors, who would highlight the deficiencies of “people’s living in the past, when they only cut trees and destroyed forest. We cleared forest for shifting cultivation for many generations, but we never achieved prosperity” [A5], arguing the case for commercial crops as a solution, which the company would buy “to reduce poverty” [A18]. Others reported that the district and company organized a village meeting to “announce information about plans for growing maize to transform people’s livelihoods” [A13]. In these cases, the company would be considered of greatest importance: “these businessmen arranged everything” [A5], lending seeds and purchasing the product, as well as ploughing fields and cutting

feeder roads based on the contract terms with producers. Lack of land and labor were barriers for the few respondents who did not grow maize.

IV-5 *Nam Et Phou Louey National Protected Area*

Most respondents' experiences of NEPL-NPA related to announcements and meetings delivered by district or project staff, with the village head often the point of contact, who would then inform villagers of conservation restrictions, as well as penalties of failing to observe them. Few respondents were able to name specific project actors in the NPA system, and those of influence were otherwise generalized in both villages as project and/or district staff. Few respondents listed a second actor beyond the village head. Provincial and district staff were considered important in translating policy, in that they "come to the village to announce what the government announces, especially about the rules and principles" [A8], initially training and informing the village leaders on "advantages and disadvantages of forests in the past, present and future" [A6]. Respondents also referred to visits by a survey team of district staff to identify and announce where the NPA borders affect village land, "so that [villagers] don't go to destroy" the forest [A6]. Such visits would include providing information on using forests sustainably, occasionally delivered by "foreign experts," but in some cases also village elders. The experience of NPA visits seemed less constructive in village B), the head expressing frustration that NPA staff "just say they will come to help people like this, like that, but that project is not good, they just come to advertise, such as pictures of hunting animals" [B36]. Most respondents identified the role of the village head with calling meetings to announce the NPA borders and banned activities such as wildlife hunting and forest clearance, cooperating with the provincial and district staff and following up enactment of regulations. Perhaps again reflecting closer proximity to the district center, the village A) head was directly acquainted with senior staff of the NPA and described their role as demarcating accessible land, explaining its sustainable use and rules to restrict activities that impact forests and wildlife.

About one-third of respondents in both villages had some knowledge of further planned forest or conservation related projects. Descriptions in village B) included awareness of climate change projects gained from forest conservation staff, and announcements relating to NEPL-NPA and the ongoing drive to eradicate swidden cultivation. Respondents in village A) referred to forest-related projects, including those associated with NEPL-NPA, information campaigns on forest conservation led by the district authorities, and related visits from foreign experts. Most respondents expressed interest to participate in forest conservation, whether to fulfil government plans and prescribed obligations, or responding to the need to protect local resources. Other motivations

ranged between the more passive stances observed in relation to the other systems (e.g. “I will wait for the head of the village to announce the relevant information” [B15]; “I’ll do, if they want me to do” [B22]), to concerns over missing out on opportunities for material or informational advantage (“If the project has benefits to the villagers, I also want to join” [B16]; “If they tell us I want to attend, I need to know what they talk about” [B30]). For others, desire to participate was more pragmatic, some expressing the wish to do so only if “convenient.” When asked how they considered they might contribute to implementation, responses again varied between passive recipients and following changes in laws and regulations (“we will do what they order” [A2]; “I will follow the plan the government announces” [B30]); to desiring an active role and being a model for other households. Of the more active responses, some directly referred to learning how to protect the forest, contributing labor and equipment if they possess it, and planting trees, while one respondent asserted that “the villager must be in a strong role in this program” [B27]. The few respondents who were not interested either believed forest-related projects to be the responsibility of the village head, or otherwise considered themselves ill-equipped in terms of knowledge, too old, or facing too many difficulties of their own to engage in such things. Table 3 summarizes the results by the three systems of resource allocation.

V Discussion: Local Agency in Systems of Resource Allocation

Part of what it means to conceive of human beings as *agents* is to conceive of them as *empowered* by access to resources of one kind or another. (Sewell 1992, 10, original emphasis)

The previous section examined the historical-structural conditions of resource allocation within the study villages, and patterns and experiences of participation in the three resource allocation systems of livelihood development and poverty reduction projects, maize contract farming, and the NEPL-NPA. Respondents’ interactions with each system are governed by its respective institutional structure and resulting allocation of different kinds of resources—varying forms of development assistance through the projects system; production inputs and income through the maize system; and information and the maintenance of forest resources through the NPA. The further aim of adopting a structure-agency lens is to examine the ways that these structures may “limit, constrain or enable human action” (Rigg 2007, 27), by contrasting their agency-enabling features that may allow people to influence the decisions that affect them with aspects of dependence and circumstances of non-participation.

Table 3 Summary of Results by System

Resource Allocation System	Perceptions of Participation	Actor Interactions and Influence	Aspects of Dependency	Circumstances of Non-Participation
Livelihood development and poverty reduction projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent visits by staff of numerous projects • Limited knowledge of or differentiation between projects • Most active participation in PRF • Perception of external actors coming to “develop” or modernize the village 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village head is focal point of information/instructions • Village head channels villagers’ opinions over PRF interventions • Low knowledge of specific actors—district or provincial staff who come to make announcements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependence on external actors as gatekeepers to project resources, village head as interface with projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited avoidance/opting out, e.g. during peak labor periods • Poverty and sense of inability to contribute
Maize contract farming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most respondents actively participate in maize production • Villagers guided on production by village head and traders, who also lend inputs • Perception of maize traders bringing opportunity to improve livelihoods, district authority encouraging “progress” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greatest influence held by Vietnamese traders and companies • Village head leads in facilitating contracts, meetings, keeping records • Traders negotiate with district authority, approach village head to promote contract farming • Strong knowledge of specific traders in contract system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependence on traders to connect to market, village head • Contracts function on conditions of credit/debt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of land and labor • Occasional avoidance/opting out
NEPL-NPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Villagers attend meetings, receive announcements on NPA borders/penalties of encroachment • Occasional participation in surveys, visits by foreign experts • Varying sense of obligation vs. personal duty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village head as focal point • Low knowledge of specific actors—district or provincial staff who come to make announcements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependence on village head, external actors to deliver information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception that village head is responsible • Lack of education or inability to contribute • Limited avoidance/opting out, e.g. during peak labor periods

Source: Field data, Houaphan province 2013.

Within the poverty reduction and livelihood development projects system, the bottom-up, consultative aspect of the PRF is perhaps most strongly resonant with the enablement of agency, through influence to some degree over what activities are undertaken and how, and hence the allocation of resources. This is because the PRF is ostensibly designed to allow autonomous proposals of local needs by villagers for higher authorities to consider and respond to with funding, thereby presenting a form of vertical communication with decision-makers that is otherwise rare within existing governance hierarchies. Respondents at both sites referred to the village head appealing to the government for assistance in this way, and expressions of agency on the part of households might thus be viewed as being channeled via the local leaders. However, it should be noted that participating villages in the PRF select options from an externally pre-defined project “menu,” based on agreement between the government and the World Bank (GoL 2003), and the rules of resource allocation are thus to some extent remotely set within the project structure. This is confirmed in some aspects in village A), where respondents viewed district or project staff as disconnected from local reality, in that they could “only make the plan” from afar [A2]. Other village A) respondents considered “villagers” to be key actors in the first system, since it is they who undertake all activities in the village, though still considering themselves less influential overall than government staff or village leaders. Several respondents referred to a further expression of agency in the form of avoidance, by opting out of activities and meetings when other needs take precedence, particularly during peak labor periods when it was necessary to stay in the fields. Despite the apparently community-driven approach of the PRF, a sense of dependence on external actors as gatekeepers to project resources prevailed, reflected in statements such as “if there is not this project, our village would be poorer than now” [B17] and “we will not have this project if there is no one like [district official]” [B24]. In village A), the role of the head was considered paramount: “if we don’t have the head of the village [the project] is impossible” [A11]. Villagers who held the perception of being unable to participate whatsoever in such projects considered themselves barred by circumstance, one respondent stating that the household could not join “because I am just a regular villager and go to listen to them only . . . we are very poor and we don’t have anything to provide them” [B2]. These statements highlight the impact of localized structural conditions over the enablement versus disablement of respondents to influence the interventions that affect them, through the sense of self-reinforcing circumstances of poverty, and of prevailing dependence on institutional hierarchy, as similarly observed by Martin *et al.* (2018).

As a market-based structure, the clearest expression of agency within the maize contract system is through the business decisions that households are, on the surface,

free to make—that is, whether to grow the crop or not, and if so for whom. However, the fact that most farmers enter contracts under credit conditions (typically for start-up capital, seasonal inputs, and construction of feeder roads by traders) means that apparent degrees of autonomy on the part of contract farmers may often quickly lead to conditions of dependency. This is consistent with research elsewhere in Houaphan province, which reveals how farmers are “often locked in relationships that they did not even choose” with traders, later becoming ensnared in a cycle of increasing inputs to compensate for degrading land, with farmers struggling to repay production costs and loans (Vagneron and Kousonsavath 2015, 6–10). A further layer of this dependency was evident in the importance attached to external actors in connecting farmers to the Vietnamese market: “Vietnamese businessmen started this project and come to buy, so this is the most significant encouragement to grow more maize” [A9]. With this said, most participants were directly aware of different local traders, and there was evidence in both villages of switching to new contracts where others had proven untrustworthy (particularly by reneging on agreed prices). While almost all households were active participants in the system, some had nonetheless decided to opt out, one farmer stating that “I don’t connect with the maize project, and they don’t know about me either” [B14]. As with the PRF, the role of local institutional structures was evidenced by perceptions of the village head’s importance, and the dependency within this relationship: “if the village head allows, we can do, if he doesn’t want us to do we won’t, if we don’t listen to him, if something happens he won’t be responsible for us” [B33]. Village A) respondents generally considered this in a more enabling light, that the village head “leads the people to change their occupation, to make progress to help themselves” [A9]. Agency could be seen as enabled in various ways through the maize contract system, particularly improving income and living standards, though as has proven the case elsewhere in Houaphan province at the time (Martin *et al.* 2018), the benefits were short-lived, while the impacts on the land were a source of concern for most respondents. In a broader sense, the historically bound nature of land regimes in both villages acted as a filter through which differentiated access to land for cultivation resulted in uneven economic outcomes among farmers. Agency-enabling aspects of maize production should therefore be carefully considered against a backdrop of economic precarity, with contracting rules governed by external actors, and geographical constraints over market access.

As the more top-down and restrictive of the three systems, for many respondents, participation in NEPL-NPA mostly involved attending meetings and following instructions, echoing the findings of Martin *et al.*, who observed “consistent evidence that the district government came to inform, rather than to engage in discussion about the formation of the NPA” (*ibid.*, 99). Perceptions ranged from having a personal stake (“we have

to take care of the forest surrounding our village” [B11]), to simple obligation (“I have to do whatever they said” [B9]). Participation in NPA activities was described by one respondent as follows: “agriculturalists and foreigners come to our village for inspecting, to survey the area that they want and the head of the village informed the villagers by telling them to go and survey with them” [B12]. While the emphasis among these statements is firmly on households acting in accordance with institutional structures, as opposed to having a role in shaping policies that affect them, some respondents also considered villagers as influential actors in organizing and undertaking activities. Others presented the NPA staff in a more enabling light as “teaching” villagers the advantages and benefits of maintaining the forest; albeit often at the same time as advising, announcing, or “warning” people to protect it: “they come to control the protected area of the village” [B30]. As with the other two systems, the village head was once again the focal actor for many respondents, typified by statements that “I just know [about the NPA] by the head of the village” [B24]. For some, NEPL-NPA appeared to transcend any potential for individual involvement or influence, existing beyond “our responsibility, they just come here to advise and work with the village [leaders]” [B3], who would then counsel them to “accept the rules of protected forest. Those who don’t follow the rules will be fined and done with according to the government strategy” [A5]. As with the other systems, some ability to opt out of the NPA was suggested by those who considered themselves too busy tending crops to join activities or meetings. While forest communities in Laos have been observed to dispute state-sponsored enclosure of resources (Ingalls 2017) and elsewhere to reject participation in and benefits from government forest management activities to avoid legitimizing them (e.g. Myers and Muhajir 2015), it is perhaps a stretch to consider opting out in the studied case as such an exercise of agency, since this may often be a matter of simple pragmatism. Finally, although age and lack of education or ability to understand the project were stated as common barriers to participation in the NPA system, the same respondents stated that they already knew how to protect the forest. This points to separation between knowledge of the NPA as a project, perceived as out of the hands of respondents; and unspoken knowledge of the need to protect forest, that respondents may enact via everyday agency as a matter of course.

VI Conclusion

This article has applied a structure-agency lens to examine the experiences of marginal farm households in the northern Laos uplands of three distinct systems of resource

allocation, the degree to which farmers may shape their engagement with the different systems, and how agency may be enabled or disabled by this engagement. This was explored via examining participation in and perceptions of decision processes and resulting actions, the nature of interactions between actors and ability to influence decisions within the three systems, and aspects of dependence and circumstances of non-participation. Our analytical approach has sought a nuanced understanding of people's lived experiences of such interventions, thereby the everyday enablement or disablement of agency, with the aim of supporting policy that is better grounded in local realities while contributing to debates on participatory and inclusive development in the social sciences. The systems identified by respondents comprised livelihood development and poverty reduction projects, maize contract farming, and a national protected area, each reflecting in different ways how the influence and practices of different sets of actors are steered by deeply embedded structures (Leach *et al.*, 2010).

In his influential structuration theory, Giddens depicts a “dialectic of control” through which “all forms of dependence offer some resources whereby those who are subordinate can influence the activities of their superiors” (1984, 16). The extent and nature of such resources offered through the studied systems is governed by local hierarchies and, in the case of the maize system, geographical isolation and economic constraint. Critically, in these examples of everyday experiences of development and environmental policies, it appears to remain firmly the norm that knowledge production and influence over highly impactful policy decisions remain in the ambit of external actors and experts (Simmons 2007), and restricted from incorporating local knowledge and practices by the nature of institutional structures and procedures. It is difficult to view the mode of delivery of information on forest management and conservation at the time of the research as one that might foster local agency, and by extension, an inclusive model (though some respondents viewed the flow of information more positively than others), and existing local conservation knowledge and practices are thus at risk of being overlooked. On the other hand, the vocal desire among some respondents for a stronger local role in forest conservation is indicative that alternative approaches are possible, given enabling structural conditions. These conditions would first need to include varied platforms to capture the diversity of local voices in adapting, contributing to, or opposing interventions. In parallel, stronger recognition of the existing exercise of local agency in everyday livelihood practices, together with the removal of agency-disabling barriers, would allow for more direct involvement by marginal forest communities in policy processes.

The findings of this study contribute to a wider body of work on experiences of development in Southeast Asia by focusing on the nuances of agency and perceptions of

participation and inclusion in decision processes relating to resource allocation in upland Laos. These perceptions, as expressed by respondents in remote upland communities, reflect both the structural and cultural constraints of institutional hierarchy and a willing dependence on external “patrons” in exchange for resources. Li (2001) argues that there are definite tracks of power in rural landscapes and livelihoods laid by previous laws, policies, and development interventions, such as in the rules of resource allocation and access to land we have described in the two study villages. Do the interventions we have examined, with the varied dependencies and differentiated enablement of agency they foster, reduce or reinforce forms of agrarian differentiation and inequality? Although our study provides only a starting point for such questions, we consider that a more nuanced sense of agency is critical for the design of inclusive and equitable policies, which can be developed through understanding people’s everyday experiences of the interventions that affect them.

Accepted: February 19, 2019

Acknowledgments

This study was conducted under the ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC), funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The research was undertaken in collaboration with the Department of Forestry, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Laos, and Faculty of Forestry, National University of Laos. We are grateful to the directors and staff of our partner institutions for their support, to our respondents for sharing their time and insights, and reviewers for their constructive inputs. We thank Jean-Christophe Castella at Institute de Recherche pour le Développement for his contributions to the fieldwork, and Rasso Bernhard at the Laos country office of the Centre for Development and Environment, Bern University, for producing the map. Grace Y. Wong is supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency-funded GRAID program at the Stockholm Resilience Centre. Robert Cole greatly appreciated a research attachment with the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at Kyoto University while preparing the manuscript.

References

- Agarwal, B. 2001. Participatory Exclusions, Community Forestry and Gender: An Analysis for South Asia and a Conceptual Framework. *World Development* 29(10): 1623–1648.
- Baird, I. G. 2011. Turning Land into Capital, Turning People into Labour: Primitive Accumulation and the Arrival of Large-Scale Economic Land Concessions in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic. *New Proposals: Journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry* 5(1): 10–26.
- Baird, I. G.; and Shoemaker, B. 2007. Unsettling Experiences: Internal Resettlement and International Aid Agencies in Laos. *Development and Change* 38(5): 865–888.
- Bourdet, Y. 2000. *The Economics of Transition in Laos: From Socialism to ASEAN Integration*. Cheltenham-

- ham: Edward Elgar.
- Brockhaus, M.; Di Gregorio, M.; and Carmenta, R. 2014a. REDD+ Policy Networks: Exploring Actors and Power Structures in an Emerging Policy Domain. *Ecology and Society* 19(4): 29.
- Brockhaus, M.; Di Gregorio, M.; and Mardiah, S. 2014b. Governing the Design of National REDD+: An Analysis of the Power of Agency. *Forest Policy and Economics* 49: 23–33.
- Brown, K.; and Westaway, E. 2011. Agency, Capacity, and Resilience to Environmental Change: Lessons from Human Development, Well-Being and Disasters. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 36: 321–342.
- Brown, M.; and Zasloff, J. J. 1986. *Apprentice Revolutionaries: The Communist Movement in Laos, 1930–1985*. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press.
- Caouette, D.; and Turner, S. 2009. *Agrarian Angst and Resistance in Contemporary Southeast Asia*. Oxford: Routledge.
- Castella, J.-C.; and Bouahom, B. 2014. Farmer Cooperatives Are the Missing Link to Meet Market Demands in Laos. *Development in Practice* 24(2): 185–198.
- Castella, J.-C.; Lestrelin, G.; Hett, C.; Bourgoin, J.; Fitriana, Y. R.; Heinimann, A.; and Pfund, J.-L. 2013. Effects of Landscape Segregation on Livelihood Vulnerability: Moving from Extensive Shifting Cultivation to Rotational Agriculture and Natural Forests in Northern Laos. *Human Ecology* 41: 63–76.
- Cole, R.; and Ingalls, M. L. (Forthcoming). Rural Revolutions: Socialist, Market and Sustainable Development of the Countryside in Vietnam and Laos. In *The Socialist Market Economy in Asia: Development in China, Vietnam and Laos*, edited by A. Hansen, J. I. Bekkevold, and K. Nordhaug. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cole, R.; Wong, G.; Brockhaus, M.; Moeliono, M.; and Kallio, M. 2017a. Objectives, Ownership and Engagement in Lao PDR's REDD+ Policy Landscape. *Geoforum* 83: 91–100.
- Cole, R.; Wong, G.; and Bong, I. W. 2017b. *Implications of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) for Transboundary Agricultural Commodities, Forests and Smallholder Farmers*. Infobrief 178. Bogor: Center for International Forestry Research.
- Colfer, C. J. P.; and Capistrano, D., eds. 2005. *The Politics of Decentralization: Forests, Power and People*. London: Earthscan.
- De Koning, M.; Nguyen, T.; Lockwood, M.; Sengchanthavong, S.; and Phommasane, S. 2017. Collaborative Governance of Protected Areas: Success Factors and Prospects for Hin Nam No National Protected Area, Central Laos. *Conservation and Society* 15(1): 87–99.
- Drahmoune, F. 2013. Agrarian Transitions, Rural Resistance and Peasant Politics in Southeast Asia. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 32(1): 111–139.
- Emirbayer, M.; and Mische, A. 1998. What Is Agency? *The American Journal of Sociology* 103(4): 962–1023.
- Evans, G. 1995. *Lao Peasants under Socialism and Post-Socialism*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books.
- . 1988. *Agrarian Change in Communist Laos*. Occasional paper No. 85. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Évrard, O. 2011. Oral Histories of Livelihoods and Migration under Socialism and Post-Socialism among the Khmu of Northern Laos. In *Moving Mountains: Ethnicity and Livelihoods in Highland China, Vietnam and Laos*, edited by J. Michaud and T. Forsyth, pp. 76–99. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Évrard, O.; and Baird, I. G. 2017. The Political Ecology of Upland/Lowland Relationships in Laos since 1975. In *Changing Lives in Laos: Society, Politics and Culture in a Post-Socialist State*, edited by V. Bouté and V. Pholsena, pp. 165–191. Singapore: NUS Press.
- Évrard, O.; and Goudineau, Y. 2004. Planned Resettlement, Unexpected Migrations and Cultural Trauma in Laos. *Development and Change* 35(5): 937–962.

- Forsyth, T. 2009. The Persistence of Resistance: Analysing Responses to Agrarian Change in Southeast Asia. In *Agrarian Angst and Resistance in Contemporary Southeast Asia*, edited by D. Caouette and S. Turner, pp. 267–276. Oxford: Routledge.
- Friend, R. M.; and Blake, D. J. H. 2009. Negotiating Trade-Offs in Water Resources Development in the Mekong Basin: Implications for Fisheries and Fishery-Based Livelihoods. *Water Policy* 2(1): 13–30.
- Gallemore, C. T.; Dini Prasti H. R.; and Moeliono, M. 2014. Discursive Barriers and Cross-Scale Forest Governance in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. *Ecology and Society* 19(2): 18–30.
- Galvin, M.; and Haller, T., eds. 2008. *People, Protected Areas and Global Change: Participatory Conservation in Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe*. Perspectives of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South, University of Bern, Vol. 3. Bern: Geographica Bernensia.
- Giddens, A. 1984. *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Government of Lao PDR (GoL). 2003. *The Poverty Reduction Fund Manual of Operations*. Government of Lao PDR, Vientiane.
- Hall, R.; Edelman, M.; Borrás, S. M. Jr.; Scoones, I.; White, B.; and Wolford, W. 2015. Resistance, Acquiescence or Incorporation? An Introduction to Land Grabbing and Political Reactions ‘From Below’. *Journal of Peasant Studies* 42(3–4): 467–488.
- Hart, G. P.; Turton, A.; and White, B. 1989. *Agrarian Transformations: Local Processes and the State in Southeast Asia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Heinimann, A.; Hett, C.; Hurni, K.; Messerli, P.; Epprecht, M.; Jørgensen, L.; and Breu, T. 2013. Socio-economic Perspectives on Shifting Cultivation Landscapes in Northern Laos. *Human Ecology* 41(1): 51–62.
- Hett, C.; Castella, J.-C.; Heinimann, A.; Messerli, P.; and Pfund, J.-L. 2011. A Landscape Mosaics Approach for Characterizing Swidden Systems from a REDD+ Perspective. *Applied Geography* 32: 608–618.
- High, H. 2014. *Fields of Desire: Poverty and Policy in Laos*. Singapore: NUS Press.
- Hojman, D. A.; and Miranda, Á. 2017. Agency, Human Dignity and Subjective Well-Being. *World Development* 101: 1–15.
- Ibrahim, S.; and Alkire, S. 2007. Agency and Empowerment: A Proposal for Internationally Comparable Indicators. *Oxford Development Studies* 35(4): 379–403.
- Ingalls, M. L. 2017. Not Just Another Variable: Untangling the Spatialities of Power in Social-Ecological Systems. *Ecology and Society* 22(3): 20–34.
- Ingalls, M. L.; Diepart, J.-C.; Truong, N.; Hayward, D.; Neil, T.; Phomphakdy, C.; Bernhard, R.; Fogarizzu, S.; Epprecht, M.; Nanhthavong, V.; Vo, D. H.; Nguyen, D.; Nguyen, P. A.; Saphangthong, T.; Inthavong, C.; Hett, C.; and Tagliarino, N. 2018a. *State of Land in the Mekong Region*. Centre for Development and Environment, University of Bern and Mekong Region Land Governance. Bern, Switzerland and Vientiane, Lao PDR: Bern Open Publishing.
- Ingalls, M. L.; Meyfroidt, P.; To, P. X.; Kenney-Lazar, M.; and Epprecht, M. 2018b. The Transboundary Displacement of Deforestation under REDD+: Problematic Intersections between the Trade of Forest-Risk Commodities and Land Grabbing in the Mekong Region. *Global Environmental Change* 50: 255–267.
- Islam, K. K.; Jose, S.; Tani, M.; Hyakumura, K.; Krott, M.; and Sato, N. 2015. Does Actor Power Impede Outcomes in Participatory Agroforestry Approach? Evidence from Sal Forests Area, Bangladesh. *Agroforestry Systems* 89: 885–899.
- Kabeer, N. 1999. Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women’s Empowerment. *Development and Change* 30: 435–464.

- Kallio, M. H.; Hogarth, N. J.; Moeliono, M.; Brockhaus, M.; Cole, R.; Bong, I. W.; and Wong, G. Y. 2018. The Colour of Maize: Visions of Green Growth and Farmers' Perceptions in Northern Laos. *Land Use Policy* 80: 185–194.
- Kallio, M. H.; Moeliono, M.; Maharani, C.; Brockhaus, M.; Hogarth, N. J.; Daeli, W.; Tauhid, W.; and Wong, G. 2016. Information Exchange in Swidden Communities of West Kalimantan: Lessons for Designing REDD+. *International Forestry Review* 18(2): 203–217.
- Kenney-Lazar, M. 2013. Shifting Cultivation in Laos: Transitions in Policy and Perspective. Report commissioned by the Secretariat of the Sector Working Group for Agriculture and Rural Development of Lao PDR, Vientiane.
- Kerkvliet, B. J. T. 2005. *The Power of Everyday Politics: How Vietnamese Peasants Transformed National Policy*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Leach, M.; Scoones, I.; and Stirling, A. 2010. *Dynamic Sustainabilities: Technology, Environment, Social Justice*. London and New York: Earthscan.
- Lestrelin, G.; and Giordano, M. 2007. Upland Development Policy, Livelihood Change and Land Degradation: Interactions from a Laotian Village. *Land Degradation and Development* 18: 55–76.
- Li, T. M. 2001. Agrarian Differentiation and the Limits of Natural Resource Management in Upland Southeast Asia. *IDS Bulletin* 32(4): 88–94.
- Loyal, S.; and Barnes, B. 2001. “Agency” as a Red Herring in Social Theory. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 31(4): 507–524.
- Martin, A.; Myers, R.; and Dawson, N. M. 2018. The Park Is Ruining Our Livelihoods. We Support the Park! Unravelling the Paradox of Attitudes to Protected Areas. *Human Ecology* 46: 93–105.
- Michaud, J.; and Forsyth, T., eds. 2011. *Moving Mountains: Ethnicity and Livelihoods in Highland China, Vietnam and Laos*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Myers, R.; and Muhajir, M. 2015. Searching for Justice: Rights vs. “Benefits” in Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park, Indonesia. *Conservation and Society* 13(4): 370–381.
- Parkins, J. R.; and Mitchell, R. E. 2005. Public Participation as Public Debate: A Deliberative Turn in Natural Resource Management. *Society & Natural Resources* 18(6): 529–540.
- Pholsena, V.; and Banomyong, R. 2006. *Laos: From Buffer State to Crossroads?* Chiang Mai: Mekong Press.
- Rao, M.; Johnson, A.; Spence, K.; Sypasong, A.; Bynum, N.; Sterling, E.; Phimminith, T.; and Praxaysombath, B. 2014. Building Capacity for Protected Area Management in Lao PDR. *Environmental Management* 53: 715–727.
- Rigg, J. 2007. *An Everyday Geography of the Global South*. London: Routledge.
- . 2005. *Living with Transition in Laos: Market Integration in Southeast Asia*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Robichaud, W.; Marsh, C. W.; Southammakoth, S.; and Khounthikoummene, S. 2001. Review of the National Protected Area System in Lao PDR. Report. Division of Forest Resource Conservation, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Lao PDR, Vientiane.
- Schroeder, H. 2010. Agency in International Climate Negotiations: The Case of Indigenous Peoples and Avoided Deforestation. *International Environmental Agreements* 10: 317–332.
- Scott, J. C. 2009. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven: University Press.
- . 1998. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- . 1985. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- . 1976. *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*. New

- Haven: Yale University Press.
- Sen, A. 1999. *Development as Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sesan, T. 2014. Peeling Back the Layers on Participatory Development: Evidence from a Community-Based Women's Group in Western Kenya. *Community Development Journal* 49(4): 603–617.
- Sewell, W. H., Jr. 1992. A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency and Transformation. *The American Journal of Sociology* 98(1): 1–29.
- Simmons, W. M. 2007. *Participation and Power: Civic Discourse in Environmental Policy Decisions*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Singh, S. 2012. *Natural Potency and Political Power: Forests and State Authority in Contemporary Laos*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Sirivongs, K.; and Tsuchiya, T. 2012. Relationship between Local Residents' Perceptions, Attitudes and Participation towards National Protected Areas: A Case Study of Phou Khao Khouay National Protected Area, Central Lao PDR. *Forest Policy and Economics* 21: 91–100.
- Stuart-Fox, M. 1995. Laos: Towards Subregional Integration. *Southeast Asian Affairs*: 177–195.
- Thompson, J. B. 1989. The Theory of Structuration. In *Social Theory of Modern Societies: Anthony Giddens and His Critics*, edited by D. Held and J. B. Thompson, pp. 56–76. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Thu, T. P.; Moeliono, M.; Wong, G. Y.; and Brockhaus, M. (In press). The Politics of Swidden: A Case Study from Nghe An and Son La in Vietnam. *Land Use Policy*.
- Tole, L. 2010. Reforms from the Ground Up: A Review of Community-Based Forest Management in Tropical Developing Countries. *Environmental Management* 45: 1312–1331.
- Turner, S. 2012. Making a Living the Hmong Way: An Actor-Oriented Livelihoods Approach to Everyday Politics and Resistance in Upland Vietnam. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 102(2): 403–422.
- Vagneron, I.; and Kousonsavath, C. 2015. Analyzing Cross-Border Maize Trade in Huaphanh Province, Lao PDR. Northern Uplands Development Programme, Vientiane.
- Victor, B.; Fischer, E. F.; Cooil, B.; Vergara, A.; Mukolo, A.; and Blevins, M. 2013. Frustrated Freedom: The Effects of Agency and Wealth on Wellbeing in Rural Mozambique. *World Development* 47: 30–41.
- Vongvisouk, T.; Broegaard, R. B.; Mertz, O.; and Thongmanivong, S. 2016. Rush for Cash Crops and Forest Protection: Neither Land Sparing Nor Land Sharing. *Land Use Policy* 55: 182–92.
- Wong, T. 2010. Making the Mekong: Nature, Region, Postcoloniality. PhD thesis. Department of Geography, Ohio State University.

Land Use and Land Cover Changes during the Second Indochina War and Their Long-Term Impact on a Hilly Area in Laos

Nakatsuji Susumu*

Armed conflicts create drastic socioeconomic shocks that lead to land use and land cover changes in ways that are not yet well understood. Several studies have used satellite imagery to detect such changes during periods of conflict. However, there has been an insufficient examination of older conflicts before the 1970s. By examining older conflicts, we can examine the effects of conflict on land use and land cover over a long time span. This study reveals land use and land cover changes during the Second Indochina War (1960–75) and the war's immediate and long-term effects on land use and land cover by combining an analysis of aerial and satellite photographs with fieldwork. This study concludes that the war created an abnormal situation in which a large number of people from a different ethnic group came to live amongst the original inhabitants of the research site. This led to a unique farming landscape and vast areas of forest destruction. The study also reveals that forest destruction during the war was a significant milestone in the history of the vegetation of the research site, and the vegetative landscape has still not recovered to its prewar condition. These findings, as well as the results of previous research, suggest that we need to be more conscious of the effects of war on forest degradation in Laos.

Keywords: land use, shifting cultivation, Khmu, Hmong, Second Indochina War, Laos, aerial photographs, Corona satellite photographs

I Introduction

Armed conflicts create drastic socioeconomic shocks that lead to land use and land cover changes in ways that are not yet well understood. Research on conflict, land use, and land cover change is still scarce. Most research on the subject has used satellite images taken before, during, and after recent conflicts (after the 1980s) to examine and reveal the changes to land use and land cover on a regional or national scale. According to these

* 中辻 享, Faculty of Letters, Konan University, 8-9-1 Okamoto, Higashinada-ku, Kobe, Hyogo 658-8501, Japan
e-mail: nakatsuji@konan-u.ac.jp

studies, armed conflict has an extensive impact on land use and often leads to major changes in vegetation cover. In many cases conflict has been the direct or indirect cause of forest destruction. During conflicts forests are often intentionally destroyed; for example, during the Vietnam War there was widespread defoliation of the forest due to herbicidal chemical agents used in the conflict (Nakamura 2007). In some countries, militaries and guerrillas promote the production of illicit crops or the expansion of cattle ranching in their territory to increase revenue, which in the case of Colombia accounts for the majority of the country's deforestation (Álvarez 2003; Sánchez-Cuervo and Aide 2013). In the tumultuous period during and immediately after conflicts, there can be an increase in the exploitation of forest resources because weakened governments and communities often lack the stability or power necessary to effectively manage or prevent exploitation (Álvarez 2003; Stevens *et al.* 2011). Conversely, armed conflicts can also reduce land use pressure, and this can promote vegetation recovery. For example, in some cases guerrillas and paramilitaries in Colombia sought to preserve forested areas because they required these areas for shelter against air raids, water resources (Álvarez 2003), or corridors to transport weapons and drugs (Sánchez-Cuervo and Aide 2013).

In addition, large-scale population mobility is often cited as a cause of land use and land cover change during conflicts. When people flee the battlefield or are forcibly displaced by the government or military, this generates a change in land use in the battle zone and in the areas where displaced people settle. It has both positive and negative impacts on the environment. In the depopulated areas around the battlefields, vegetation recovery might take place on abandoned agricultural land and homesteads (FAO 2005, 119; Suthakar and Bui 2008; Gorsevski *et al.* 2013; Sánchez-Cuervo and Aide 2013). In the areas where displaced populations settle, there might be an increase in land use activities such as agriculture, which frequently applies pressure on the local environment, causing a reduction in forest or forest degradation (FAO 2005, 119; Stevens *et al.* 2011; Gorsevski *et al.* 2013; Sánchez-Cuervo and Aide 2013; Baumann *et al.* 2015). Displaced populations can generate land use and land cover changes far from the actual combat zone and in areas that otherwise might not have been affected by the conflict (Baumann *et al.* 2015).

Although previous studies produced valuable revelations, they had two main shortcomings. First, they did not examine conflicts before the 1970s. This shortcoming was in part due to the research methods used. As the method to reveal land use and land cover change relies mostly on an analysis and comparison of satellite imagery, research could not be conducted for the time before the 1970s, when this technology became available. However, we can research land use before the 1970s with aerial photographs

and US reconnaissance satellite photographs (such as the Corona satellite photographs). One of the advantages of examining older conflicts is that we can confirm the effects of conflict on land use and land cover over a long time span, an advantage previous research failed to make use of (*ibid.*).

Second, most previous studies did not conduct field research at their research site and did not interview the inhabitants. This was partially due to safety reasons: most of the research sites are still conflict zones, even after the signing of peace agreements. Without interviewing local inhabitants, however, we cannot understand the causes, processes, and results of land use and land cover change, because their decisions and actions are important factors (Gorsevski *et al.* 2013). Examining older conflicts again has an advantage in this regard because conflicts reduce over time, and people become more willing to talk about wartime events.

This study examines the effects of the Second Indochina War (1960–75)¹⁾ on land use and land cover in a hilly area of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR),²⁾ by interpreting aerial and satellite photographs and interviewing inhabitants of the research site who lived there during the war. The Second Indochina War is a significant event in the modern history of Laos. It was a conflict between the Royal Lao Government, backed by the United States, and the Communist Pathet Lao, backed by North Vietnam. At the end of the war, similar to the wars in Vietnam and Cambodia, the Communists succeeded with their revolution. The Pathet Lao forced the King to abdicate, and on December 2, 1975 they proclaimed the new nation as the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

The war devastated the country, leaving at least 200,000 people dead and twice as many injured from both sides. A large percentage of the population fled the battlefields, and more than half the villages in the country relocated during the war (Goudineau 1997, 10). A quarter of the population, approximately 750,000 people, became internal refugees; and 10 percent of the population, approximately 300,000 people who had supported the Royal Lao Government, fled the country at the end of the war to avoid persecution by the new government. From 1964 to 1973 the United States dropped more than two million tons of bombs on the Pathet Lao zone, or more than two tons for every inhabitant. Many of these remain in Laos as unexploded ordinance and to this day continue to cause injuries and deaths (Stuart-Fox 1997; 2010; Sutton *et al.* 2010).

Ethnic groups living in the hills suffered the most from this war. Their livelihoods depend on the production of upland rice in the hills of the northern and eastern parts of

1) This name is used as it is more inclusive than “the Vietnam War,” since the war spilled over into Laos and Cambodia (Stuart-Fox 2001, 274–275).

2) This has been the official title of the Lao state since December 2, 1975. Hereinafter, this study uses the general name of the country, “Laos,” except when referring to the state or government.

the country. For these groups neither “revolution” nor “freedom,” the battle cries of both sides of the war, was appealing. Nonetheless, they were heavily involved in the war because their land was a main part of the battlefield. They were forced to provide food and other essential supplies when military forces from either side entered their villages. Many of their villages were ordered to relocate by forces from both sides.³⁾ When they became caught up in the battles on the ground or bombed from the air if they were not killed first, they were forced to flee deeper into the hills or to refugee camps designated by the Royal Lao Government (Stuart-Fox 1997, 135–167; 2010, 207–254).

The Hmong were the worst afflicted group in this war. Some were forced to fight against the Pathet Lao as members of the “Secret Army,” which was organized following the advice and funding of the CIA. Many Hmong inhabitants near the Plain of Jars in Xiang Khuang Province (Fig. 1, later), one of the bloodiest battlefields, were involved in the war, and it has been estimated that 10 percent of the Hmong people died during the war. Following the establishment of the socialist state in 1975 and the failed revolt in 1976–78,⁴⁾ thousands of Hmong fled the country to become refugees. There were approximately 120,000 Hmong refugees, which was more than one-third of the Hmong population in Laos in the early 1970s (Stuart-Fox 1997, 135–177; 2010, 207–268).

As can be expected from the great population mobility described above, this violent war caused great land use changes in the country. Some researchers have argued that the war devastated the forests of Laos. Examining their research, it turns out that the causes of the war-related forest destruction in Laos were similar to the causes discovered for the other countries mentioned above. G. Lacombe *et al.* (2010) argue that the aerial bombardment of large areas of southern Laos directly destroyed the forest, which led to a sharp increase in runoff into the lower Mekong basin from the early 1970s, when the bombing climaxed. The war also indirectly destroyed the forest. Fujita Yayoi *et al.* (2007) conclude that throughout the 1960s and 1970s the war prevented the government from developing any consistent or coherent forest management policies, turning the forest into an open-access resource. The forest of their research was destroyed by commercial logging interests during and after the war. They also point out that the war disrupted the customary resource management systems of local communities, which enabled migrants to clear vast tracts of forest for shifting cultivation. The collapse of customary

3) The Royal Lao Government frequently relocated villages it suspected of being supportive of the Communists, into government-controlled areas (Baird and Le Billon 2012, 295).

4) This revolt was fought by the Chao Fa, fighters who were recruited from the former Hmong members of the CIA’s Secret Army. To suppress this revolt, the military of the new regime and its Vietnamese allies used artillery and air strikes, killing thousands of Hmong people (Stuart-Fox 1997, 176–177; 2010, 267–268).

resource management systems and the exploitation of forest resources in the absence of any long-term strategies by villagers and external invaders were also visible immediately after the war, as Thatheva Saphangthong and Kono Yasuyuki (2009) have demonstrated.

Massive population movements also contributed to land use and land cover changes in wartime Laos. Previous research has shown the increased land pressure and subsequent forest decline and degradation in the areas where displaced people settled. For example, Jean-Christophe Castella *et al.* (2013, 68) note the forest degradation in the remote areas of their research site after villagers fleeing the bombings and armed conflicts relocated their settlements to new areas deep inside the forest and cleared large tracts of forest vegetation for collective farming. Sithong Thongmanivong *et al.* (2005) and Fujita *et al.* (2007) examine the deforestation from the expansion of shifting cultivation, which was caused by a population increase (the population more than doubled) in the 1960s from an influx of migrants escaping wartime disruption and bombings. Mats Sandewall *et al.* (1998, 48–49) also report that in their research site most of the increases in shifting cultivation area and decreases in forestland occurred during the 1960s and 1970s rather than later. This forest loss is related to the intensive population movements during the war. Grant Evans (1995, 39–40, 80) argues that from the mid-1960s refugee mobility was the main cause of the increase in land pressure on the Vientiane Plain.⁵⁾ According to the older farmers he interviewed, since that time areas of forest that were inhabited by deer and monkeys have been destroyed. In contrast, Lacombe *et al.* (2010) argue that the wartime exodus should have regenerated the vegetation on the abandoned agricultural land.

These studies confirm that the effects of the war were significant, and it is essential to consider this to understand livelihoods, land use, and forest in Laos today (Fujita *et al.* 2007; see also Baird and Le Billon 2012). However, so far wartime land use and land cover changes have either been briefly analyzed, or analyzed with insufficient evidence. This is partially because only one or two aerial photographs or satellite images that were taken before the 1970s are used, and war-related land use and land cover changes are not visualized or quantified. This study aims to reveal the land use and land cover changes by using as many relevant photographs as possible, including aerial photographs and satellite images taken since the 1980s to examine the effects of the war over a long time span. As a result, the time span of the research is approximately 70 years, from 1945 to 2011.

To investigate the causes, processes, and effects of land use and land cover changes

5) Thirty-five thousand people relocated to Vientiane Province in 1971 alone (Evans 1995, 39).

detected from an interpretation of the photographs, this study incorporates detailed field research, including interviews with inhabitants.

II Research Site and Method

(1) *Research Site*

The research site of this study is the territory of Village A (encompassing an area of about 20 km²),⁶⁾ which is located 17 km to the south of Luang Prabang town, the largest town in northern Laos, and is part of Xiengngeun District, Luang Prabang Province (Fig. 1, Fig. 2). The main settlement area of the village is located 835 m above sea level, 400–500 m higher than the neighboring lowland villages. The population in 2014 was 222 people within 46 households, almost all of whom belonged to the Khmu ethnic group.

The Khmu are one of the main hill peoples of northern Laos. Their livelihood consists mainly of rice production by the shifting cultivation system; this is true also for the inhabitants of Village A. The significance of upland rice in their agriculture was revealed in land use research by the author in 2005: of the 99 ha of upland fields in the village, 82 ha were planted with rice mainly for subsistence,⁷⁾ 14 ha were planted with maize for animal feed, and 3 ha were cultivated with Job's tears for sale.⁸⁾ Paddies located along the stream near the village settlement (Fig. 3, later) covered only 3 ha and were managed by only seven households (Nakatsuji 2010). According to villagers, the predominance of upland rice and relatively low significance of other cash crops in their farming system did not change throughout the research period (1945–2011).

These crops have been planted in different topographies and soil types. According to the villagers, maize, chili, and peanut are well suited to the reddish soil on a karst hill⁹⁾ to the west of the village, which constitutes the highest area (Fig. 2, Fig. 3). This was confirmed by land use maps produced during the author's previous research, which demonstrated that the maize fields in 2005 and 2009 were distributed mainly on the slopes

6) Between 1994 and 1998, the boundary of Village A was demarcated by the Land Use Planning and Land Allocation program for the first time (Nakatsuji 2013b). Before that, there were no clear boundaries for most of the villages in the research site mentioned in this study.

7) Some households grew rice also for sale. According to the author's research in 2005, of the 34 households in the village, 13 sold rice to people both inside and outside the village (Nakatsuji 2010).

8) Nakatsuji Susumu (2004) describes Job's tears cultivation in the region around Village A; Ochiai Yukino (2002) discusses the reasons why this minor crop has been cultivated in a large area of northern Laos.

9) This hill is located on the south side of Phou Phaxang Noy massif mentioned in Kiernan (2009, 71–72). See also the approximate extent of limestone in Laos mapped in Kiernan (2012, 226).



Fig. 1 The Location of the Research Site

of the hill (*ibid.*; Nakatsuji 2013a). On the other hand, rice is suited to, and thus planted in, the blackish soil on the gentle slopes of the hills around the village settlement.

Each household has several plots of lands that it customarily has a right to use.¹⁰⁾ This land use right was officially admitted by the Land Use Planning and Land Allocation program implemented by the government of Xiengngeun District in 2004.¹¹⁾ There are large areas of land that are not yet allocated to anyone due to the remoteness of them. These are actually communal lands of the village, in which villagers can forage, let cattle

10) Prior to 1975, the King of Laos was considered the ultimate owner of all the land. When the Lao PDR was founded, landownership was transferred from the King to the people, represented by the state (Ducourtieux *et al.* 2005, 502). Therefore, it is more appropriate to state that villagers have land use rights on lands than that they own lands.

11) According to the author's previous research (Nakatsuji 2013b), the number of allocated plots in the Land Allocation program was usually limited to four in the lowland villages along the Khan River (Fig. 2). In contrast, no limitation was imposed on the number of allocated plots in Village A due to the large area and small population of the village. Villagers were allocated as many plots of land as they wished to have, if they could afford to pay tax for them.

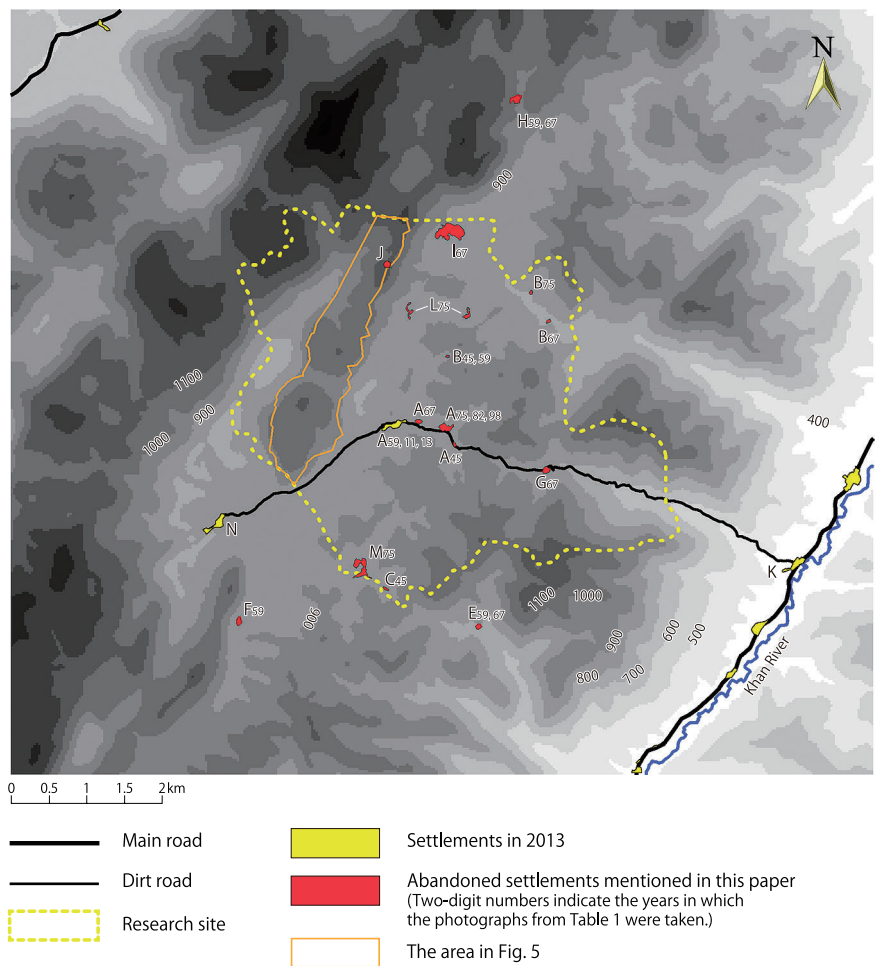


Fig. 2 Research Site

Sources: Photointerpretation by the author, DSM data from National Geographic Department, Laos.
(For color version of this figure, see the online version of this article.)

room, get timber for building, and even make fields if they are not reluctant to walk a long distance to farm. The upper land of the karst hill studied in detail below is also in this kind of area.

(2) Method

(a) Interpretation of Aerial Photographs and Satellite Images

Table 1 illustrates the aerial photographs and satellite images used in this study and previous research. To reveal changes in land use and land cover during wartime and

Table 1 Aerial Photographs and Satellite Images Used in This Paper and Previous Research

Year Taken	Type of Photo	Origin	Sandewall <i>et al.</i> 2001	Sithong <i>et al.</i> 2005	Thatheva and Kono 2009	Castella <i>et al.</i> 2013	This Paper	For Photos in This Paper		
								Resolution	Date Taken	Remarks
1945	Aerial, b/w	United States					○	3 m	Feb. 6	Contains oblique photographs
1952	Aerial, b/w	France		○						
1953	Aerial, b/w	France	○							
1959	Aerial, b/w	United States					○	1 m	Feb. 7, Feb. 8	
1967	Satellite (Corona)	United States	○				○	3 m	Feb. 24, May 16	3 images in total
1973	Satellite (KH-9)	United States			○					
1973	Satellite (Landsat)	United States				○				
1975	Satellite (KH-9)	United States					○	6–9 m	Dec. 19, Dec. 26	7 images in total
1979	Satellite (Landsat)	United States				○				
1981	Aerial, b/w	Soviet Union		○						
1982	Aerial, b/w	Soviet Union	○		○		○	1 m	Feb. 24	
1988	Satellite (Landsat)	United States				○				
1989	Satellite (SPOT)	Sweden-France	○							
1996	Aerial, b/w	Finland	○							
1998	Aerial, b/w	Japan		○			○	1 m	Dec. 12	
1999	Aerial, b/w	Japan			○					
2000	Satellite (Landsat)	United States		○						
2003	Satellite (Landsat)	United States				○				
2007	Satellite (Landsat)	United States				○				
2009	Satellite (Landsat)	United States				○				
2011	Satellite (WV-2)	United States					○	0.5 m	Nov. 14	
2013	Aerial, color	Finland					○	0.5 m	Jan.	Orthorectified
Total of years researched			5	4	3	6	8			

their long-term effects, this study gathered as many old photographs of the research site as possible. For photographs and images before the 1970s (which were indispensable for analyzing changes in land use and land cover during wartime), this study uses images taken in four different years, whereas previous research used images taken in two or fewer years.

In total, this study uses photographs and images from eight different years over a time span of nearly 70 years. The aerial photographs of 1945 and 1959 were obtained from the National Archives and Records Administration of the United States, and the images from 1982, 1998, and 2013 were obtained from the National Geographic Department of Laos. These were not hard-copy prints but digital formatted scans to realize a higher resolution.

Three Corona satellite photographs from 1967 and seven KH-9 satellite photographs from December 1975 were obtained from the United States Geological Survey. Although their resolution was lower than the aerial photographs, they provided valuable data on land use and land cover in the 1960s and 1970s that was not available from the aerial images.

For the analysis of more recent land use and vegetation, this study used both high-resolution satellite images taken by WorldView-2 in 2011 and aerial photographs from 2013.

These photographs and images were orthorectified using the 2013 photographs as references,¹²⁾ and the land use—including settlements, paddies, and upland fields—was digitized to reveal the distribution and area of each type at each point in time. When detecting the types of land use, cross-checks were possible because there were usually other overlapping photographs available for the same point in time. For 1945, in addition to the usual vertical photographs, oblique photographs were available; these were also useful in detecting and verifying the different types of land use.

As a result, the settlements and fields of the research site were digitized for seven points in time: 1945, 1959, 1967, 1975, 1982, 1998, and 2011.¹³⁾ Fig. 3 (later) and Table 2 (later) show land use in 2005, data for which was gathered by the author's GPS survey conducted in that year (Nakatsuji 2010).

12) The 2013 aerial photographs were already orthorectified by the National Geographic Department, which stated that the pixel size was 50 cm and the locational accuracy of the pixels was 1–2 m on flat areas (Lao PDR, National Geographic Department 2014). Due to this high accuracy, they were used as reference images to orthorectify older aerial and satellite photographs for this research.

13) From the aerial photographs of 1945, 1959, and 1982, only the detection of upland fields in the previous years (1944, 1958, and 1981) was possible because these photographs were all taken in February, when field preparation for the current year was not complete (Table 1).

In addition to changes in land use, changes in vegetation were also assessed—mainly on a 2.24 km² area of the upper part of the karst hill to the west of the settlement of Village A (Fig. 2). Vegetation and land use for each point in time were classified into four categories: forest, bush, grass, and field. The first three categories were classified in accordance with the Modified UNESCO Classification (MUC) (The GLOBE Program 2000). Forest in this research corresponds to “trees” in the MUC system, in which more than 40 percent of the site is covered by a canopy of trees that are at least 5 meters tall. It includes both primary forest and old fallows in the research site. Bush corresponds to “shrubland” in the MUC, in which more than 40 percent of the ground is covered by clumped woody plants 0.5 to 5 meters tall. In the research site, it usually refers to two- to six-year fallows consisting mainly of trees. Grass corresponds to “herbaceous vegetation” in the MUC, in which ground coverage of herbaceous vegetation is greater than 60 percent. It usually refers to one- to three-year fallows in the research site. Some places retain grass or bush for longer periods, for burning or animal grazing or because the soil becomes exhausted from continuous cultivation on the same land. The upper land on the karst hill is also a place where vegetation recovery has been delayed due to such reasons.

From 2012, during exploration in and around the research site, the author observed and recorded the types of vegetation in several areas. By examining how the vegetation of these places looked in the satellite images of 2011 and the aerial photographs of 2013, the author improved his ability to accurately detect vegetation types from aerial and satellite images. In the Corona and KH-9 satellite photographs, however, it was difficult to differentiate between forests and bush due to their low resolution (Fig. 5, later).

(b) Field Survey

The field data used in this study was collected mainly in February and September 2015 and February 2016, although some data was collected from earlier research as the author began research in Village A in 2005. Interviews were conducted with inhabitants in and around the research site to obtain information on its historical development and changes in demography, livelihoods, and land use. As for the abandoned villages of the research site, most of them were visited and information on them—such as demography, periods of existence, and reasons for abandonment—was collected by interviewing older people who remembered them.

For demographic data, the number of households in the villages was determined for each year that the aerial photographs and satellite images were taken. For Khmu villages, the numbers of households in 1961, 1963, and 1975 were determined and then those in 1959 and 1967 were estimated from the results. This is because important events

occurred at the research site in these years¹⁴⁾ and thus interviewees could easily recall these years. The numbers of households in the Hmong villages in 1967 and 1975 were determined from an interview with an elderly Hmong man who had resided in Village J during that period (see footnote 33).

For the number of households in 1982, the study used the number of houses noted on the 1:100,000 topographical map as it was produced in 1983 by the National Geographic Department in Laos using aerial photographs from 1982. The numbers of households for the years after 1998 were acquired from population statistics developed by the government office of Xiengngeun District.

Data on the population for the years after 1998 was also acquired from the statistics. The population for the years before 1982 was calculated by multiplying the number of households by the number of persons per household. For Khmu households, the average number of persons per household in 1998 (6.8) was used to estimate the population in the previous years. For Hmong households, eight persons per household was assumed to estimate the figures in 1967 and 1975.¹⁵⁾

III Results

(1) *Changes in Population and Land Use*

Fig. 3 shows bird's-eye views of the settlements, upland fields, and paddies in each year, while Table 2 illustrates the relationship between the number of households and the area of the fields for each year. With these measurements, alongside the local interviews, the history of the demographic and land use changes of the research site can reasonably be divided into three periods: prewar (1945–59), wartime (1960–75), and postwar (1976–present).

(a) Prewar Period (1945–59)

During this period there were three Khmu villages at the research site: Village A, Village B, and Village C. Village A and Village B are older villages, and no one was certain about the dates of their establishment. These villages existed in both 1945 and 1959, although

14) In 1961 and 1963 villagers in Village A and Village B moved from and returned to the research site, respectively (this is discussed below). In 1975 the Communist revolution succeeded and the new state was created. For 1961, the number of households recalled by the interviewees was verified by aerial photographs taken in 1959, which had such a high resolution that the number of houses in each village could be counted.

15) This supposition was based on Keen (1978, 221), in which he guessed eight persons per household may well be the right figure for the Hmong in Thailand overall.

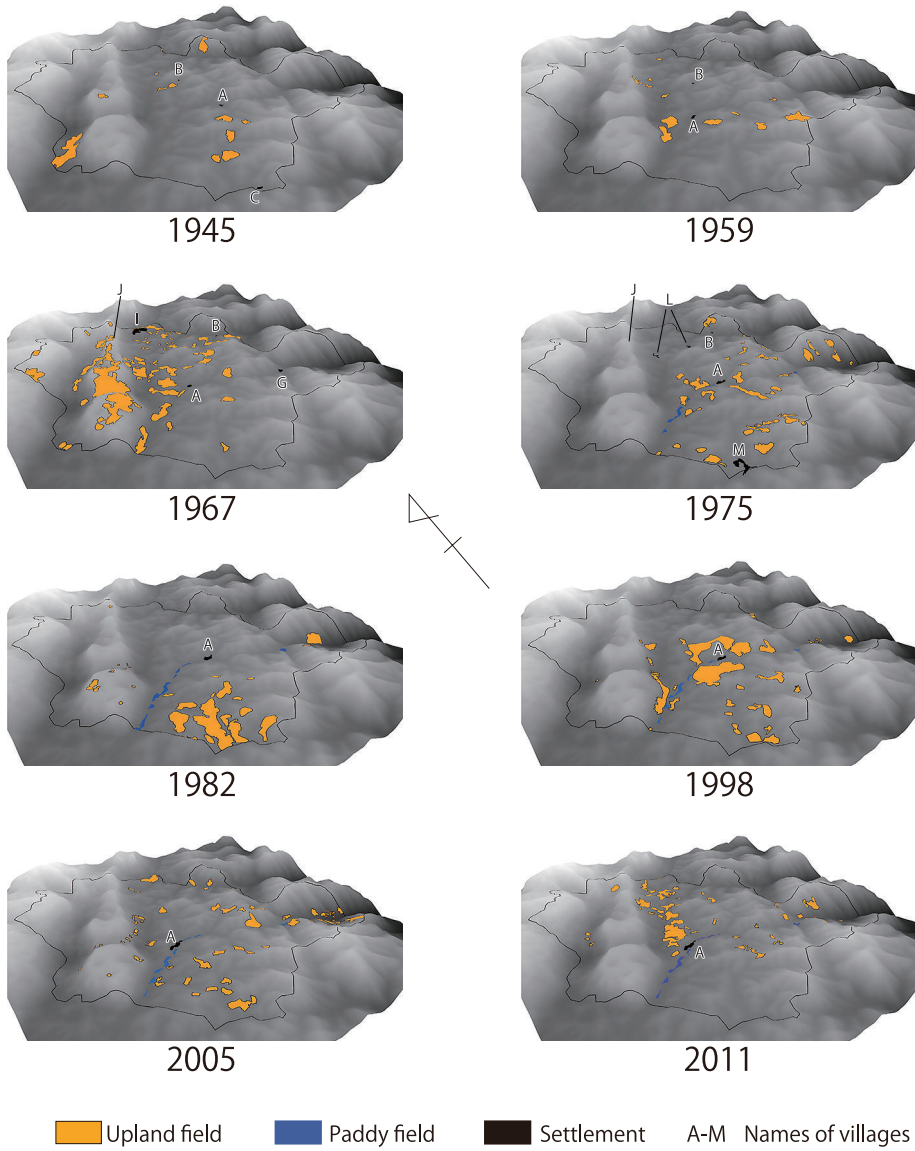


Fig. 3 Changes in Land Use in the Research Site (1945–2011)

Sources: Photointerpretation by the author, DSM data from National Geographic Department, Laos.

Notes: 1) Fields in 2005 were surveyed by the author with GPS in that year.

2) The location of Village J was not identified by photointerpretation but by exploration with a native guide.

3) Village L consisted of two settlements located close to each other.

(For color version of this figure, see the online version of this article.)

Table 2 Villages, Households, and Fields at Each Point in Time

Year	No. of Villages			No. of Households			Population	Population Density (Inhabitants/sq. km.)	Upland Fields (ha)		Paddies (ha)
	Total	Khmu	Hmong	Total	Khmu	Hmong			Total	Per Household	
1945	3	3	0	-	-	0	-	-	43	-	0.0
1959	2	2	0	22	22	0	150	8	33	1.5	0.0
1967	5	3	2	150	30	120	1,164	58	221	1.5	0.0
1975	5	2	3	57	33	24	416	21	84	1.5	4.0
1982	1	1	0	42	38	4	286	14	76	1.8	8.6
1998	1	1	0	67	67	0	457	23	132	2.0	5.2
2005	1	1	0	34	34	0	223	11	99	2.9	6.3
2011	1	1	0	42	42	0	232	12	90	2.1	6.3

Sources: Photointerpretation by the author, interviews by the author, population statistics from the local government.
Notes: 1) Fields in 2005 were surveyed by the author with GPS in that year.

2) No. of households and population in 2011 is from data collected in October 2012.

3) For the method of deducing the population before 1982, see section titled "Field Survey."

4) Upland fields in 1945, 1959, and 1982 are actually those in the previous year (footnote 13).

Village A had moved 800 m to the west in the interim period.

Village C was built at the beginning of the 1940s by migrants from a village 10 km to the southwest. Due to a disease outbreak in 1956, the village then relocated 1 km to the southeast, outside of the research site (Village E in Fig. 2).

The number of households in 1959 was estimated by interviewees and verified by aerial photographs: 17 in Village A and 5 in Village B. The number of households in 1945 is unknown, although it was estimated that there were approximately 30 households in the three villages at that time.

(b) Wartime (1960–75)

The circumstances of the research site changed dramatically in 1961. By order of the Royal Lao Army, Village A and Village B were relocated to Village D, which is 10–11 km to the north of the two villages. This occurred immediately after a surprise attack by the Royal Lao Army on Village F (Fig. 2), where two Pathet Lao soldiers were living.¹⁶⁾ The relocation was to prevent villagers supporting Pathet Lao soldiers who might still enter the research site.¹⁷⁾ After the attack, a Royal Lao Army base was built near the northeastern border of the research site.¹⁸⁾ These actions could be interpreted as an effort to destroy the influence of the Pathet Lao in this region.

In 1963 both villages returned from Village D to the research site, but because both of the original settlements had been burned by the Royal Lao Army, new ones were built. From the old site, Village A and Village B were rebuilt 300 m to the east and 1.4 km to the east, respectively. Simultaneously, seven households from Village E, which had also relocated to Village D in 1961, left and migrated to the research site. Two of these joined the new Village A, and the other five built Village G, 1.8 km to the east of the new Village A site. As a result, there were about 30 Khmu households in the three villages in 1963.

At the beginning of the 1960s, there was also a massive inflow of settlers and more than 100 Hmong households migrated to the research site around 1962–63. They came from villages 20–50 km to the southeast of Village A, after fleeing a severe assault by the Pathet Lao army. At first they attempted to settle in Village H,¹⁹⁾ a Hmong village to the north of the research site (Fig. 2), but the village did not have enough space for the

16) In this battle, six civilian residents of Village F died while the two soldiers survived. All the survivors subsequently abandoned the village and fled to villages to the north.

17) According to the older villagers, residents of Village A supported the Pathet Lao Army and most of them were on its side during the war.

18) The base existed for five years. In 1964 another base was built 700 m to the southeast of Village A (at that time) to defend the region against the Pathet Lao.

19) According to a Hmong man who had lived in Village J, Village H was abandoned in 1974 and, like the Hmong migrants, most of the residents went to Thailand.

number of migrants. Therefore, they built their own village, Village I, 2 km to the south, at the foot of the karst hill (Fig. 2, Fig. 3).²⁰⁾ In addition, around 1964–65 five Hmong households migrated from a village 20 km south to build Village J²¹⁾ on the karst hill (Fig. 2, Fig. 3). According to a former inhabitant of Village J, there were 100 households in 1967 in Village I and 20 in Village J. Together with the Khmu households, this brought the total number of households within the research site in 1967 to 150.

This population increase was reflected in the size of upland fields: in 1967 the latter suddenly increased to 221 ha, which historically was by far the largest size of the fields (Fig. 3, Fig. 4). Characteristic of the land use in 1967 was the distribution of upland fields, and this was the only year that the upper area of the karst hill in the west of the research site was extensively cultivated. In the other years studied, unlike the lower slopes at the foot of the hill, this area was rarely cultivated. The reason for this will be discussed in the next section.

Another change that occurred in the mid-1960s was the creation of paddies, which was started by the Khmu in Village A. Creation of rice paddies was popular at the time among villages on the floodplain of the Khan River (Fig. 2), and this inspired the residents of Village A to create paddies along the streams of the highlands (Fig. 3). This may have been done also because of the population increase during this period and the subsequent land scarcity.²²⁾

Between 1968 and 1972, the region around the research site was occasionally bombed. The targets were the Pathet Lao and Vietnamese forces that hid in the forests and campaigned in the region for their revolution. Consequently, by order of the Royal

20) It is unknown whether they selected the resettlement location by themselves or were advised by the government or the military. We can only surmise that their resettlement might have been related to the efforts of the Royal Lao Government to strengthen its control over the region around the research site. This supposition is based on the fact that these Hmong sympathized with the government. As mentioned below, when the new Communist government was formed in 1975, many of them crossed the Mekong River into Thailand while others even participated in a revolt against the new regime during 1977 and 1978. It is possible that they were “strategically” resettled (Fujita *et al.* 2007, 82) under the direction of the Royal Lao Government to strengthen its control over the region.

21) This village was not identified by photointerpretation but by exploration with a native guide. The author identified traces of house floors, leveled by digging, at the location shown in Fig. 2 and Fig. 3. These traces are typical of abandoned Hmong villages, as Hmong traditionally build houses directly on the ground, while other groups, such as the Khmu, build houses with raised floors.

22) An elderly man in Village A stated that 100 households could earn a living through shifting cultivation on the land of Village A (the research site). However, in the mid-1960s the number of households in the site greatly exceeded 100. Thus, paddy creation could be interpreted as a strategy by the villagers to solve the problem of land scarcity through an intensification of agriculture. According to the author’s 2005 survey, the harvest from paddies in Village A was 2.7 tons per hectare, while that from upland rice fields was 1.2 tons per hectare (Nakatsuji 2010).

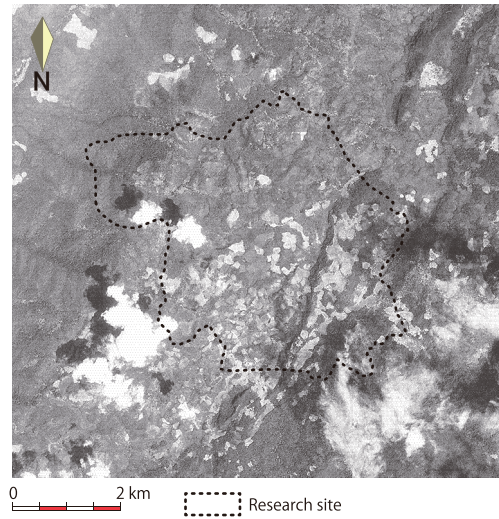


Fig. 4 The Corona Satellite Photograph of 1967
Source: Corona satellite photograph obtained from USGS.

Lao Government, the residents of Village A were again forced to relocate in 1971, to Village K in the lowlands along the Khan River (Fig. 2).²³⁾ This was partially to evacuate the villagers from the battlefield and partially to eliminate any possible connection with the Pathet Lao. However, the villagers remained in Village K for only one year, returning to the research site in 1972.²⁴⁾

By the mid-1970s, after the ceasefire agreement was signed in 1973 and after the Pathet Lao seized power in 1975, most of the Hmong had left the research site. Many of them went to Thailand, while others returned to their home villages where they had lived before the war. Village I could not be discerned from the KH-9 satellite images of December 1975. Only the Hmong villages of Village L²⁵⁾ and Village M could be discerned in that image, and each of these villages contained only about 10 households (Fig. 3).

23) From 1969 to 1972, the area between Xiengngeun and Muang Nan, which includes the lowlands along the Khan River, was designated as a refugee relocation site. A 60 km roadway connecting Xiengngeun with Muang Nan was constructed, along which 3,700 internal refugees from across northern Laos settled in 18 villages and received aid including food, clothing, building materials, and other essentials (Embassy of the USA 1972). It appears that due to their relocation to this area, the residents of Village A were also treated as internal refugees and received aid.

24) Around this time, by order of the Royal Lao Government, all of the five households in Village G moved to Village A. According to the older men in Village A today, the government promoted village consolidation because it felt that the villagers were more likely to support and assist the Pathet Lao if their villages remained small and dispersed.

25) This village had two settlements, but one chief governed both of them.

These villages were built by the former residents of Village I and Village J, existed for a few years, and by 1977 were abandoned.²⁶⁾

(c) Postwar Period (1976–Present)

After December 1975 the research site was gradually integrated into the structure of the new socialist regime. The new government, like the former leaders, promoted village consolidation through the relocation of small villages to larger ones in order to govern rural areas more easily and effectively. Around 1976, eight Khmu households from Village B moved to Village A by order of the new government. There were four Hmong households still living in Village J after the other Hmong households had left the research site. These households were registered as residents of Village A in 1978 and moved to this settlement in 1982.²⁷⁾ As a result, after 1982 there was only one village left at the research site.²⁸⁾

After the formation of the new regime, in the late 1970s there was resistance to the new government across the country. In 1977 the former Hmong members of the Royal Lao Army, the Chao Fa, revolted against the new regime in the highlands to the west of the research site.²⁹⁾ During this battle some residents of Village A took refuge for one month in the lowland Village K³⁰⁾ (Fig. 2). The government ruthlessly suppressed the revolt in 1978, and since then there has been no conflict in this region.

During peacetime the number of households in Village A continued to rise in the 1980s and 1990s, reaching 67 in 1998, when the area of upland fields was 132 ha. This was the second-highest rate in both demography and land use.

However, many households left Village A between 2000 and 2004 to live in lowland villages such as Village K, and in 2005 the number of households in Village A dropped by

26) Despite supposed land pressure and forest degradation resulting from the Hmong's migration, no conflict between the original Khmu and the Hmong migrants was mentioned in the interviews. According to the elderly men in Village A, several Khmu people were hired as wage laborers in the Hmong opium fields. Some Khmu even had friendly relations with the Hmong, and they held feasts together on special occasions. The generosity of the Hmong was often discussed: they gave rice, vegetables, or even small pigs as gifts if requested by their Khmu friends.

27) The Hmong households left Village A; the last household left in 1992.

28) Similar incidents of village consolidation in Nan District, the neighboring district of Xiengngeun District, were depicted also by Sandewall *et al.* (1998, 33), in which the authors stated that the government urged those who were living in scattered small hamlets to move into any solid villages based on their own preference.

29) According to older men in Village A, residents in Village L and Village M also became members of Chao Fa and fought in the revolt. This revolt is discussed in Stuart-Fox (1997, 176–177; 2010, 267–268), and Sandewall *et al.* (1998, 34).

30) Only the elderly, young, infirm, and injured took refuge during this time, according to an elderly man in Village A.

50 percent to 34. This was caused partially by conflict and division within the village and partially by the villagers' desire for infrastructure, such as electricity, available in the lowlands (Nakatsuji 2010). Notwithstanding this major decline, the population has since recovered: in 2011 there were 42 households, and in 2014 there were 46.³¹⁾

Village A relocated only once during the postwar period. The village moved 600 m to the west in 2005, partially due to many successive deaths in the old village (which villagers associated with an evil spirit living close by) and partially because of the government order to move to the current location.³²⁾

(2) *Land Use of the Hmong*

As mentioned above, land use in 1967 was quite characteristic in terms of coverage and distribution. This year had the largest area of upland fields, and unlike other years, the upper land on the karst hill in the west of the research site was largely cultivated. This is considered representative of the Hmong's land use because 80 percent of the households in 1967 were Hmong whereas the Khmu accounted for most or all of the households living in the research site in the other years (Table 2).

Based on the statements of an elderly Hmong man who had previously lived in Village J, their characteristic land use can be analyzed in detail.³³⁾ According to this man, the most important crops when he lived in Village J were rice, opium poppy, and maize, and fields of each were planted in different places. Among the three crops rice was the staple food, and he cultivated 2 ha of it every year for his household, which had more than 10 members at that time. It was cultivated on the slopes of the hills between Village A and Village I or at the foot of the karst hill.

On the other hand, opium and maize were planted on the upper land of the karst hill, as these crops, unlike rice, suited the reddish soil found on the hill. Furthermore, the

31) In 2005 the area of upland fields per household had one of the highest rates (Table 2). This was because 18 former residents of Village A continued their shifting cultivation of rice on the land of Village A after relocating to Village K (Nakatsuji 2010). By doing this, they increased the area of upland fields (the numerator) without increasing the number of households living in the research site (the denominator). In 2011, 17 residents from Village K cultivated upland fields of rice on the land of Village A.

32) The government ordered the relocation of Village A under a policy to merge Village A with the neighboring Village N (Fig. 2). The new location had enough space for all the residents of both villages to build homes. However, this policy was not realized because residents of Village N refused to move.

33) This man was born in 1949 and in 1967 fled from the battle around his home village and migrated to Village J. In 1978 he was registered as a resident of Village A, and he lived there until 1992. When interviewed in 2016, he lived in a village close to Village A and was one of the few former Hmong residents still living in the neighborhood.

topography was suitable for opium cultivation as there were depressions or valleys in the upper area of the hill where fog often accumulated. Opium was then a high-priced cash crop and was usually cultivated in two fields of about 0.2 ha each. The interviewee carried his opium harvest on his back to sell at a local market in Luang Prabang town.³⁴⁾

Maize was planted on the ridges and upper slopes of the hill, which were unsuitable for opium. The main variety planted was for pigs' feed, *sali khaw* in the Lao language, although varieties for human consumption were also planted. The area of cultivation was as large as 2–3 ha, as this villager needed a large quantity of feed for his pigs, which, not counting the piglets, usually numbered 50–60. He sold 10–20 pigs per year to his neighbors, and together with opium they were a good source of income. Every household in Village I and Village J engaged in this kind of pig rearing and maize cultivation at the time.

This information demonstrated that the fields on the upper land of the karst hill in 1967 were planted mainly with opium and maize, and they contributed to the size of the agricultural area. As mentioned above, the Khmu in Village A also knew that the reddish soil on the ridges and slopes of the karst hill suited maize rather than rice and so they planted maize on the lower slopes of the hill. However, their cultivation of maize was never as extensive as the Hmong's, and they rarely planted it on the ridges or upper slopes. This is because they did not invest in pig rearing and did not plant feed crop on the upper land of the hill as it was more than 100 m higher in altitude than Village A and reaching it required a steep climb. Their cultivation of opium poppy was also minimal, even before the complete ban on its cultivation in the mid-1990s. This explains why the upper land of the karst hill was rarely used other than in 1967.

As previous research has already pointed out (Kunstadter and Chapman 1978; Cooper 2008), opium, maize, and rice are indispensable to the Hmong economy, and the Hmong prefer the reddish soil on the high-level karst hills for cultivating the former two crops. This study has been able to demonstrate the difference in land use between the two ethnic groups by comparing land use maps at various points in time.

(3) *Changes in Vegetation*

This sub-section is an investigation of how the changes in land use affected vegetation over short and long time spans. By reviewing the above-mentioned land on the karst

34) According to Paul Cohen (2017, 580), "opium production in the uplands of Laos increased significantly during the 1950s and 1960s due to protection and distribution by the Royal Lao Government and the growth in the 1960s of the heroin market among United States troops in Vietnam" (see also Stuart-Fox 2001, 88–89). The growing of opium was legal in the 1960s. In 1971 the government banned opium consumption in response to US pressure, "but it could do little about production, which was mainly in areas beyond its jurisdiction" (*ibid.*; see also Cohen 2017, 580).

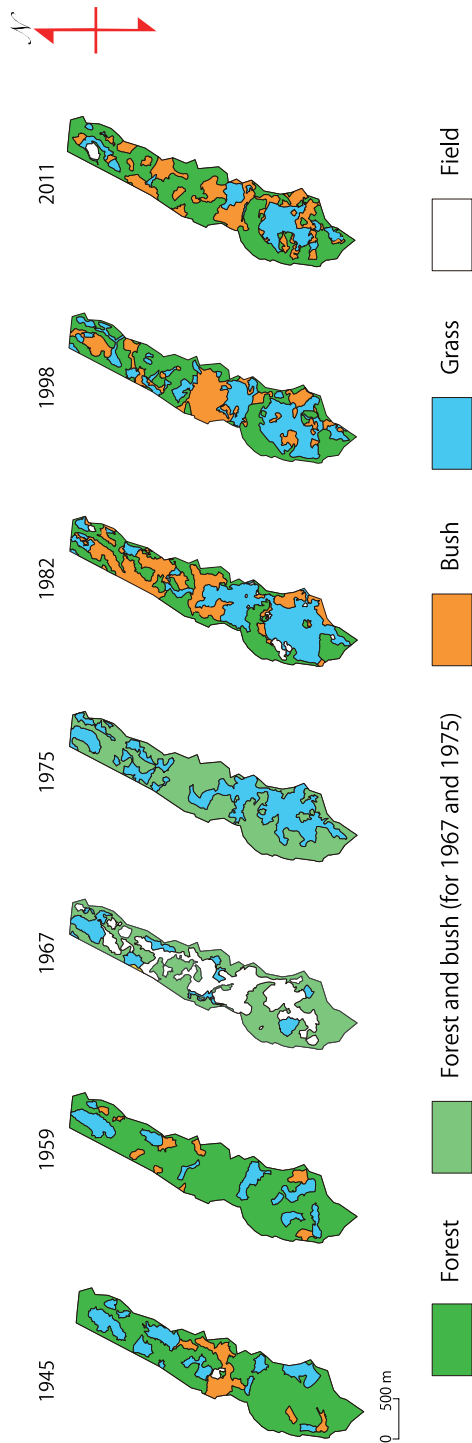


Fig. 5 Changes in Vegetation and Land Use on the Karst Hill in the Research Site (1945–2011)
Source: Photointerpretation by the author.
(For color version of this figure, see the online version of this article.)

Table 3 Changes in Ratio of Each Vegetation and Land Use on the Karst Hill in Village A (%)

Year	1945	1959	1967	1975	1982	1998	2011
Forest	71	78	54	65	35	42	55
Bush	10	6			27	26	26
Grass	18	16	11	35	36	32	18
Field	1	0	35	0	2	0	1

Source: Photointerpretation by the author.

hill, the effects of land use by the Hmong can be understood. Fig. 5 illustrates the vegetation and land use of the 2.24 km² area of the upper land of the hill (Fig. 2) at seven different points in time between 1945 and 2011, while Table 3 indicates the percentages of vegetation and land use at each point. This data suggests the following points.

First, we can deduce that Hmong land use in the 1960s caused deforestation on a much greater scale than at any other point in time. Although the land was never left completely idle, it was rarely used in both 1945 and 1959, and this created a high rate of above 70 percent forest vegetation. However, by 1967 a significant amount of the land that had been covered by forest in 1959 was being used as fields or had turned into grass vegetation. Between these years, the rate of arboreal vegetation (forest and bush) declined by 30 percent. Older men in Village A confirmed the deforestation in the 1960s. According to them, the majority of forests on the hill were cleared for the first time by Hmong migrants. They added that the old forests within the research site had reduced during this time because of this pioneering land use.³⁵⁾

The forest-destructive and resource-exploitative nature of Hmong's land use has often been cited in previous research. Hmong were engaged in pioneer shifting cultivation, preferring to clear primeval forests that had never been cut down. They continuously cultivated opium, depleting nutrients in the soil, which led to fallow land covered with *Imperata cylindrica* that delayed forest regeneration; and they relocated their village every 6–15 years to clear old forests, leaving very little forest behind them (Keen 1978; Kunstadter and Chapman 1978; Cooper 2008). In this study, these characteristics of land use appeared more extensively because more than 100 Hmong households from several villages gathered to live in one area due to the war.³⁶⁾

Second, there was a high predominance of grassland (more than 30 percent) between the 1970s and 1990s and bush (more than 25 percent) between the 1980s and first decade of the twenty-first century. The first reason for this was the resource-exploitative land use of the Hmong. As mentioned above, their continuous cultivation of opium and maize led to fallow lands covered with *Imperata cylindrica* that delayed forest regeneration (Keen 1978; Kunstadter and Chapman 1978; Cooper 2008). The slow forest recovery was discussed by the inhabitants of Village A. Regenerated trees on the karst hill

35) In addition to the pioneering agriculture of the Hmong, the need to construct more than 100 new houses must have been a major cause of forest destruction in the 1960s. Traditional Hmong houses use a lot of trees to make pillars, beams, and, for wealthier houses, walls (Cooper 2008, 33).

36) Usually villages of the Hmong do not have such a large number of households. According to research in western Tak in Thailand (Keen 1978, 210), there were 25 Hmong villages in Tak in 1963, the population was 10,000, and so there was an average population of 400 people per village. Keen analyzed a village of this size (400 population) and established that there were 28 households, made up of an average of 14 people per household.

remained thin even decades after the last cultivation of opium and maize by the Hmong.³⁷⁾

The demand for grass to make thatch was another reason why the grassland south of the hill was extended and maintained between the 1970s and 1990s. According to a man in Village A, in the 1960s most of the southern part of the hill had been cultivated with opium and maize for four or five successive years. After that, following two or three years of fallow period, *Imperata cylindrica* covered most of the area. As this type of grass is a good material for thatching houses, barns, and huts, residents of Village A have maintained the grassland ever since and designated it as communal land, so all residents have the right to gather grass. In April every year, the grassland is burned to maintain the grass vegetation and promote the growth of young leaves.

Another reason for the high levels of grassland was continued opium cultivation. In 1982 small fields of opium and maize were formed in the south of the hill (Fig. 5), and four Hmong households still lived in the research site at this time. They continued to cultivate opium and taught the cultivation methods to some of the Khmu households. The expansion of grass vegetation in the late 1970s and early 1980s is partially attributed to this continued opium cultivation.³⁸⁾

Third, the grasslands have gradually reduced since the 1990s, and by 2011 the forest had increased to cover more than half the area once again. Overall, this vegetation

37) This slow vegetation recovery might be attributed to soil erosion, decrease in soil productivity, and water deficiency caused by unreasonably intensive land use in a karst environment. As Peng Jian *et al.* (2012, 832) explain, the “karst eco-environmental system is fragile and usually featured by low environmental capacity, high sensitivity to external interruption, and poor self-recovery capability.” In southwest China, irrational, intensive land use in a karst environment has caused a high-profile environmental problem called “karst rocky desertification.” In Guizhou Province alone, 35,000 km² was ravaged by this kind of desertification that is characterized by rapid soil loss, widely exposed bedrocks, decreasing land productivity, and fast expansion of a desert-like landscape (Wang *et al.* 2004). According to Wang S.J. *et al.* (*ibid.*, 120), ecological restoration of secondary forest on karst rocky desertified land takes 30–35 years, even if human activities such as livestock grazing and fuel gathering are eliminated from the site. On the environment and land use similar to the research site, Kevin Kiernan (1987; 2010, 514–515) demonstrated severe soil loss from karst in an opium poppy field in northern Thailand. He also argued that aerial bombardment and devegetation during the war in Cambodia between 1965 and 1978 had triggered severe, widespread, and long-lasting damage on the karst environment in the south of the country (Kiernan 2010). It is likely that similar land degradation could have occurred from intensive land use on the karst hill in the research site. This needs careful scrutiny.

38) As mentioned above, the Khmu do not prefer to plant rice and maize on the upper land of the karst hill. However, a few households planted these crops occasionally and contributed to the predominance of grass and bush vegetation. Fig. 3 illustrates the fields to the north of the hill in 2011. These were upland rice fields of two Khmu households.

recovery was a result of the lower demand for land use on the hill, which was partially because no residents had cultivated opium on the land since the mid-1990s when a complete opium ban was enforced.³⁹⁾ It was also partially due to a reduction in demand for *Imperata cylindrica* after the increase in tile and zinc roofing.⁴⁰⁾

Nevertheless, the vegetation has never recovered to the levels of the 1940s and 1950s, before the Hmong's arrival in the area. Their arrival was a turning point in the vegetation history of the research site. In 1959, 75 percent of fields on the upper land of the hill that they farmed in 1967 were covered in forest vegetation. The vegetation has not fully recovered to its former state. In 2011 only 31 percent of the fields of 1967 had returned to forest vegetation, and the remainder was grass or bush vegetation.

IV Discussion

In this section, the characteristics of land use during wartime are compared to both pre- and postwar periods. After that, the immediate and long-term effects of changes in land use and land cover during wartime are discussed.

First, during wartime the settlements of the research site were built, moved, or abandoned far more frequently and dynamically than during other periods. This drastically changed the population and land use of the research site. Typical examples of the settlement dynamics were the relocation of the two Khmu villages to a lowland village between 1961 and 1963 and the inflow and outflow of more than 100 Hmong households in the 1960s and 1970s. The inflow of Hmong changed the land use both quantitatively and qualitatively, due to their large population size and their cultural differences from the original Khmu residents on the site.

The characteristics of the settlement dynamics of this period are closely correlated to the war. In the case of the two examples above, the former was a forced relocation by the government of the time to prevent residents from supporting and assisting the

39) The first legal measures to outlaw opium production in the Lao PDR were carried out in 1996, and after that the government swiftly and strictly implemented the opium eradication policy with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. In 2005 the total area planted with opium (1,800 ha) was only 7 percent of the 1998 figure (Cohen 2017, 581–582; Ducourtieux *et al.* 2017, 603–604).

40) Cattle grazing, which started in parts of the karst hill in 2005, was a factor in the changes in vegetation and land use. For example, because cattle like the young leaves of *Imperata cylindrica*, this grass declined, whereas *Chromolaena odorata* became more abundant on grazing land. This vegetation change allowed some villagers to cultivate the land because *Chromolaena odorata* grassland is much easier to turn into agricultural fields than *Imperata cylindrica* grassland.

enemy, and the latter was the inflow of people fleeing battles and then leaving when the war ended.⁴¹⁾

In contrast, although settlements relocated in the prewar period, this was not as frequent and was only within a short distance, often less than a few kilometers. Moreover, prewar inflows to and outflows from the research site did not affect land use as much, as they involved a smaller population of the same ethnic group (Khmu).

During the postwar period villages of the research site merged into the single Khmu village, whose population increased steadily until the early years of the twenty-first century, when it halved due to the migration of many households to the lowlands. However, this population change was not as large as the changes during wartime.

Second, the population movement during wartime seriously damaged the forest vegetation of the research site. The forest had decreased by half, while the grassland and bush had greatly increased on the upper land of the hill studied. This was because Hmong migrants cleared the forest on land that had rarely been used before and cultivated opium and maize for many successive years.

As mentioned in the introduction, this type of forest destruction from the wartime exodus has been noted in several studies on Laos. Migrants used areas that were seldom used, and this reclamation of unused land was often accompanied by a vast amount of forest loss or degradation. By using the method of combining photointerpretation and interviews, this study has confirmed this with detailed data.

Third, this study has demonstrated that the changes in land use during wartime affected land use and land cover long after the war ended. Hmong's land use during wartime influenced land use and land cover after their exodus from the research site. Because their cultivation method depended on the repeated use of the same land, soil was easily exhausted or eroded, especially in the karst environment.⁴²⁾ This is the first reason why the forest on the karst hill in the present study was slow to recover after the war. The second reason is that Hmong's land use influenced the land use of the remaining Khmu even after most of the former had fled the research site. Their land use resulted in the creation of extensive grassland, part of which has been inherited and maintained by the Khmu because it is a good source of thatching material. Hmong also contributed to the postwar grassland expansion by teaching the opium cultivation method to some Khmu households. The vast destruction of forests during wartime was a turning point in the history of the vegetation of the research site, and even though the war ended

41) Sandewall *et al.* (1998, 30–32) also reveal many incidents of war-related relocation of people and settlements during 1964–73 in the upper Nam Nan water catchment area, which is only 20 km from the research site.

42) See footnote 37.

more than 40 years ago the forests have never recovered to prewar conditions.

Many researchers associate forest decline or degradation in Laos with developments since the 1980s, and especially since the economic liberalization that began in the late 1980s. These developments include unsustainable wood extraction (Sithong *et al.* 2005; Singh 2009; 2012, 103–108), expansion of cash crop cultivation (Nakatsuji 2004; Thouthone *et al.* 2016), industrial tree plantations (Cohen 2009), and infrastructure development such as mining and hydropower. However, as this study has demonstrated, there is substantial evidence that the forest decline or degradation began during the war. This study has also demonstrated that the war indirectly caused extensive clearing of old forest and changed vegetative landscapes until long after the war had ended. This suggests that there is a need to evaluate the forest-cover changes during wartime if we are to understand the ways in which forestland has been lost or degraded in Laos.

V Conclusion

This study revealed land use changes over 70 years at a research site in northern Laos by combining an analysis of aerial and satellite photographs with fieldwork. Specifically, it revealed changes in land use during the Second Indochina War and the immediate and long-term effects of these changes. The research demonstrated that the war created an abnormal situation in which a large number of people from a different ethnic group came to live amongst the original inhabitants of the research site. This led to a unique farming landscape and vast areas of forest destruction during the war. The research also demonstrated that the wartime forest destruction was a significant milestone in the history of the vegetation of the research site, and the vegetative landscape has still not recovered. These findings, as well as those of previous research, suggest that we need to be more conscious of the effects of the war when we analyze forest degradation in Laos.

Similar research is necessary for other regions in Laos to understand further war-related land use and land cover changes, and their long-term effects. Research is necessary to analyze the land use and land cover changes in the destinations and origins of wartime migrants. As discussed in the introduction, several studies from other countries have revealed vegetation recovery in areas where people fled during wartime. This phenomenon probably occurred during and after the war in Laos. Lacombe *et al.* (2010), using longitudinal hydrological data in a catchment of the Mekong River in northern Laos, argue that during the war the forests should have regenerated on the abandoned cultivated lands in the areas where the wartime migrants were originally based. For a full

understanding of wartime forest cover changes in Laos, detailed research on the land that wartime migrants left behind is necessary.

Accepted: December 11, 2018

Acknowledgments

I appreciate the long-term assistance by the staff of the Faculty of Social Sciences, National University of Laos, especially Dr. Khammany Soulideth and Mr. Oudone Vongsommy. I also thank Dr. Kobayashi Shigeru, Professor Emeritus at Osaka University, for advising me to search aerial photographs at the National Archives and Records Administration and Dr. Narumi Kunitada, Professor at Konan University, for assisting me in searching them. I am grateful to the referees for their constructive comments that helped improve this paper considerably. This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Numbers JP24240115, JP25580178, JP16K01227, JP16H01963.

References

- Álvarez, María D. 2003. Forests in the Time of Violence: Conservation Implications of the Colombian War. *Journal of Sustainable Forestry* 16: 49–70.
- Baird, Ian G.; and Le Billon, Philippe. 2012. Landscapes of Political Memories: War Legacies and Land Negotiations in Laos. *Political Geography* 31: 290–300.
- Baumann, Matthias; Radeloff, Volker C.; Avedian, Vahagn; and Kuemmerle, Tobias. 2015. Land-Use Change in the Caucasus during and after the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict. *Regional Environmental Change* 15: 1703–1716.
- Castella, Jean-Christophe; Lestrelin, Guillaume; Hett, Cornelia; Bourgoin, Jeremy; Fitriana, Yulia R; Heinemann, Andreas; and Pfund, Jean-Laurent. 2013. Effects of Landscape Segregation on Livelihood Vulnerability: Moving from Extensive Shifting Cultivation to Rotational Agriculture and Natural Forests in Northern Laos. *Human Ecology* 41(1): 63–76.
- Cohen, Paul T. 2017. Opium and Shifting Cultivation in Laos: State Discourses and Policies. In *Shifting Cultivation Policies: Balancing Environmental and Social Sustainability*, edited by Malcolm Cairns, pp. 577–592. Boston: CABI.
- . 2009. The Post-Opium Scenario and Rubber in Northern Laos: Alternative Western and Chinese Models of Development. *International Journal of Drug Policy* 20: 424–430.
- Cooper, Robert. 2008. *The Hmong: A Guide to Traditional Life*. Vientiane: Lao-Insight Books.
- Ducourtieux, Olivier; Laffort, Jean-Richard; and Sacklokham, Silinthone. 2005. Land Policy and Farming Practices in Laos. *Development and Change* 36: 499–526.
- Ducourtieux, Olivier; Sacklokham, Silinthone; and Doligez, François. 2017. Eliminating Opium from the Lao PDR: Impoverishment and Threat of Resumption of Poppy Cultivation Following “Illusory” Eradication. In *Shifting Cultivation Policies: Balancing Environmental and Social Sustainability*, edited by Malcolm Cairns, pp. 593–616. Boston: CABI.
- Embassy of the USA. 1972. *US Economic Assistance to the Royal Lao Government 1962–1972*. Vientiane: Embassy of the USA. http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pdacq661.pdf, accessed January 26, 2019.
- Evans, Grant. 1995. *Lao Peasants: Under Socialism and Post-Socialism*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books.

- FAO. 2005. *State of the World's Forests 2005*. Rome: FAO. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-y5574e.pdf>, accessed January 26, 2019.
- Fujita, Yayoi; Khamla Phanvilay; and Donovan, Deanna. 2007. Past Conflicts and Resource Use in Postwar Lao PDR. In *Extreme Conflict and Tropical Forests*, edited by Wil De Jong, Deanna Donovan, and Ken-ichi Abe, pp. 75–91. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Gorsevski, Virginia; Geores, Martha; and Kasischke, Eric. 2013. Human Dimensions of Land Use and Land Cover Change Related to Civil Unrest in the Imatong Mountains of South Sudan. *Applied Geography* 38: 64–75.
- Goudineau, Yves. 1997. Main Report. In *Basic Needs for Resettled Communities in the Lao PDR: Resettlements and New Villages Characteristics in Six Provinces*, edited by Yves Goudineau, pp. 1–40. Vientiane: UNESCO-UNDP.
- Keen, F. G. B. 1978. Ecological Relationships in Hmong (Meo) Economy. In *Farmers in the Forest: Economic Development and Marginal Agriculture in Northern Thailand*, edited by Peter Kunstadter, E. C. Chapman, and Sanga Sabhasri, pp. 210–221. Honolulu: University Press of Hawai'i.
- Kiernan, Kevin. 2012. Impacts of War on Geodiversity and Geoheritage: Case Studies of Karst Caves from Northern Laos. *Geoheritage* 4: 225–247.
- . 2010. Environmental Degradation in Karst Areas of Cambodia: A Legacy of War? *Land Degradation & Development* 21: 503–519.
- . 2009. Distribution and Character of Karst in the Lao PDR. *Acta Carsologica* 38: 65–81.
- . 1987. Soil Erosion from Hilltribe Opium Swiddens in the Golden Triangle, and the Use of Karren as an Erosion Yardstick. *Endins* 13: 59–63.
- Kunstadter, Peter; and Chapman, E. C. 1978. Problems of Shifting Cultivation and Economic Development in Northern Thailand. In *Farmers in the Forest: Economic Development and Marginal Agriculture in Northern Thailand*, edited by Peter Kunstadter, E. C. Chapman, and Sanga Sabhasri, pp. 3–23. Honolulu: University Press of Hawai'i.
- Lacombe, G.; Pierret, A.; Hoanh, C. T.; Sengtaheuanghoung, O.; and Noble, A. D. 2010. Conflict, Migration and Land-Cover Changes in Indochina: A Hydrological Assessment. *Ecohydrology* 3: 382–391.
- Lao PDR, National Geographic Department. 2014. Accurate Air Photos Covering All Southern Laos and More. <http://www.ngd.la/?p=2405&lang=en>, accessed December 31, 2016.
- Nakamura, Goro. 2007. Defoliation during the Vietnam War. In *Extreme Conflict and Tropical Forests*, edited by Wil De Jong, Deanna Donovan, and Ken-ichi Abe, pp. 149–158. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Nakatsuji Susumu 中辻 亨. 2013a. Raosu sanson ni okeru dezukuri shuraku to kachiku shiyo ラオス山村における出作り集落と家畜飼養 [Satellite settlement as a base for animal husbandry]. In *Shigen to seigyo no chirigaku* 資源と生業の地理学 [Geography of resource and livelihood], edited by Satoshi Yokoyama 横山 智, pp. 217–241. Otsu: Kaiseisha Press.
- . 2013b. Raosu sanchibu ni okeru yakihata jissai no sonrakusa to sono yoin ラオス山地部における焼畑実施の村落差とその要因 [Differences in the importance of shifting cultivation among villages in northern Laos]. *Jimbun Chiri* 人文地理 [Human geography] 65(4): 339–356.
- . 2010. Raosu yakihata sanson ni okeru noson kaihatsu seisaku no igi to mondai ten ラオス焼畑山村における農村開発政策の意義と問題点 [Rural development, migrations, and livelihood change in northern Laos]. *Chiri Kagaku* 地理科学 [Geographical sciences] 65(1): 26–49.
- . 2004. Raosu yakihata sanson ni okeru kankin sakumotsu juyogo no tochi riyo ラオス焼畑山村における換金作物栽培受容後の土地利用 [Changes in slash-and-burn agriculture after the introduction of cash crops in the hilly area of Laos]. *Jimbun Chiri* 人文地理 [Human geography] 56(5): 449–469.
- Ochiai Yukino 落合 雪野. 2002. Nougyo no gurobaruka to maina kurooppu 農業のグローバル化とマイナークロップ [Minor crops in globalizing agriculture]. *Ajia Afurika Chiiki Kenkyu* アジア・ア

- リカ地域研究 [Asian and African area studies] 2: 24–43.
- Peng Jian; Xu Yue Qing; Zhang Ren; Xiong Kang Ning; and Lan An Jun. 2012. Soil Erosion Monitoring and Its Implication in a Limestone Land Suffering from Rocky Desertification in the Huajiang Canyon, Guizhou, Southwest China. *Environmental Earth Sciences* 69: 831–841.
- Sánchez-Cuervo, Ana María; and Aide, T. Mitchell. 2013. Consequences of the Armed Conflict, Forced Human Displacement, and Land Abandonment on Forest Cover Change in Colombia: A Multi-Scaled Analysis. *Ecosystems* 16: 1052–1070.
- Sandewall, Mats; Ohlsson, Bo; and Sandewall, R. Kajsa. 1998. *People's Options on Forest Land Use: A Research Study of Land Use Dynamics and Socio-Economic Conditions in the Upper Nam Nan Water Catchment Area, Lao PDR*. Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Department of Forest Resource Management and Geomatics.
- Sandewall, Mats; Ohlsson, Bo; and Silavanh Sawathvong. 2001. Assessment of Historical Land Use Changes for Purposes of Strategic Planning: A Case Study of Laos. *Ambio* 30(1): 55–61.
- Singh, Sarinda. 2012. *Natural Potency and Political Power: Forests and State Authority in Contemporary Laos*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- . 2009. Governing Anti-Conservation Sentiments: Forest Politics in Laos. *Human Ecology* 37: 749–760.
- Sithong Thongmanivong; Fujita, Yayoi; and Fox, Jeff. 2005. Resource Use Dynamics and Land-Cover Change in Ang Nhai Village and Phou Phanang National Reserve Forest, Lao PDR. *Environmental Management* 36(3): 382–393.
- Stevens, Kara; Campbell, Lindsay; Urquhart, Gerald; Kramer, Dan; and Qi Jiaguo. 2011. Examining Complexities of Forest Cover Change during Armed Conflict on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. *Biodiversity Conservation* 20: 2597–2613.
- Stuart-Fox, Martin. 2010. *Raosu shi* ラオス史 [A history of Laos]. Translated by Yoko Kikuchi 菊池陽子. Tokyo: Mekong Publishing.
- . 2001. *Historical Dictionary of Laos*. 2nd ed. Lanham: Scarecrow Press.
- . 1997. *A History of Laos*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Suthakar, K.; and Bui, Elisabeth N. 2008. Land Use/Cover Changes in the War-Ravaged Jaffna Peninsula, Sri Lanka, 1984–Early 2004. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 29: 205–220.
- Sutton, Sean; Sisoulith, Thongloun; Obe, Lou McGrath; and Page, Tim. 2010. *Laos: Legacy of a Secret*. Stockport: Dewi Lewis Publishing.
- Thatheva Saphangthong; and Kono, Yasuyuki. 2009. Continuity and Discontinuity in Land Use Changes: A Case Study in Northern Lao Villages. *Tonan Ajia Kenkyu* 東南アジア研究 [Southeast Asian studies] 47(3): 263–286.
- The GLOBE Program. 2000. *MUC Field Guide*. Washington, DC: GLOBE & USGPO. <https://www.globe.gov/documents/355050/355097/MUC+Field+Guide/5a2ab7cc-2fdc-41dc-b7a3-59e3b110e25f>, accessed January 26, 2019.
- Thoumthone Vongvisouk; Broegaard, Rikke Brandt; Mertz, Ole; and Sithong Thongmanivong. 2016. Rush for Cash Crops and Forest Protection: Neither Land Sparing nor Land Sharing. *Land Use Policy* 55: 182–192.
- Wang S.J.; Liu Q. M.; and Zhang D. F. 2004. Karst Rocky Desertification in Southwestern China: Geomorphology, Landuse, Impact and Rehabilitation. *Land Degradation & Development* 15: 115–121.

Dear Thai Sisters: Propaganda, Fashion, and the Corporeal Nation under Phibunsongkhram

Kanjana Hubik Thepboriruk*

Embodying modernity and nationality was a self-improvement task for fin de siècle Siamese monarchs. In post-1932 Siam, kingly bodies no longer wielded the semantic and social potency necessary to inhabit the whole of a nation. Siam required a corporeal reassignment to signify a new era. This study examines previously neglected propaganda materials the Phibunsongkhram regime produced in 1941 to recruit women for nation building, specifically, the texts supplementing Cultural Mandate 10 addressed to the “Thai Sisters.” I argue that with the Thai Sisters texts, the regime relocated modernization and nation building from male royal bodies onto the bodies of women. Moreover, these texts specified gendered roles in nation building and inserted nationalism into the private lives of women by framing nation-building tasks as analogous to self-improvement and the biological and emotional experiences of a mother. Vestimentary nation building prescribed by Mandate 10 turned popular magazines into patriotic battlegrounds where all Thai Sisters were gatekeepers and enforcement came in the form of photo spreads, advertisements, and beauty pageants. By weaving nation building into fashion and the private lives of women, the Phibunsongkhram regime made the (self-)policing of women’s bodies—formerly restricted to elite women—not only essential but also fashionable and patriotic for all Thai Sisters.

Keywords: Thailand, nation building, women, fashion

I Introduction

On October 4, 1941 various Thai government ministers gathered in the capital of Nong Khai Province to celebrate the opening of a district office of the Publicity Department. Attendees at the celebration received a small commemorative volume titled “Collection of Mandates, Codes, and Guidelines for National Culture.”¹⁾ There is one copy of this

* กัญจนา เทพบริรักษ์, Department of World Languages and Culture, Northern Illinois University, 335 Watson Hall, DeKalb, IL 60115, USA; Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Northern Illinois University, 520 College View Court, DeKalb, IL 60115, USA
e-mail: kanjana@niu.edu

1) In Thai, “ประมวลรัฐธรรมนูญและระเบียบวัฒนธรรมแห่งชาติ” (*pramuan rattaniyom lae rabiap watthanatham haeng chat*).

commemorative volume in the Rare Books Archives at the National Library of Thailand, its pages crumbling and held together by twine. The booklet is a collection of supplemental publications to the 12 Cultural Mandates.

Nestled in the 188 pages are seven documents addressed to “Thai Sisters” (*phi nong satri thai*) published by various government agencies of the Phibunsongkhram regime in 1941. There are no texts in this volume that directly address Thai men. It is noteworthy that the Phibunsongkhram regime would specifically target women during this transformative period in Thai history and then later deem such publications valuable enough to be reprinted in a commemorative volume. Not only does this remarkable subset of texts offer a glimpse into the regime’s notion of the ideal modern woman, it is also one of the earliest examples of the government’s attempt to recruit women for the task of nation building. Why were women targeted for these texts, and to what end? What do these texts reveal about the nationalization and modernization of Siamese women during that time?

This particular period of Thai history has very few analyses focusing on women, especially in English, despite Phibunsongkhram enjoying a recent resurgence of interest among scholars of Thai studies.²⁾ The discovery and analysis of these neglected archival materials show that the regime saw it necessary to produce materials specifically for women; thus, women’s role and participation in nation building during this transformative period warrants further study. The language in such propaganda, moreover, is always deliberate, and a textual analysis of these Thai Sisters documents can reveal the nationalistic ideology toward women. The current study explores how the Phibunsongkhram regime recruited women for nation building through propaganda and, in the process, conscripted women’s bodies as corporeal proxies for the nation. It is my hope that this study will help to advance discussions on the condition of Siamese women during this era as well as show the importance of these texts in Thai national history.

I use translations from Thak *et al.* (1978) for the Cultural Mandates. All other Thai-English translations are my own, including all translations of primary sources referenced herein. English transliterations of Thai, including names of individuals, follow the standards prescribed by the Royal Institute of Thailand (1999), unless a different transliteration is already well established and widely accepted. Transliterations of names always

2) Notable exceptions are works in Thai, namely, Piyawan Asawarachan’s “The Leadership’s Perception towards Thai Women during World War II under the Influence of the Japanese Military Regime” (2012) and two unpublished graduate theses, “Women Policies during the Nation Building Period of Field Marshall Phibunsongkhram, 1939–1945” by Nanthira Khamphiban (1987) and “Society’s Expectations of Thai Women in the ‘Nation Building’ Period, 1938–1944” by Suksun Dangpakdee (1994).

follow those used by the individuals when applicable. Thai words are transliterated, italicized, and given in parentheses after the English translation in the text.

II Modern Nation

Making of a Nation

The Kingdom of Siam went through an intense period of transformation starting in the mid-nineteenth century. Higher levels of literacy in the growing middle class combined with new forms of mass media such as the cinema and wireless radio fueled considerable social, economic, and political changes in Siam that continued well into the interwar period (Barmé 2002).³⁾ The dismantling of traditional power structures after the Great War, including the disintegration of the monarchy system, was buoyed by a worldwide undercurrent of social, economic, and political anxiety and instability. Several conservative military regimes grew to fill the power vacuum left by deposed monarchs.⁴⁾ Like elsewhere in the world, the interwar years in Siam were especially tumultuous, in this case punctuated by the 1932 coup d'état that ended absolute monarchy and resulted in the abdication of King Prajadhipok (Rama VII) in 1935.⁵⁾

In the century leading up to the 1932 coup, nation building and modernization was a central theme in the public lives of Siamese Kings. The Kings of House Chakri, established in 1782 with Bangkok as its new seat of power, traditionally borrowed the aesthetics and material culture from nearby empires in China and India to sanctify and legitimize their claims on the Siamese throne (Peleggi 2002, 12–13). But by the reign of King Mongkut (Rama IV), Europe had become the new locus of “progress” and “civilization” and Siamese royal culture began its retreat from the Indo- and Sino-spheres. Linguistically, the Pali-Sanskrit term *arayatham* was replaced by one modeled after the English word for “civilization,” *siwilai*. Rama IV, his son King Chulalongkorn (Rama V), and his grandson King Vajiravudh (Rama VI) gradually recalibrated the Siamese royal image to

3) The interwar years are defined as the period between the end of the Great War in 1918 and the beginning of World War II in 1939. The interwar years were characterized by: (1) political, social, and emotional reactions to and recovery from the Great War; (2) the economic prosperity of the 1920s; and (3) the Great Depression.

4) Some military nationalist regimes that were in power during the interwar years were: Mussolini in Italy, Stalin in Russian, Franco in Spain, Hitler in Germany, Atatürk in Turkey, Chiang Kai-shek in China, and Hirohito in Japan.

5) Siamese and Thai Kings of House Chakri are commonly referred to by their chronological order of reign. The first Chakri King, King Phra Phutthayotfa Chulalok, is thus Rama I, King Vajiravudh is Rama VI, and the current king of Thailand, King Vajiralongkorn, is Rama X.

align more closely with the West and looked to their European peers as the source for *siwilai* (*ibid*).

The pursuit of *siwilai* was visually accompanied by a gradual shift toward Western modes of dress among Siamese elites. The modernization of Siamese royal bodies through the conspicuous consumption of and participation in Western culture was the visual representation of Siam as a modern nation (Peleggi 2002). *Siwilai*, as indexed by the monarchs' increasingly Westernized public image, and the very act of being photographed looking so, was a kingly task. Through this public performance of *siwilai*, Siamese Kings positioned themselves as benevolent arbiters of the West, patrolling the cultural frontline against any pernicious foreign ideas and proffering a uniquely Siamese vision of modernity for aspiring elites and other subjects to emulate.

Beyond looking civilized and aligning Siamese aesthetics with Western ideals, the quest for *siwilai* also required a bifurcation of traditional Siamese genders into male/masculine and female/feminine. Western records of Siamese modes of dress from as early as the seventeenth century show that both men and women had the same style of short hair and wore the same *phanung* or *chong kraben* to cover their lower bodies.⁶⁾ Unaccustomed to local ways of gender demarcation, Westerners were left unsettled and disoriented by their inability to visually distinguish men from women (*ibid*). As Peter Jackson (2003) points out, the Western-inspired system of genders not only created new social distinctions between men and women in Siamese society but also left no room for traditional genders that did not fit into the male/female binary.

Elsewhere in mainland Southeast Asia, traditional ways of presenting and marking gender were cleaving into binaries under the weight of colonial powers and fashion while previously unisex aspects of local cultures were becoming gendered. Europeans indexed the perceived lack of gender distinction in Southeast Asian modes of dress with a lack of civility and culture and began assigning gender to traditionally non-gendered or unisex fashion. The Cambodian *sampot* and the short jacket that both men and women wore, for example, became feminine and masculine, respectively (Edwards 2001). Like in Siam, unisex hairstyles in French Cambodia (shorn short) and British Burma (long and coiled atop the head) became gendered (*ibid*; Ikaya 2011).

Siamese Kings of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were keenly aware of Western prejudices against unisex sartorial practices of the Siamese people and their neighbors. King Mongkut (Rama IV) ordered all to wear upper garments when in royal

6) *Phanung* (lit. "cloth for wearing") is a rectangular piece of cloth wrapped around the lower body, the ends of which can be folded or rolled together in the front and then tucked between the legs to fashion it into a pantaloons called *chong kraben*. Every Siamese wore this piece of clothing, regardless of age, status, and gender.

audience. His son Rama V, who was famously educated by an English governess, issued the first royal decree on clothing for the general public in 1899 that limited what should be worn in public and at court. The decree marks the beginning of the relationship between morality and clothing in Siam (Jackson 2003). Rama VI, who was educated entirely in England, further pushed for gendered fashion and discouraged women at court from traditional Siamese styles, thus rendering formerly unisex hairstyles and *chong kraben* masculine. By the time Rama VII came into power, the King and the men and women in his court were entirely covered up, sported contemporary Western hairstyles, and were appropriately masculine and feminine by Western standards.

The canonization of the Siamese King's body (and, by extension, any other bodies in his household) to represent the nation and the metonymic use of Siam to mean the King were not novel. Ernst Kantorowicz's detailed work *The King's Two Bodies* (1997) shows that the twin representation of kingly bodies as the realm and the individual can be traced back to the medieval period in Europe, the linguistic manifestations of which can be found in the use of the "royal we." The bodies of royal women, likewise, served as political proxies and were exchanged in diplomatic transactions through strategic marriages. By the eighteenth century, the emblematic binding between the King's body and the state was so strong that French revolutionaries were able to use corporeal metaphors to attack the man and the institution. The corporeality of the French state in Louis XVI's body culminated in making his beheading a compulsory part of the destruction of the ancien régime (De Baecque 1993). In post-1932 Siam, kingly bodies no longer wielded the semantic and social potency necessary to embody the whole of a nation. Siam required a corporeal reassignment to signify a new era.

Phibunsongkhram's Cultural Mandates

Army Major General Plaek Phibunsongkhram maneuvered his way into power in 1938. Phibunsongkhram was a member of the People's Party (Khana Ratsadon), a group comprising Western-educated civil servants, military officers, and minor royals. The group orchestrated the 1932 coup d'état that ended absolute monarchy in Siam. Shortly after his ascent to premiership, Phibunsongkhram followed his European contemporaries and rebranded himself as "The Leader" (*phu nam*). He also attempted to ritually fill the symbolic void left by Rama VII's relatively recent abdication and the child-king Rama VIII's geographic distance in Switzerland (Gray 1991, 50). Visually, the regime ordered the public to replace pictures of the deposed Rama VII with those of Phibunsongkhram (Thamsook 1978, 237). The army general, however, lacked the cultural legitimacy of prelapsarian Siamese Kings, and the Phibunsongkhram government needed to canonize a new body as the nation.

The regime's nation-building campaign aimed to transform the Kingdom of Siam into the nation of Thailand and Siamese subjects into Thai citizens by thrusting Siam into modernity and, paradoxically, by building a democratic and constitutional nation with their unelected government. To that end, Phibunsongkhram and his chief ideologue, Luang Wichit Wathakan, created the Cultural Mandates (*ratthaniyom*) to be the centerpiece of their social policies.⁷⁾ The regime issued a total of 12 Cultural Mandates between June 1939 and January 1942. The mandates transformed Siam into Thailand and all people living within the borders into Thai/Tai people (Mandates 1 and 3); dictated new and modern ways of life (Mandates 7, 11, and 12); designated a mode of dress (Mandate 10); described duties of nation building (Mandates 2, 5, 7, and 9); and sanctified the nation and, in a much lesser manner, the monarchy as unifying forces for the Thai people (Mandates 4, 6, and 8).

Mandate 10, issued on January 15, 1941, is particularly interesting because it imposed, for the first time and at a national level, a new and modern aesthetic of self-presentation for everyone regardless of social class. The mandate did not apply uniformly to men and women, as evidenced by the body of texts aimed at the Thai Sisters.⁸⁾ The mandate states that "Thais should not appear in public, populous places, or in municipal areas without *proper* clothing . . ." (Thak *et al.* 1978, 253, emphasis added). The Thai term in the original text is *riap roi*, which has many meanings. When used to describe inanimate objects, it means "tidy," "orderly," or "in good order." But when describing a person, the term means "well-mannered" or "polite." A task that is *riap roi* is one that is "ready" or "all set." Taken together, to dress *riap roi* is to present oneself as someone who is tidy, well-mannered, and ready for nation building.

At the height of Siamese cultural and political influence in mainland Southeast Asia, vestimentary regulations through enforcements of sumptuary laws affected only those whose ranks and positions required identifiers to visually partition them from the rest of society (Conway 2002). Members of the growing middle class emulated the sartorial practices of traditional elites to visually index their social aspirations. Commoners outside of Bangkok's cultural spheres were left mostly unaffected by such regulations and only needed passive knowledge of those visual markers pertaining to official rank. With the issuance of Mandate 10, the regime not only erased—albeit just in theory—the sar-

7) The Thai name for the Cultural Mandates is Ratthaniyom, which translates to "state or national values." This study follows the common practice of using "Cultural Mandates" to refer to the 12 mandates issued by the Phibunsongkhram regime between 1939 and 1942.

8) This is not to say that men were not subjected to the demands of Mandate 10 and its many subsequent expansions. Men also had newly prescribed modes of dress, and an exploration of the recruitment of men to nation building via fashion is a worthwhile future endeavor.

torial class separations previously outlined by sumptuary laws but also created a uniformed way to present Thai identity at a national level. Without a monarch to embody modernity and the nation, the burden fell on everyone.

As a supplement to the Cultural Mandates, the regime produced and disseminated various texts to clarify and explicate the barrage of modern demands made on the public. These supplemental texts took advantage of all available modes of communication and came in many forms. The texts were not intended solely for the general population and were (re-)printed for civil servants in internal bulletins such as *Khao Khotsanakan* (Publicity News), a magazine for employees of the Publicity Department. The Phibunsongkhram government had full censorship control of information, so popular media, too, had to participate in creating the ideological echo chamber that was the cultural backdrop to their totalitarian nation building. Media outlets that refused to participate or had values deemed to be “against national interests” were shut down (Thamsook 1978, 244).

The following sections will discuss examples from supplemental texts that the Phibunsongkhram regime produced for Mandate 10 and their influence in contemporary print media. The supplemental texts targeted women and were addressed to the “Thai Sisters” (*phi nong satri thai*) and “Esteemed Thai Sisters/Ladies Everywhere” (*phi nong satri thai thi nap thue/than suphap satri phu mi kiat thang lai*). Analyses are pulled from popular print media, periodicals, and internal government magazines. I argue that in the absence of a kingly body, the regime produced the Thai Sisters texts in order to: (1) transfer the physical burden of modernity and nation building onto the bodies of women, (2) specify gendered roles for nation building by extending nationalism into the private lives of women, and (3) thereby create an environment for women to self-police under the guise of patriotism and fashion. These supplemental texts offer an insightful cross-section of the regime’s ideology toward modernity, womanhood, and women’s gendered role in nation building.

Dear Thai Sisters

Between March and September 1941, the regime disseminated eight supplemental texts in rapid succession to complement Mandate 10. The texts (listed below) targeted women and were addressed to “Thai Sisters” and “Esteemed Ladies Everywhere.” Together, they provide an enormous amount of detail on how women were to put Mandate 10 into practice.

1. The Prime Minister’s Plea (For Our Thai Sisters), March 14, 1941
2. The Prime Minister’s Plea for Our Thai Sisters, Titled “Wearing Hats,” June

14, 1941

3. Ways to Wear Hats for Thai Ladies, speech delivered by Mr. Ensee Intharayothin over the wireless, June 19, 1941
4. Explanation, Titled “Finding Hats,” June 20, 1941
5. Ways to Wear Hats for Thai Ladies, Part 2, speech delivered by Mr. Ensee Intharayothin over the wireless, June 29, 1941
6. Explanation, Titled “Wearing Hats into Suan Kulap Palace,” July 1, 1941
7. Guidelines on Ways of Dress for Ladies
 - a. Part 1, August 27, 1941
 - b. Part 2, speech delivered by Amon Osathanon over the wireless, September 2, 1941

The discourse of the Thai Sisters texts was always deferential in nature, and the tone ranged from official (“Finding Hats” and “Suan Kulap”) to informal (First Plea, Second Plea). Though framed as a series of personal dialogues with women, the content, in reality, made concrete commands on their bodies and minds.

Signatories of the texts included both individuals and government units. Based on the relatively uniform style, it is unlikely that each text was personally crafted by the signatories. The texts were most likely written and approved by a group in the Publicity Department. Signatories such as Phibunsongkhram and Ensee Intharayothin, the head of the Office of Consumer Welfare, even when presented as individuals, simply anthropomorphized the regime. The sole female signatory was Amon Osathanon. Amon sat on the council that outlined the Guidelines for Women’s Dress and was married to Wilat Osathanon, a member of the 1932 Khana Ratsadon who served as the regime’s deputy minister of transport. Amon’s address was the last of the Thai Sisters texts. Besides having the friendliest discourse of all the texts, utilizing a conversational approach, humor, and the pronoun “we,” her radio address was otherwise unremarkable.

III Corporeal Nation

Patriotic Propriety

The first message from Phibunsongkhram to the “Thai Sisters” was on March 14, 1941 and titled “The Prime Minister’s Plea (for Our Thai Sisters).”⁹⁾ In the plea, Phibunsong-

9) In Thai: คำวิจวอนของท่านนายกรัฐมนตรี (ฝากไว้แก่พี่น้องสตรีไทย) *Kham wingwon khong thaen nayok ratthamontrii (faak wai kae phii nong satrii thai)*

khram asked the Thai Sisters to celebrate the victorious return of “lost territories” from the French by doing three things: (1) grow out their hair, following ancient customs or in modern styles; (2) cease wearing cloth styled into pantaloons (*chong kraben*) and, instead, wear sarong-style wrap skirts (*pha thung*) in the traditional ways or following modern styles; and (3) cease wrapping a single piece of cloth on their torso or baring their upper bodies and instead wear a shirt.

The first theme that emerges from this plea is that the Thai Sisters were required to modernize their bodies to modernize the nation. Though the regime did not overtly pursue *siwilai* as did the Siamese Kings, the path toward nation building laid out for women in the plea was similar to the one taken by Rama IV and his successors. Nation building for the newly minted Thailand was still a corporeal task, to be done on and to the body, but this time focused on the bodies of women.¹⁰ Modernity remained an individual responsibility that was concurrently a public performance to be consumed by and for the benefit of others.

The plea demanded that women become Thai by physically modifying their bodies (by growing out their hair) and modifying the ways their bodies were displayed (by changing the modes of dress). Nation building and patriotism in this context was a public display and performance for the Thai sisterhood. When the plea was issued, many women in the kingdom—such as those from the Lanna/Lao, Burmese, Malay, and Chinese communities—already wore their hair long, covered their upper bodies, and wore traditional wrap skirts (with the exception of Chinese women, who wore trousers). Indeed, wearing a wrap skirt and having long hair were salient visual markers of non-Siamese women just a few decades earlier (McIntosh 2000; Woodhouse 2012).

A second theme shows modernity to be a synthesis of tradition and innovation, the new and the old. As E. Reynolds (2004, 100–101) shows, the Phibunsongkhram regime, like other contemporary nationalist political movements of that era, aimed to build a new and idealized national identity that was deeply rooted in a glorified (imagined) past and to create a new nation from a cultural palimpsest of past empires. Imagined linkages to the past as part of nation building were not unique to Thailand or the Phibunsongkhram regime. Four years earlier in Italy, Benito Mussolini had added the phrase “Founder of the Empire” (*Fondatore dell’Impero*) to his official title, linking his fascist regime to the Roman Empire. Adolf Hitler, likewise, positioned his regime, the Third Reich, as the imperial successor to the Holy Roman Empire and the German Empire when he became chancellor in 1933. In March 1939, the Phibunsongkhram regime’s ideologue Luang

10) Mandate 1 was issued on June 24, 1939 and states, “The name of the country is to be ‘Thailand’” (Thak *et al.* 1978, 245). Prior to the Cultural Mandates, the kingdom was officially called Siam.

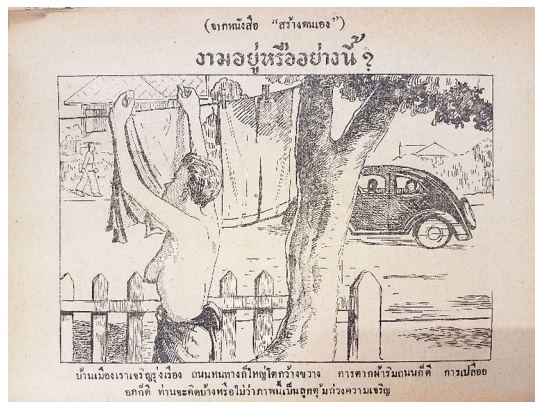


Fig. 1 A Picture from a Book Titled *Building Oneself*, Reprinted in *Chiwit Thai* (March 26, 1941)

Witchit Watthakan delivered a radio speech titled “Sukhothai Culture” that tethered the soon-to-be Thailand and Thainess to an idealized ancient kingdom. Modern Thainess as encoded in the Second Plea was a new fashion variation on a traditional theme.

Less than two weeks after the prime minister’s plea was issued, *Chiwit Thai* (Thai Life) magazine reprinted an illustration from a book titled *Building Oneself* (Fig. 1). The book contains useful pictures to show appropriate (modern and civilized) and inappropriate (backward and uncivilized) behavior in both the private and public spheres. Building oneself, after all, was to be done publicly at an individual level and encompassed all dimensions of daily life. Large letters above the illustration read “Is this still fine?” and the picture shows a woman hanging laundry by the roadside with the following caption:

Our land is developed and prosperous. Even the streets are large and wide. If hang-drying clothes on the roadside is fine, if baring your chest is fine, will you ever realize that this sight is weighing down progress?

The woman pictured sports a traditional cropped hairstyle, is bare-chested, and wears the recently prohibited *chong kraben* pantaloons. This Thai Sister clearly did not heed the prime minister’s plea.

Interestingly, the laundry she is hanging comprises a pair of modern male trousers, complete with a zipper closure and belt loops, and a collared shirt. Her house has a Western-style picket fence, yet the woman is portrayed as being stuck in the past. A man wearing a modern-style shirt, trousers, and shoes walks on the other side of the street, holding a flat, rectangular portfolio that indexes his modern literacy. Passers-by look on from a Volkswagen Beetle. The choice of a German vehicle here is significant. The picture was reprinted in the magazine after Nazi Germany launched a successful

attack on Yugoslavia and can be interpreted as a nod to Germany's rising power and the importance of how Thailand was to be seen by the Third Reich.¹¹⁾ The message for the Thai Sister here is clear: she must improve herself for the nation and keep in step with the West, lest she be left behind as deadweight while others pass her by.

Phibunsongkhram's plea, in summary, asks the Thai Sisters to embody a modern Thai womanhood through the implementation of Mandate 10. Modern Thainess as conceptualized in the plea did not contradict or exist in opposition to the future or the past. Thai Sisters could be modern in a way that was both traditionally Thai and fashionably modern by following the demand of the plea. Through this text, the regime conscripted women to fulfill a nationalist program, one in which they must build the nation with their bodies. The plea presents a cultural binary whereby the two pathways to modernity and patriotism exist together and not in opposition, an idea that would continue to reverberate in future messages to Thai Sisters. According to the plea, the only unacceptable choice would be for a Thai Sister to continue as before, without improvement and without change.

The Nation Child and Private Patriotism

Patriotism and nation building are never restricted to the public lives of citizens. This section will offer examples of how nationalism was internalized into the private lives of Thai Sisters through the appropriation of motherhood for nation building. A. Tansman (2009) shows that despite the Japanese government's pervasive and persistent penetration into the private lives of Japanese citizens, there remained an "interiority" the regime was unable to conquer. But once nationalism was internalized by individuals, it surreptitiously seeped into the aesthetics of national culture in ways that were undetectable, even to those who publicly resisted against propaganda. These private moments of patriotism and internalized nationalism are what crafted the cultural tapestry that served as the backdrop for pre-World War II Japanese nation building. Though Tansman's study was not gendered, the concept of "private patriotism" is useful in the analysis of the Thai Sisters propaganda texts.

Meanwhile, in Italy and Germany the two governments had already taken measures to expand nation building into citizens' private spheres. The fascist and Nazi regimes, through various policies, gradually unraveled the public lives of women until their participation in nation building was restricted to the private confines of home, while simultaneously redrawing the boundaries of womanhood to comprise only two roles, wife and

11) The Phibunsongkhram regime borrowed heavily from contemporary nationalist military governments, specifically fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and early Shōwa Japan. The extent and details of their influence are beyond the scope of this paper.

mother. In this way, Italian and German women were forced to internalize nationalism and perform patriotism and citizenry in private as individuals, while men's participation was expected to be public (De Grazia 1992; Guenther 2004, 92–93).

In 1941 Thailand, the Phibunsongkhram regime was just beginning its advance into the interiority of the Thai Sisters' lives. Three months after the First Plea on June 15, 1941, the premier addressed women for the second time with "The Prime Minister's Plea for Our Thai Sisters, Titled 'Wearing Hats.'"¹²⁾ The speech added hats to the prescribed patriotic uniform in addition to the long hair, skirts, and covered torsos. The Second Plea is significantly longer than the first and is its ideological counterpart, the content dedicated to espousing the moral duty of citizens. The discourse is more formal than the First Plea and addresses the female audience as "All Esteemed Thai Sisters" (*phi nong satri thai thi nap thue thang lai*).

The Second Plea begins as a dialogue between Phibunsongkhram and the Esteemed Thai Sisters on the definition of a nation and the need for nation building. Between the lines, the text shows that there were nation-building skeptics with whom Phibunsongkhram wanted to directly engage (paragraphs 2–3). Here, the prime minister reaffirms that women must take responsibility for nation building in very concrete and personal ways. Whereas the First Plea mandated a patriotic uniform, the Second Plea situates All Esteemed Thai Sisters as mothers who have a duty to nurture and care for their child-nation:

[Nation building] is the same as when we have a child. You all try to mold and educate your child so that they become better. Few would allow their child to be illiterate, starve, or get sick. Whatever you would do for your child is what you must do for Nation Building. (paragraph 3)

The regime achieved two tasks with the Second Plea. First, the text situates nation building within the private, moral lives of women as mothers. Nation building in the First Plea was material, external, and public, something that could be acquired and performed to and with others. But in this Second Plea, the task of nation building becomes an internal, individual, and private act to be done in the home. By equating the tasks and responsibilities of nation building with those of motherhood, the regime superimposes patriotic expectations onto women's most salient social role, one that carries moral, emotional, and biological weight.¹³⁾ Patriotism via motherhood, in this context, becomes

12) Title in Thai, คำวิจวอนของท่านนายกรัฐมนตรี แต่พี่น้องสตรีไทย เรื่อง การสวมหมวก (*kham wingwon khong than nai yok ratthamontri dae phinong satri thai rueng kansuammuk*).

13) The Phibunsongkhram regime was not at all original in its attempts to equate motherhood with nation building. Similar policies of contemporary nationalist regimes predate those in Thailand. Even then, the policies of fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and early Shōwa Japan were merely twentieth-century reiterations of common ideologies of past empires.



Fig. 2 The Two Winners of Motherhood Prizes (*Tai Mai*, October 13, 1941)

a natural part of idealized womanhood and a communal yet private activity on a national scale for the benefit of the mother (woman) and child (nation).

Motherhood as nation building was not restricted solely to ideology. The regime expected the Thai Sisters to also build the nation by producing more citizens. Whereas the perpetuation of the Siamese kingdom was embodied by the King and his many children, the virility of the Thai nation in 1941 could not rest on the teenage body of Rama VIII, who was only 14 when Phibunsongkhram came into power. Women and their bodies were now responsible for the proliferation of the Thai nation and the Thai people. The nationalization of women's wombs culminated in the creation of prizes rewarding mothers for the number of children they had and the subsequent creation of Thai Mother's Day in 1943.¹⁴⁾

On October 13, 1941, a photo spread in *Tai Mai* or "New Tai" magazine featured two women, Wanphen Chuayprasit and Soi Limthongkhaw, who received prizes for having the highest number of children (Fig. 2). Wanphen (top), a mother of 8, was rewarded for having the most children born since 1932, while Soi (bottom), a mother of 12, was rewarded for having the most children in a category with no time limit. The two mothers are photographed with their husbands and children, who are dressed in accordance with

14) A decade earlier, in 1933, fascist Italy and Nazi Germany both declared a national holiday, *Giornata della Madre e dell'Infanzia* and *Muttertag* respectively, in celebration of mothers and motherhood as part of their nation-building campaign.

Mandate 10 and the prime minister's two pleas, complete with hats. Wanphen and Soi received their prizes at Amphon Park on October 4, 1941 at an event under the patronage of La-ia-d Phibunsongkhram, the prime minister's wife and the mother of his six children.¹⁵ The picture of Wanphen and Soi, shown to be compliant in their Western clothes and prolific in their motherhood, presents them as exemplary Thai Sisters for the new nation.

Besides elevating hat-wearing mothers as the ideal woman, the Second Plea also reaffirms the corporeality of the Thai nation on women's bodies. The Second Plea defines the term "nation building" (*sang chat*) as having three sequential components and uses lexical similarities to draw ideological parallels between the task of nation building (*sang chat*) and self-improvement (*sang tong eng*). Any improvements made to the self, as was the case for Siamese Kings of yesteryears, would be for the sake of the nation. But in this context, self-improvement could not be achieved by a Thai Sister without self-sacrifice because the child-nation was an extension of her own body.

The first step toward nation building was for the Thai Sisters to improve themselves to befit the prestige of their great nation. Self-improvement consisted of (1) maintaining one's health by "nourishing yourself so that you are strong [and] free of sickness and disease"; (2) adjusting one's behavior; (3) dressing "properly and appropriately, in the same manner as in other civilized nations"; (4) diligently working in one's occupation; (5) diligently learning and seeking new knowledge; and (6) "diligently following the government's suggestions for self-improvement and persevering until you have succeeded in every way" (paragraph 4). At around the same time, the regime also began a morning exercise radio broadcast, and magazines such as *Chiwit Thai* and *Tai Mai* began featuring exercises in their women's columns (Fig. 3) (Kongsakon 2002).

Nation building through self-improvement now required physical changes to the bodies of women in the form of good nutrition and exercise, in addition to the prescribed dress code. As the "returned" territories of French Indochina restored the imagined integrity of the geo-body of Thailand, the newly prescribed patriotic uniform and modern Thai lifestyle would improve and make whole the bodies of the Thai Sisters.¹⁶ Those

15) The October 1943 issue of *Wannakhadisarn* (Literary Magazine) was published in honor of La-ia-d's birthday and, through prose and poetry, praised her as the ideal wife and mother. Phibunsongkhram wrote the introduction and dedication.

16) For a detailed discussion of the nation-building narrative surrounding the Franco-Thai War of 1940–41, see Shane Strate's *The Lost Territories: Thailand's History of National Humiliation* (2015). For an examination of the role of bodily health in Thai nation building, see Kongsakon Kawinraweeekun's "Constructing the Body of Thai Citizens during the Phibun Regime of 1938–1944" (2002) and Davisakd Puaksom's "Of Germs, Public Hygiene, and the Healthy Body: The Making of the Medicalizing State in Thailand" (2007).



Fig. 3 The Cover of *Tai Mai* Magazine Showing a Woman Exercising Along with the Daily Radio Broadcast (September 1, 1941)

who did not comply would be morally and physically unfit and, therefore, deadweight for the Thai nation. Nation building through self-improvement in this era was no longer reserved for Siamese monarchs wishing to gain entry into modernity but was deemed a moral imperative for all Thai citizens. Even leisurely activities would later be categorized under the umbrella of self-improvement in Mandate 11.¹⁷

The second step toward nation building was for the Thai Sisters to improve their families. Successful self-improvement was required for nation building, as this second task could begin only once the women had already improved themselves as prescribed. In comparison to the first requirement, the second was reasonably straightforward. To improve the family, the Thai Sisters had to be frugal, find some unused land to make a home, take care of this home, and educate their children. The third and final step asked that women extend their contribution to the common good beyond their homes. These three components of nation building, if efficaciously executed by the Thai Sisters, would help the nation prepare for “imminent conflict with powerful nations” (paragraph 5).

The Second Plea defines, in both concrete and ideological terms, the duties of

17) Issued on September 8, 1941, Mandate 11 states: “. . . the proper carrying out of daily activities is an important factor for the maintenance and promotion of national culture and hence the vigorous health of Thai citizens and their support for the country . . .” (Thak *et al.* 1978, 253). The mandate divides the day into three discrete eight-hour parts: work, sleep, and leisurely activities done for the sake of self-improvement (*ibid.*).

citizens. The regime presented self-improvement as the heart of modern Thai citizenry. Nation building was defined as voluntary, cooperative, and deeply personal sacrifices, something internal and private for women as individuals. Within this context, nation building entered the realm of women's personal lives and homes. Thai Sisters were now required to devoutly fulfill their prescribed roles as mothers to the Thai child-nation and proliferate the Thai family/race. This sense of private nationalism was to complement the outward application of these concepts on women's bodies as the visual representation of progress and civility.

Patriotism as Fashion

Fashion has always been a political tool, as evidenced by the ways in which fin de siècle Siamese monarchs used modes of dress and Western accoutrements to perform modernity. This section will show how the world of fashion aided the construction of nationalistic ideals and the internalization of patriotism of the Thai Sisters more effectively than government policies. R. L. Blaszczyk (2009, 10) defines fashion, even in its most benign interpretation, as "a cultural phenomenon growing out of the interactions of individuals and institutions." She further categorizes producers of fashion into two groups: tastemakers and intermediaries (*ibid.*, 6). Together, these two groups are the ones who are responsible for suspending fashion in "the gel of culture," and in the case of 1941 Thailand the culture was nation building. Whereas fashion tastemakers aim to create and pilot trends, generally producing top-down effects on the fashion world, fashion intermediaries manage the necessary interactions between consumers and those who sell fashion. Under this framework, it is the intermediaries—the popular press and women who make and sell fashion—who have the most impact, despite being largely uncredited for their work in the fashion world (*ibid.*). Fashion, under this definition, is a process and a system that is the product of individuals, institutions (including the individuals who make up the institutions), and culture.

Nation building as a fashion, then, goes beyond government policies and propaganda and is not the sole responsibility of any one entity. The Phibunsongkhram regime, together with fashion tastemakers and intermediaries, constructed the fashionably patriotic Thai woman. Popular media, in even more insidious ways than public policies, contributed to the interweaving of nationalism into the world of fashion. So when the prime minister acquiesced in his Second Plea by saying "I defer to all the Thai Sisters to please consider what is internationally fashionable," the regime was yielding to the fashion tastemakers and intermediaries (paragraph 11). In the hands of elite Thai women (tastemakers) and magazine editors and writers (intermediaries), patriotism and nationalism quietly entered into the daily beauty regimen of the Thai Sisters and became fodder

for female social interactions. The regime was very specific about how women were to put Mandate 10 into practice with the prime minister's two pleas, but seemingly it did not receive the desired level of public cooperation.

Months after the issuance of Mandate 10, the regime continued to struggle with a lack of public compliance despite its multilateral efforts to promote the new dress code. Softer measures intended to publicly encourage compliance on all levels of society, such as clothing pageants, fashion flea markets, hat-making workshops, and making the new dress code a requisite for entry into events at Amphon Park, had failed. The Thai Sisters had not internalized patriotism and nation building, and nationalism stubbornly remained on the exterior and in public.

During a parliamentary meeting on September 6, 1941, four days after the last of the Thai Sisters texts, the regime tightened enforcement and issued a resolution to "maintain the sanctity of the Cultural Mandates" (Publicity Department 1941, 170–171). The resolution stated that those who were not dressed in accordance with Mandate 10 would not be allowed to enter government buildings and other public places, would not receive services from government agencies, and would not be allowed to use public transportation. The resolution concluded with a request for private businesses to cooperate with the government by putting in place similar restrictions. In all the ways that the regime had, thus far, failed to make patriotism a daily routine for the Thai Sisters, the world of fashion would succeed.

Hats were not new in Thailand. Neither were the various ways of wearing a hat. But, nevertheless, the Thai Sisters were seemingly resistant to the idea and struggled with how to wear hats in a "modern" and "civilized" manner. The innovation of wearing decorative hats (as opposed to functional work hats) seemed difficult to reconcile as part of the existing cultural praxis, and confusion and resistance continued well into 1941. That is why, perhaps, much of the public discussion on dress code, whether initiated by the regime or by the mass media, was dedicated to the ways hats and hat wearing fitted into the new schema of Thainess. Amon, throughout her radio address in September 1941, had to placate traditionalists and disabuse them of the notion that wearing hats would transgress Thai cultural norms:

There have been problems and confusion regarding how to pay respects when wearing hats. Some people misunderstood that when wearing hats, we cannot pay respects or prostrate as customary because hats are European. [The Council on the Guidelines for Women's Dress] firmly believes that the use of international customs must not be a reason for abandoning the great Thai culture and behavior. The use of hats also must not cause us to abandon our manners and etiquette (*khwam suphap riap roi*). (Guidelines, part 2, paragraph 9)

Ensee Intharayothin, the head of the Office of Consumer Welfare, took to the airwaves

twice to appeal to the Esteemed Ladies Everywhere. Ensee delivered his first treatise on millinery matters, appropriately titled “Ways of Wearing Hats,” on June 19, 1941.¹⁸⁾ The speech provided excruciating details on hat-wearing history, fashion, and etiquette; and to conclude, Ensee pleaded for women to “help each other think, help each other improve, as a way to promote our culture in [the hat-wearing] method of nation building” (last paragraph).

Ensee’s concluding remark recruited the Thai Sisters to be benevolent gatekeepers of the patriotic uniform. The speech, in effect, deputized all who participated in the world of fashion as potential enforcers of patriotism and nationalized the self-policing of women’s bodies and self-presentation as a form of nation building. Moreover, the task of self-policing was framed as a way for the Thai Sisters to improve themselves and help other women, reiterating the need for women to make physical changes to their bodies for the nation. The policing of women’s bodies prior to 1932 applied only to upper-class women whose self-presentation, lineage, and matrimonial linkages were scrutinized and carefully curated. Women with no rank generally had freedom in choosing their spouse and their manner of dress (Loos 2004).

Ensee’s speech was not well received as he returned to the airwaves 10 days later with an elaborate apology to the Esteemed Ladies for his hubris. The pushback must have been severe to require such verbal groveling:

I did not intend to teach you about the beauty of hats because with these things, you must already know better than me what is beautiful. You are a woman. . . . I leave that to be your responsibility to consider and decide or find out from women circles. The Department of Public Welfare did not intend to regulate the occasion in which you should wear hats . . . Who will dare nitpick and bother you, making this rule and that rule? (paragraph 2)

Despite the deferential tone, Ensee nevertheless demanded that the Esteemed Ladies enforce dress code compliance among themselves. Not only that, the patriotic uniform, hat and all, was presented in this speech as fashionable and a standard of beauty in the context of nation building. Phibunsongkhram had earlier hinted at the idea of patriotism as beauty in the Second Plea when he added hats to the patriotic uniform: “I speak of the wearing of hats as your duty in Nation Building, so that Thai women will shine more brightly” (paragraph 11).

Patriotism as part of women’s beauty regimen was further promoted by the various clothing pageants held throughout the country. The regime also reimaged the Miss Siam pageant as the Miss Thailand pageant, in which elite young women competed to be

18) Title in Thai, ปาฐกถา เรื่อง การใช้หมวกสำหรับสตรีไทย (*pathakatha rueng kan chai muak samrap satri thai*).



Fig. 4 The Cover of *Srikrung* Newspaper Promoting the Dress Code Prescribed by Mandate 10 (March 23, 1941)

the feminine and fashionable ideals of a new nation. The reigning Miss Thailand (1941), Sawangchit Kharuehanon, and the first ever Miss Thailand (1940), Mariam (Riam) Phesayanawin, regularly graced magazine covers and made public appearances, fulfilling their role as patriotic tastemakers. Fashion intermediaries reported on their public appearances and other stylishly patriotic society events within the pages of popular magazines such as *Tai Mai* and *Chiwit Thai*, helping to usher nationalism deep into the world of fashion. Even newspapers that were once deemed radical, such as *Srikrung* (Glorious City), became fashion intermediaries for the patriotic dress code. The cover of the March 23, 1941 issue shows a picture of Thais dressed in compliance with Mandate 10 (Fig. 4). The caption reads, “National progress rests on culture; thus, the mode of dress is important. We, the people, must comply with the Prime Minister’s plea for the sake of national progress and our own self-improvement.”

The August 13, 1941 issue of *Chiwit Thai* magazine prominently featured a human-interest piece about a charity flea market held at Amphon Park on August 3.¹⁹⁾ In the

19) Proceeds of the event went to the building of Phra Srimahathat Woramahawihan Temple. Phibunsongkhram proposed the building of a Democracy Temple (Wat Prachathippatai) near the site of the Fifth Constitution Monument, or Protected Constitution Monument (Anusaawaree Phithakrat-tathamanoon) in Thai, which was erected to celebrate the quelling of the Boraworadet Rebellion. The purposes of the temple were to: (1) celebrate National Day in 1941, (2) honor Buddhism as the national religion and the Buddhist principles guiding democracy, and (3) celebrate the change of political system from absolute monarchy to constitutional democracy (see Dhammathai website).

article the Publicity Department, one of the co-sponsors of the event, described it as “one of the biggest hat-wearing events for all to witness.” The all-day event featured a group demonstration of the daily radio broadcast morning exercises at 6 a.m. and a clothing and hat pageant competition shortly after 8 a.m. The first prize winner of the junior category, Somprasoe Suphrangkun, received one of La-ia Phibunsongkhram’s 24-karat gold bracelets.

Patriotism, as a stowaway in fashion, slipped into all areas of women’s private lives, abetted by the work of fashion tastemakers and intermediaries. Mandate 5 had dictated earlier that

Thais should try to consume only food prepared from products which originate or are produced in Thailand; try to dress with materials which originate or are produced in Thailand; should help to support indigenous agricultural, commercial, and industrial occupations and professions. (Thak *et al.* 1978, 248)

The Thai fashion industry in 1941, which was nascent at best, was not ready for the new patriotic dress code. As a result, the Thai Sisters had to rely on foreign-made items to comply with Mandate 10.

The regime, realizing its mistake, scrambled to organize a series of millinery workshops for women, transmogrifying the acquisition of basic vocational skills into a patriotic duty and blurring the lines between fashion consumers and producers. Between September 8 and November 27, the Department of Public Welfare and the Office of Consumer Welfare co-hosted a series of millinery workshops for women at the National Commercial Building. Sa-nga (formerly Amelia) Sukhabut, a Westerner married into the prestigious Sukhabut law family, instructed the attendees with the help of an interpreter (Fig. 5). Being a stylish Western woman herself, Sa-nga was the perfect candidate to preach the millinery gospel to Thai proselytes. Participants could show off their handiwork immediately at the gala dinners the Department of Public Welfare organized to complement the workshops. Two participants even modeled their self-made hats on the cover of the October 20 issue of *Tai Mai*. Amon, the sole female signatory of the Thai Sisters text, may have been one of the attendees, as she later opened an eponymous hat boutique named Ran Amon on Ratchadamnoen Road.

Eventually, anyone in any trade could participate in fashionable patriotism. Newly founded schools filled the advertisement pages with hat- and Western clothes-making classes. Tailors and seamstresses clambered to attract buyers for their “Thai-made” fashionable wares. Products otherwise unrelated to clothing injected patriotism into their advertisements to promote their goods as the perfect complement to a fashionably patriotic woman. The advertisement for Chula Brand soap, for example, compared the newly



Fig. 5 Millinery Workshop Hosted by the Department of Public Welfare (*Tai Mai*, September 15, 1941)



Fig. 6 Advertisement for Chula Brand Soap (*Tai Mai*, January 6, 1941)

improved bar soap with the newly improved Thai ladies who were dressed “appropriately for our civilized times” (Fig. 6). The regime continued to host the increasingly popular “Thai-made” flea markets at Amphon Park.

This is not to say that all Thai women were compliant and cooperative with the demands of the regime. Samples of print media during this time suggest that some Thai Sisters remained skeptical of the patriotic dress code, though direct evidence of public opposition to Mandate 10 is elusive amidst state-controlled media. The regime had already shut the doors of women’s magazines that mobilized women to fulfill roles beyond mothers and wives, because they were deemed “too political” by the time Mandate 10 was issued (Ubolwan and Uaypon 1989, 25). Careful examination, however, shows that some Thai Sisters continued to ignore the bombardment of propaganda urging compliance with the dress code. In the July 9, 1941 issue of *Chiwit Thai*, a photo spread hints at an atmosphere of opposition against hats (Fig. 7). The photos show women who attended a tea dance held at Amphon Park on July 5. One caption states that only hat-wearing



Fig. 7 A Photo Spread in *Chivit Thai* That Hints at Women's Resistance to Wearing Hats (July 9, 1941)

women were allowed entry into the event (top right), while another caption reads “Hat-wearing ladies. See, it’s not as unsightly as you thought! We think it’s the opposite, based on the charm exuding from their faces” (bottom left).

By the October 8, 1941 issue, even a magazine like *Chivit Thai*, which unabashedly supported the regime, was weary of publishing pro-hat messages. The magazine regularly ran a section named “The Ladies” (*khun ying*) that offered tips on how women could keep up with the latest fashion in the constitutional age. Here, women could find the latest recipes, hairstyles, clothing and shoe designs, and tips on how to manage their household, all important aspects of the newly constructed modern Thai woman. The October 8 edition of “The Ladies” on page 34 reads, “Hats for ‘The Ladies’ is a never-ending conversation. Over and over, it happens. So we are showing two more types [of hats] in this issue” (Fig. 8).

One can also read between the lines of the numerous Thai Sisters texts that, overall, the Ladies Everywhere, esteemed or otherwise, continued to be ambivalent or altogether noncompliant despite the great efforts to propagandize them into submission. It remains unclear how the regime was able to effectively enforce Mandate 10, beyond the stern measures of the seemingly desperate parliamentary resolution of September 1941. It is also unknown what legal consequences, besides denial of service, the Thai Sisters faced if they did not comply. Had the regime not struggled with public compliance, there would be no need for the resolution or the onslaught of propaganda.



Fig. 8 The October 8, 1941 Edition of “The Ladies” (*Chiwit Thai Magazine*)

Patriotism and nationalism had become a part of the Thai Sisters’ daily life and fashion routine, thanks in part to the work of fashion intermediaries as defined by Blaszczyk (2009). By the time Thailand entered World War II the following year, the media and regime had turned their attention away from the patriotic dress code. Compliance with Mandate 10 had either largely been met, or the regime refocused its propagandic energy toward grooming the citizens for war. There is not yet any definitive proof that the regime designed the Cultural Mandates to accelerate the development of the Thai fashion industry, though it must have claimed responsibility for the production and economic boom that came as a result. Rightly so: without Mandate 10, there would have been no need for businesses to meet the demands of women needing to style newly long hair, wear Western-style clothes and shoes, and exercise daily.

IV Conclusion

Embodying modernity and nationality was a self-improvement task for fin de siècle Siamese monarchs. In that process, their bodies along with their visual representations were iconized as sites for the modernization of Siam (Peleggi 2002; 2007). The lack of a kingly body resulting from the abdication of Rama VII and the physical absence of his successor, the child-king Rama VIII, made modernity and nation building necessarily a civilian task when Phibunsongkhram came into power in 1938. With the issuance of

Mandate 10 and the supplemental texts examined in the above sections, the regime relocated the physical locus of modernization and nation building onto the bodies of women, effectively abandoning royal bodies. The Thai Sisters were, thus, conscripted to be corporeal proxies for the nation in place of the monarchs, and their bodies were transformed into public sites for the performance of patriotic propaganda.

Nation building, however, occurred also at a private and individual level. For the sake of the nation, citizens were asked to submit to the patriotic appropriation of their private lives so that the nation became internalized and naturalized within themselves (Tansman 2009). This sense of private nationalism was promoted in the supplemental texts, wherein the regime linked women's nation-building tasks to those of a mother. By framing nation building as analogous to the biological and emotional experiences of a mother, the regime sought to place patriotism into the private lives of Thai women. Repeated lexical parallels in the supplemental texts further equated nation building (*saang chaat*) with self-improvement (*saang ton eeng*), so that in order to modernize the nation the Thai Sisters had to first modernize their bodies.

Such vestimentary nation building turned popular magazines such as *Tai Mai* and *Chiwit Thai* into patriotic battlegrounds for those whom Blaszczyk (2009) calls fashion intermediaries and tastemakers. In the realm of fashion, enforcement could come in the form of photo spreads and beauty pageants. Any Thai Sister could now be a gatekeeper and arbiter of patriotism in her own home and social circle. Nation building and modernization by way of self-improvement were literally sewn into clothes, learned as vocations, modeled on beauty queens, and advertised in magazines.

Mandate 10 and its supplemental texts to the Thai Sisters demanded that the feminine body physically bear the burden of nation building. The creation of a detailed patriotic dress code for women relocated nation building away from the male bodies of monarchs and onto the bodies of Thai women. And by weaving nation building into women's private lives, the Phibunsongkhram regime made the (self-)policing of women's bodies—formerly restricted to elite women—not only essential but also fashionable and patriotic for all Thai Sisters.

Accepted: February 19, 2019

References

- Barmé, Scot. 2002. *Woman, Man, Bangkok: Love, Sex & Popular Culture in Thailand*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Blaszczyk, Regina Lee. 2009. Rethinking Fashion. In *Producing Fashion: Commerce, Culture, and*

- Consumers*, edited by Regina Lee Blaszczyk, pp. 1–18. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Conway, Susan. 2002. Hither Come the Merchants: Textiles Trade at the 19th Century Courts of Lan Na (North Thailand), Chiang Tung (Eastern Shan States), Lan Xang (Western Laos) and Sipsong Pan Na (Xinshuang Banna, South-west China). *Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings*. Lincoln: Textile Society of America. <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1376&context=tsaconf>, accessed November 5, 2018.
- Davisakd Puaksom. 2007. Of Germs, Public Hygiene, and the Healthy Body: The Making of the Medicalizing State in Thailand. *The Journal of Asian Studies* 66(2): 311–344. doi:10.1017/S0021911807000599.
- de Baecque, Anthoine. 1993. *The Body Politic: Corporeal Metaphor in Revolutionary France, 1770–1800*. Translated by Charlotte Mandell. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- de Grazia, Victoria. 1992. *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922–1945*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Dhamma Thai. <http://www.dhammathai.org/watthai/bangkok/watphrasrimahathat.php>, accessed November 5, 2018.
- Durham, Martin. 1998. *Women and Fascism*. New York: Routledge.
- Edwards, Penny. 2001. Restyling Colonial Cambodia (1860–1954): French Dressing, Indigenous Custom and National Costume. *Fashion Theory* 5(4): 389–416.
- Gray, Christine E. 1991. Hegemonic Images: Language and Silence in the Royal Thai Polity. *Man, New Series* 26(1): 43–65. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2803474.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Af27043180a170d8bdd4edcb9f6b1e0b6>, accessed November 5, 2018.
- Guenther, Irene. 2004. *Nazi Chic? Fashioning Women in the Third Reich*. New York: Berg.
- Ikeya, Chie. 2011. *Refiguring Women, Colonialism, and Modernity in Burma*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Jackson, Peter. 2003. Performative Genders, Perverse Desires: A Bio-History of Thailand's Same-sex and Transgender Cultures. *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context* (9): 43. <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue9/jackson.html>, accessed January 8, 2016.
- Kantorowicz, Ernst H. 1997. *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kongsakon Kawinraweeekun ก้องสกล กวินวิกุล. 2002. Kansang rangkai phonlamueng thai nai samai chomphon po. phibunsongkhram pho. so. 2481–2487 การสร้างร่างกายพลเมืองไทยในสมัยจอมพล ป. พิบูลสงคราม พ.ศ. 2481–2487 [Constructing the body of Thai citizens during the Phibun Regime of 1938–1944]. Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, Thammasat University.
- Loos, Tamara. 2004. The Politics of Women's Suffrage in Thailand. In *Women's Suffrage in Asia: Gender, Nationalism and Democracy*, edited by Louise Edwards and Mina Rocas, pp. 170–194. New York: RoutledgeCurzon.
- McIntosh, Linda. 2000. Thai Textiles: The Changing Roles of Ethnic Textiles in Thailand. *Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings*, pp. 402–408. Lincoln: Textile Society of America. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1823&context=tsaconf>, accessed November 5, 2018.
- Nanthira Khamphiban นันทิรา ขำภิบาล. 1987. Nayobai kiaokap phuying thai nai samai sangchat khong chomphon po. Phibunsongkhram pho. so. 2481–2487 นโยบายเกี่ยวกับผู้หญิงไทยในสมัยสร้างชาติของจอมพล ป. พิบูลสงคราม พ.ศ. 2481–2487 [Women policies during the nation building period of Field Marshall Phibunsongkhram, 1938–1944]. Faculty of Arts, Thammasat University.
- Peleggi, Maurizio. 2007. Refashioning Civilization: Dress and Bodily Practice in Thai Nation-Building. In *The Politics of Dress in Asia and the Americas*, edited by Mina Rocas and Louise Edwards, pp. 65–80. Portland: Sussex Academic Press.
- . 2002. *Lord of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image*. Honolulu:

University of Hawai'i Press.

- Piyawan Asawarachan ปิยวรรณ อัสวราชันย์. 2012. Khwamkhit khong phunam lae kitchakam khong ying thai nai samai songkhram lok khrang thi song ความคิดของผู้นำและกิจกรรมของหญิงไทยในสมัยสงครามโลกครั้งที่ 2 ภายใต้เงาของทัพญี่ปุ่น [The leadership's perception towards Thai women during World War II under the influence of the Japanese military regime]. *Japanese Studies Network Journal (JSN Journal)* 2(1): 1–19. <https://www.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/jsn/article/view/42407/35053>, accessed July 10, 2017.
- Publicity Department กรมโฆษณาการ. 1941. *Pramuan ratthaniyom lae rabiap watthanatham haeng chat, chabap thi song* ประมวลรัฐนิยมและระเบียบวัฒนธรรมแห่งชาติ, ฉบับที่ ๒ [Collection of Mandates, Codes, and Guidelines for National Culture, 2nd edition]. Publicity Department. Bangkok, Thailand.
- Reynolds, E. Bruce. 2004. Phibun Songkhram and Thai Nationalism in the Fascist Era. *European Journal of East Asian Studies* (Brill) 3(1): 99–134.
- Royal Institute of Thailand ราชบัณฑิตยสถาน. 1999. *Lakkan thot akson thai pen akson roman baep thai siang* หลักเกณฑ์การถอดอักษรไทยเป็นอักษรโรมันแบบถ่ายเสียง [Guidelines for transliterating Thai into Roman script]. Royal Institute of Thailand.
- Strate, Shane. 2015. *The Lost Territories: Thailand's History of National Humiliation*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Suksun Dangpakdee สุขสรรค์แดงกิติ. 1994. Khwamwang khong sangkhom tho satri thai nai samai sangchat pho. so. 2481–2487 ความหวังของสังคมต่อสตรีไทยในสมัยสร้างชาติ พ.ศ. 2481–2487 [Society's expectations of Thai women in the 'Nation Building' Period, 1938–1944]. Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University.
- Tansman, Alan. 2009. *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Thak Chaloemtiarana; Charnvit Kasetsiri; and Thinapan Nakhata. 1978. *Thai Politics: Extracts and Documents*, Vol. 1. Bangkok: Social Science Association of Thailand.
- Thamsook Numnonda. 1978. Pibulsongkram's Thai Nation-Building Programme during the Japanese Military Presence, 1941–1945. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies (Japan and the Western Powers in Southeast Asia)* 9(2): 234–247.
- Ubolwan Pitipattanakosit อุบลวรรณ ปิติพัฒนะโมยิต; and Uaypon Panit อวยพร พาณิช. 1989. *100 Pi khong nittayasan satri thai pho. so. 2431–2531* 100 ปีของนิตยสารสตรีไทย พ.ศ. 2431–2531 [100 years of women's magazines (1888–1988)]. Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University.
- Woodhouse, Leslie. 2012. Concubines with Cameras: Royal Siamese Consorts Picturing Femininity and Ethnic Difference in Early 20th Century Siam. *Trans-Asia Photography Review* 12(2). <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/t/tap/7977573.0002.202?view=text;rgn=main>, accessed September 14, 2018.

An Ethnography of Pantaron Manobo Tattooing (*Pangotoeb*): Towards a Heuristic Schema in Understanding Manobo Indigenous Tattoos

Andrea Malaya M. Ragragio* and Myfel D. Paluga*

Pangotoeb refers to the traditional tattooing among the Pantaron Manobo of Mindanao, a practice that has not been given a systematic description and analysis before in Philippine or Mindanao studies. After giving a review of early historical and recent reports on this practice, this article provides an ethnographic description of Pantaron Manobo tattooing on the following aspects: (a) the tattoo practitioner (and her socio-symbolic contexts); (b) tools and techniques; (c) variations in body placements; (d) basic designs; and (e) the given reasons why present-day Manobo tattoo themselves. In terms of Philippine tattooing technique, this study highlights the importance of distinguishing three modal hand movements: hand-tapping, hand-poking, and incising techniques; this last is unique to Mindanao relative to the rest of the Philippines and perhaps Southeast Asia. This paper also opens a comparative and exploratory cognitive approach in studying Manobo tattooing practice. Calling for a methodological declustering of the study of tattooing from its frequent association with male/warrior identity, this article concludes by selecting a limited set of figures that appears to be an enduring schema underlying Manobo tattooing practice: (a) the central role of the female gender; (b) the unique importance of the navel/abdomen as a tattooing region of the (female) body; and (c) the importance of the “ridge-pole” (and the “house” in general) in naming tattoo figures and attributing significances. These appear to be more resonant with many other aspects of Manobo culture to warrant giving this schema a heuristic value for future studies.

Keywords: tattoo, Manobo, Pantaron, Mindanao, Philippines, indigenous peoples, gender, cognitive schema

I Introduction

A systematic anthropological documentation of the *pangotoeb*, the indigenous tattoo prac-

* Department of Social Sciences, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of the Philippines-Mindanao, Barangay Mintal, Davao City, Philippines; Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Leiden University, Wassenaarseweg 52, 2333 AK Leiden, Netherlands

Corresponding author (Ragragio)’s e-mail: amragragio@up.edu.ph



Fig. 1 The Pantaron Highlands

tice of the Manobo from the Pantaron highlands (Fig. 1) of southern Mindanao, Philippines, is yet to be done. The present paper is a contribution towards this direction. It reviews the available historical accounts of the tattoo, from the earliest available records dating to the late nineteenth century, up to more recent documentation in ethnographies and visual media. The article will also present firsthand ethnographic data from interviews and observations regarding the present tattooing practice of the Manobo along the Talomo River and Simong River in Talaingod town, Davao del Norte Province, and the Salug River in San Fernando town, Bukidnon province. The data this article presents include what the designs of the tattoos are and their meanings, where they are placed on the body, and what reasons the Manobo give for their tattooing. Interviews with tattoo practitioners¹⁾ also reveal that the Pantaron Manobo tattooing technique of incising is unique from the other indigenous tattooing techniques in the Philippines, and perhaps Southeast Asia.

The initial aim of this research was to fill in a gap in the ethnographic description of indigenous tattooing practices in Mindanao. Unlike the tattooing practice of various groups in the Cordilleras of northern Luzon (e.g. Salvador-Amores 2013; 2002; Wilcken 2010), Mindanao tattooing has not yet been the focus of a systematic ethnographic study. In the course of developing this ethnographic description, the study evolved further interpretive directions. Meaningful connections between the tattoos and other daily objects that link them to other aspects of Manobo life began to emerge from the interviews and observations. It is this network of associations that the final section of this paper explores, forwarding them to be local “systems of representation” (Geirnaert-Martin 1992, xxviii), or “metaphors for living” (Fox 1980, 333) that may be used to describe or make sense of tattooing’s place in Pantaron Manobo society. This direction is similar to what Schildkrout (2004, 328) would describe as a “Levi-Straussian” perspective which saw body art as “a microcosm of society” that represented ideas of spirituality, social status, hierarchy and leadership, and gender and kinship relations.

1) Following Salvador-Amores’ terminology, nuancing the phrase “tattoo practitioner” from “tattoo artist” (2013, 68–70).

Godelier (2018, 479–484), in his recent comprehensive assessment of Levi-Strauss’s structural approach still emphasized the value of analysis guided by the Levi-Straussian keywords of “structure” and “transformations,” and reiterated the continuing importance of pursuing inquiries about enduring “cognitive schemas” for the present twenty-first century social science agenda. Departing from classical structuralism, this research has been open to closely listening to local, subjective views, and paid attention to what focal images surfaced in discussions of Manobo tattooing, and how they resonate with other domains of activities. In presenting a heuristic model that may guide further studies, this paper also follows Mosko’s (2009 [1985], 1; cf., Salazar 1968) suggestion to continually explore the “analytical validity of indigenous categories” while remaining aware of the dynamism of the Pantaron Manobo as a group affected by current global economic and political forces.

I-1 *Collecting Manobo Tattooing Information*

The ethnographic data presented here was collected in the period between 2007 and 2015. Prior to 2013, only initial observations about the tattooing were done as these were field visits that were not centered on investigating tattooing. Data was more systematically collected from 2013 until 2015 through directed interviews with *pangotoeb* practitioners, recipients, and other knowledgeable persons in the community, such as elders, leaders, and epic chanters. The main field site of the study were the villages located along the Talomo River (see Fig. 2 and Fig. 3 for location maps), but visits and interviews were also conducted in villages on the Salug and Simong Rivers. During interviews, the same set of questions were asked in order to triangulate the replies of each

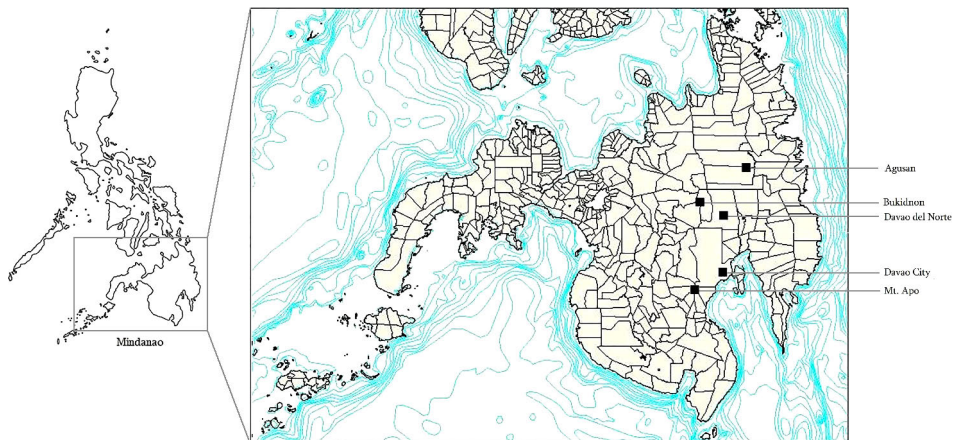


Fig. 2 Mindanao Areas Mentioned in This Paper

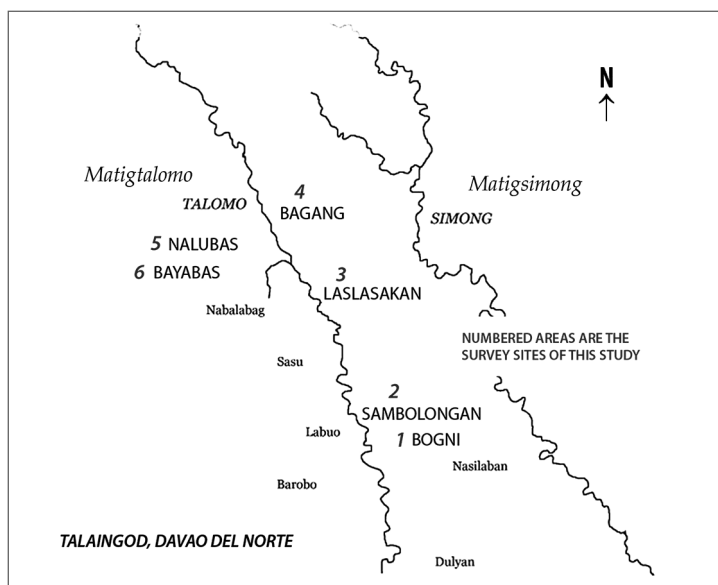


Fig. 3 Talomo and Simong Rivers of Davao del Norte

interviewee. Interviews began with asking the interviewee for basic biographical details (age, if it is known, village of birth, village of residence, names and places of birth of lineal relatives including ascending generations, if they could still be remembered). Tattoo practitioners were asked to describe the process of tattooing, what items are used, and what behavioral or bodily observances must be done throughout the process. Tattoo practitioners and other tattooed persons were also asked to recall their own experiences of getting tattooed, or seeing others get tattooed.

Photographs of tattoos were also taken during these occasions, with the consent of, and utmost consideration for, the individuals involved. However, the actual process of tattooing was not witnessed by the researchers for no such opportunity presented itself during the intermittent field visits between 2013 and 2015, and the researchers deemed it improper to instigate a tattooing session at their behest. There was, however, two occasions in which the tattoo practitioners spontaneously offered to simulate the tattooing technique using the underside of a cassava peel. This allowed us to observe the hand movements of the practitioners and more closely examine the marks that the technique makes.

Photo elicitation was used in order to identify the names of the tattoo designs. The researchers showed the interviewees photos of tattooed persons and close-ups of his or her tattoos, and asked them if individual motifs or groups of motifs had names. This was

an effective approach in identifying designs as many Pantaron Manobo are unused with using a pen and paper to draw designs. Additionally, during interviews it was not always the case that there were tattooed persons present whose tattoos may voluntarily be used as a reference when talking about designs and their names. The photos used were photos that were taken by the researchers during initial visits and interactions in the area beginning in 2007. The persons pictured were therefore those who were still living in the Pantaron area, and the interviewees were frequently acquainted with or related to the persons in the photo. This ensured that the photos used were as well-embedded in the social context of the study area as possible (Banks 2007, 60), since the objective of photo elicitation was primarily to identify the names of the designs, and not to elicit other comments (Rose 2012; Banks 2007).

These qualitative accounts are supplemented by quantitative data collected in 2014 when, in the month of April, Pantaron Manobo from Talaingod town evacuated to Davao City in the midst of counter-insurgency operations in their area. Working with the village leaders and the evacuation center secretariat committee, 90 families (or 15 families from each of the six villages located along the Talomo River) with a total of 239²⁾ individuals were randomly selected and surveyed in order to glean a socio-demographic picture of the Manobo *pangotoeb*.

II Locating and Naming the Tattooing Groups: “Ata” or Pantaron Manobo?

In the formal literature (anthropological, historical, and linguistics), the Pantaron Manobo are broadly identified as “Ata Manobo” or simply “Ata.” Frank Lebar (1975, 63, as contributed by Aram Yengoyen) has given the most authoritative anthropological account (outside of linguistics) of the “Ata” in his three-volume summing-up work on the “ethnic groups” of Southeast Asia under the Human Relations Area Files. However, compared to other entries about other indigenous groups in Mindanao, the “Ata” is given the shortest space (half a page) and thus the briefest discussion in this work.

Up to this time, little progress has been made in the representation of this “Ata” group in both the scholarly literature and in popular view, even with additional research from Gloria and Magpayo (1997), Bajo (2004), and Tiu (2005). Tiu (2005) attempted to deepen this inquiry further by posing what he called the “Ata puzzle” to problematize

2) The actual number of individuals randomly selected from the sampling frame (list of all in the evacuation center) was 396, but we did not include in the tabulation those below 10 years of age (our cut-off for “tattooing age” among the Pantaron Manobo).

this naming and classification of a group of people (Tiu 2005, 47–116).

The present use of the term “Ata” is complicated by its being interchangeably used with a separate category “Agta” that is more commonly understood to refer to Negrito groups on the separate island of Luzon. Such a usage has historical roots (beginning with Jesuit records in the latter half of the nineteenth century), and has been inherited by succeeding writers and documenters, and used with varying degrees of circumspection.

From the perspective of groups encompassed by this study (who are often included under the label “Ata Manobo” or “Ata”), “Manobo” simply means “human being.” “Ata” also has a derogatory connotation for Manobo leaders who were interviewed (note a similar observation from Bajo 2004, 26). When asked what they called themselves, they referred to the river closest to their settlements: thus, those who live near the Talomo are the “Matigtalomo,” those near the Salug are “Matigsalug,” those near Simong are “Matigsimong,” and so on. The crucial role of rivers in geographical orientation as well as self-ascription must be foregrounded to provide further clarity about what social science scholars mean when they refer to the Manobo living in the highlands of Pantaron.

Despite these distinct self-labels, the Matigtalomo and Matigsimong (on the Davao del Norte province side of the Pantaron mountain range), and the Matigsalug and Matigtigwa/Tigwanon (on the Bukidnon province side), consider each other as kin, and share a common language and material culture, so much so that it can warrant the ascription of a collective name for them. In keeping with their convention of referring to a major prominent feature of their homeland, the term “Pantaron” Manobo after the mountain range that is their ancestral domain is apt.

In the villages covered by this study, many remain un-Christianized and un-Islamized, and still practice subsistence agriculture (rotational or swidden farming; see discussion of “Ata”/“Talaingod” practices in Gloria and Magpayo 1997, 15–90), with land ownership based on usufruct. But today, planting cash crops like abaca and corn and tending small stores are becoming common, as some individuals are drawn into the practicality of procuring some basic needs from the lowlands. This is especially true for villages accessible to motorcycles.

As individuals and as communities, they retain a degree of traditional geographic mobility. Matigtalomo Manobo regularly cross the borders of Talaingod in Davao del Norte and San Fernando in Bukidnon to look for work (often as day workers for clearing fields for planting) and to visit kin. Villages may also move from one location to another, sometimes after the death of an important person in the village (such as a local leader called the *datu*), and at other times for economic purposes, such as taking advantage of subsistence agricultural lands that may still be more productive. Cultural expressions such as epic chanting, the singing of *oranda* (short, spontaneous sung verses for welcom-

ing guests and for amusement) and, needless to say, tattooing, are also still practiced.

III Documenting Manobo Tattooing: Historical and Contemporary Accounts

This section presents an overview of the available historical and contemporary documentation of traditional tattooing in Mindanao. The geographical locations mentioned here encompass a wider area than just the Pantaron Mountain range. As far as the authors are aware, there is no such synthesis as yet of these works. It is done here to give other scholars a general view of what had been observed and recorded about traditional tattooing in Mindanao, how it was practiced and what its purposes were, as well as to provide the primary references that may be consulted about this topic.

The earliest mention of tattooing in Mindanao that the authors have encountered was in a letter written by the Jesuit missionary Saturnino Urios to his Mission Superior dated April 12, 1879. In it, Urios related how, while he was in Butuan in northeastern Mindanao, “a flotilla of 27 boats filled with men and women, known in these Mindanao regions as ‘Manobos’” arrived. He described the passengers thus: “They wore their pretty costumes, their hair long, their bodies tattooed like some of the European convicts,” and added that they belonged “to the ranches of lower Agusan” (Arcilla 2003, 46).

A few years later, from 1881 to 1882, the German explorer Alexander Schadenberg (1885) traveled round Southern Mindanao. He observed how “Bagobo”³ youth (both boys and girls) of the Mt. Apo area were, at the age of approximately 12, tattooed on the arms, hands, chest, and legs. Schadenberg claimed to have seen more than one tattooing session, which he emphasized was carried out not by the Bagobo themselves, but by an “Ata,” a distinct group from the Bagobo. The tattooing involved cutting the skin with a small knife called *sagni* and then rubbing in soot from burnt bamboo. His publication included an illustration of the tattooed upper arm of a Bagobo, as well as an illustration of the *sagni* knife used for tattooing. Later in the same decade, the Jesuit missionary Fr. Pablo Pastells briefly mentioned in a letter to his superior that the Manobo in the province of Agusan tattooed themselves by “means of a needle and powdered charcoal” (1906 [1887], 277).

At the turn of the twentieth century, Cole (1913) wrote that the groups of people he called “Tagakaolo” and “Ata” decorated their bodies with tattoos, but that he failed to

3) The “Bagobo” (or “Tagabawa”) is a distinctly named ethnolinguistic group who mostly reside in what is now Davao del Sur province.

see any among the “Bagobo.” Benedict (1916), on the other hand, noted that there were “a few cases” of tattooing among the Bagobo, which she wrote was done by an “Ubu (Ata) man, from a place in the far north . . .” (265, parenthesis in the text). Benedict herself was unable to travel to areas inhabited by the group she called Ubu/Ata, and was thus unable to see if and how the Ubu/Ata practiced this amongst themselves. However, her observation of a travelling tattoo practitioner is similar to that noted by Schadenburg three decades before.

The accounts mentioned so far are brief, but the following works of Garvan (1931) and van Odijk (1925) are comparatively more substantial. Both these accounts derive from observations among the Manobo of Agusan, a lowland province to the east of the Pantaron Mountain Range, and so share many details in common. This is generally the same area from which came the “Manobo” that Urios saw in 1879, and that Pastells wrote about in 1887.

According to Garvan and van Odijk, both men and women were tattooed upon the start of puberty. Tattoos were placed on the arms, chest, and torso, but only women were tattooed on the calves. Tattoos were placed by puncturing the skin, and then rubbing the punctured area with soot accumulated from burning tree resin (van Odijk said this resin comes from a tree commonly called *dongon-dongon*, while Garvan identified this resin as coming from *Canarium villosum*, with the common name *sai-yung*).

Van Odijk reported that the tattoo instrument consisted of three needles tied in a bundle. While Garvan did not mention what kind of instrument was used, he wrote about the specialists who were tasked with carrying out this operation. Garvan (1931, 56) stated that these specialists were “nearly always a woman” or persons he described as “hermaphrodites,” individuals who adapted feminine behaviors but did not engage in sexual intercourse.

Both Garvan and van Odijk drew comparisons between tattooing and embroidery. Garvan noted that the “hermaphrodites” who were also tattoo practitioners were also skilled in embroidery, and that tattooed designs were similar to those stitched onto jackets. Van Odijk made the same observation, and added that the application of both (tattoos on the skin and stitching on cloth) were done freehand, with no pre-applied pattern to be followed (see Fig. 4a and Fig. 4b). It is following these observations that both authors surmised that the reason tattooing was done was to beautify the body. Van Odijk (1925, 990) called it a “lust for adornment” [*lust voor opschik*, in the original Dutch] and Garvan (1931, 56) simply said that “tattooing is merely for the purpose of ornamentation.” In relation to this, van Odijk definitely stated that “[t]o be tattooed or not does not indicate recognition of rank or status, of being free or being a slave” [*Het niet of wel zich laten tatoueren duidt niet op erkenning van rang of stand, van vrij-zijn of slaaf*, in the original

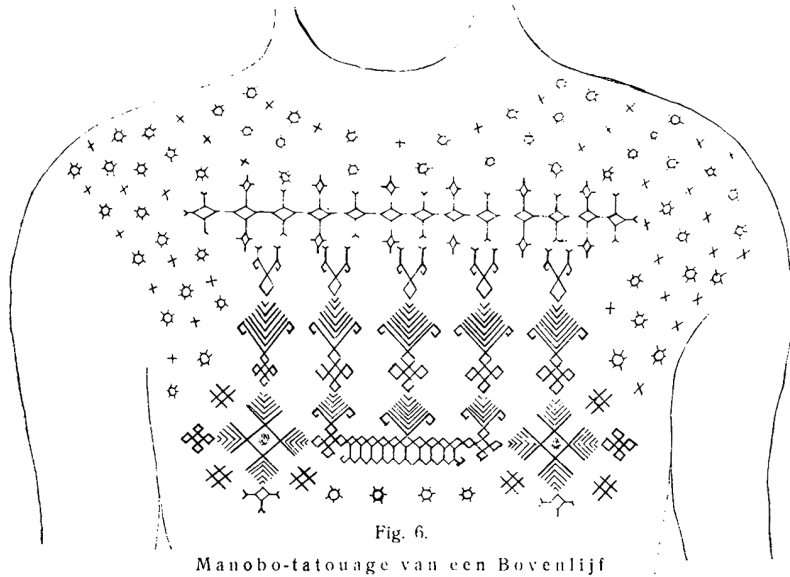


Fig. 4a Agusan Manobo Chest Tattoo, from Antonius van Odijk (1925)

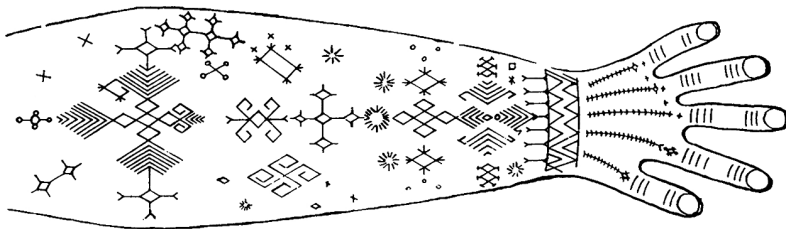


Fig. 4b Agusan Manobo Arm Tattoo, from Antonius van Odijk (1925)

Dutch] (1925, 990), though Garvan wrote that he was told that under Spanish colonial rule, tattoos were also used to identify captives who were sold as slaves.

In the decades after the publication of Garvan's and van Odijk's works, no other studies were made of Mindanao tattooing until Manuel's work among the Manuvu in the Marilog District in Davao City in the 1950s to 1960s (originally published in 1973, and re-published in 2000). Manuel discussed Manuvu tattooing as a rite of passage for adolescents and as a mechanism for fostering social cohesion. Tattooing was carried out on both males and females, and was associated with other bodily modifications such as teeth filing (for both sexes) and circumcision (for boys). Manuel added that both tattooing and

teeth cutting were done by specialists who were given “gifts” (Manuel 2000 [1973], 95) (he did not specify what kinds of gifts) in exchange for their services, and that Manuvu parents made sure that their children underwent these processes.

For Manuel, Manuvu tattooing signified group identity, conformity, and inculcating “an integrative we-feeling” (*ibid.*, 305) that subsumed individuals within the larger group. However, Manuel was unable to provide ethnographic cases to demonstrate, nor did he elaborate further on, how tattooing performed these social functions.

Other studies published since only cursorily mention tattooing. A publication by the non-government-institution Tri-People Consortium for Peace, Progress, and Development of Mindanao (TRICOM 1998) reiterated previous general observations of Manobo tattooing on the wrists, legs, waists, and breasts for ornamental purposes or for the identification of captives. Bajo’s (2004) study of Kapalong Manobo briefly mentioned the difference in designs between tattooing for women and men, and that these were meant to be decorative and symbolic of indigenous pride. A comment regarding *pangotoeb* by Western Bukidnon Manobo Francisco Polenda (2002) is brief enough to be quoted in full:

Another kind of arm *ornamentation* [zayandayan] is *tattooing* [pengeteb]. Anyone, men, women, or children may be *tattooed* [ebpengetevan]. *It is done* [Emun pengeteb] by making small *incisions* [penuris: cf. Bahasa Indonesia, *menulis*, ‘to write’]⁴⁾ *in the skin with a sharp knife* [ebpenurisen kes lundis te megarang he kurta] and *any design may be made* [ibpengeteb is ed-iringen], a *name* [ngazan], a *bird* [tagbis], or a *human* [etew] figure. (Polenda 2002, 158, emphasis and insertion of terms in brackets added; see pp. 391–392 for the original Western Manobo categories used)

Traditional Mindanao tattooing has also been the subject of two television documentaries: “*Ang Tipo Kong Babae*” (My Type of Woman) by the program *I-Witness*, which aired on March 7, 2005 (Tima 2005), and the photo-documentary “*Burdado*” (Embroidered) by the program *Reel-Time*, which first aired on August 19, 2012 (Arumpac 2012). The former tackled tattooing in the context of notions of beauty among different Philippine indigenous groups, while the latter—which focused on the Manobo of Arakan Valley—attempted to situate tattooing within Arakan Manobo spirituality.

From this review, it is apparent that there is still much that can be done for a properly contextualized and in-depth cultural analysis of Manobo tattooing. Many of these works are limited only to noting that such a practice exists among some Manobo groups. Nevertheless, there are some observations in these accounts that may still help raise relevant questions about Manobo tattooing as it is practiced today and the changes that

4) Cf. Guillermo *et al.* (2017, xiv): “‘tulisan’ (from ‘tulis’/‘menulis’ [to write]) generally means something ‘written’ or ‘writings.’”

it has undergone. First, the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century accounts are consistent in pointing out that tattooing was closely associated with specific groups of people: the “Ata” of the Davao highlands (Schadenberg 1885; Cole 1913; Benedict 1916) and the “Manobo” of Agusan (Urios in Arcilla 2003; Pastells 1906 [1887]; van Odijk 1925; Garvan 1931). While the “Bagobo” are also tattooed, it is clear from Schadenberg’s (1885) and Benedict’s (1916) account that they are only able to do so via an “Ata” practitioner. These observations suggest that the native inhabitants of Mindanao recognized distinct groupings among themselves based upon cultural practices like the ability to tattoo. Moreover, these accounts also reflect that tattooing was a channel for mobility of “Ata” practitioners, as well as the interaction between distinct local groups—possibly a sustained practice until the American colonial era.

Though the “Ata” and the Manobo of Agusan are located in contiguous areas in the eastern half of Mindanao, these early accounts also point to different tattooing techniques. According to Garvan (1931, 15), in the Agusan area tattoos are applied with the “puncturing of the skin”; van Odijk (1925, 992) similarly says that with the tool composed of bundled needles, “the skin is punctured according to the figures to be drawn” [*Met deze stift beprikt men de huid volgens de te tekenen figuren*, in the original Dutch]. In contrast, the only account of tattooing among the Ata (that of Schadenberg’s) tells that they used a short knife that “cuts” or “incises” [*ziemlich tiefe Einschnitte*, i.e., “pretty deep cuts or incisions” (Schadenberg 1885, 10)] instead of punctures.

The first two techniques resemble that of the indigenous groups in the Cordilleras of Northern Luzon wherein pointed instruments (such as needles) are used, which are either tapped or poked on to the skin. Hand-tapping is also the documented practice among neighboring Austronesian-speaking groups such as the Atayal in Formosa (now Taiwan), the Kayan in Borneo, and in many islands in the Pacific (Krutak 2007; Gell 1993; Thomas 1995). The third technique (after “hand-tapping” and “hand-poking”) is the “cutting” or “incising” technique of the Manobo of Pantaron that is discussed in this article.

Another common observation is that tattooing was associated with puberty, though only Schadenberg and Manuel explicitly stated that tattooing was a rite of passage. Ornamentation was also a commonly cited reason for tattooing. Later sources such as Manuel (2000 [1973]), Bajo (2004), and TRICOM (1998) also include “indigenous pride” and “indigenous identity” as reasons for tattooing. A contribution of the two television documentaries cited above is that the voices and views of the people themselves who practice tattooing have been heard and placed on the record.

IV Manobo Tattoo Practices:

Social Relations, Techniques, Body Placements, Designs, Reasons

The Manobo term for tattoo is *pangotoeb*, and this applies across Manobo groups such as the Agusan Manobo, Arakan Manobo, the Kulaman Manobo, the Matiglangilan, Matigtalomo, and the Matigsimong, the Matigsalug of Marilog and Kitaotao, the Tigwanon, and the Western Bukidnon. The term was first recorded by Garvan (1931), which he spelled, erroneously, as *pang-o-túb*; based upon the actual syllabication of the Manobo interviewed for this study, it should have been *pa-ngo-túb*. The following section will discuss five important aspects of Manobo tattooing: (a) social relations of tattoo practitioners and recipients; (b) comparative tools and techniques; (c) body placements and relation to the idea of self; (d) basic elements and designs; and (e) given reasons for having tattoos.

IV-1 *Social and Symbolic Relations: Tattoo Practitioner and Tattoo Recipients*

The tattoo practitioner, called a *mangotoeb*, can be either a male and a female. However, notably, all the tattoo practitioners the authors have been able to interview are female. Additionally, all the other practitioners to whom the authors have been referred but have been unable to interview are also female, except for one. Lastly, most of the deceased tattoo practitioners whose names are still remembered are also female. The explanation offered by the Pantaron Manobo was that women tattoo practitioners could tattoo both men and women, while men tattoo practitioners could only tattoo fellow males, because a man touching the body of a woman who was not kin is deemed inappropriate.

This gender pattern is different from the Cordillera peoples in Northern Luzon where male tattoo practitioners were more common (Salvador-Amores 2013, 68). But women being dominantly or exclusively given the role of tattoo practitioner and holder of knowledge related to tattoo meanings is recorded among the Kayans in the early twentieth century (Hose and McDougall 1912a, 252; Hose and Shelford 1906, 68), in southeastern Papua New Guinea (Barton 1918, 24), the Ainu of northern Japan (van Gulik 1982, 192), and the Atayal (Ho 1960, 46).

The skills of the *mangotoeb* are transmitted informally. Future tattoo practitioners began as children who observed older *mangotoeb* in practice. These *mangotoeb* are also often an elder relative such as their mother or aunt. Malin,⁵⁾ a *mangotoeb*, recalled how she would spend the whole day with her aunt, who would allow her to observe: "Very early in the morning I would start, until the sun reaches there [points to the west]." Soon

5) All names of interlocutors are pseudonyms.

after, and without any prodding, these young girls would move on to practice cutting the underside of a cassava peel, which simulates human skin, while others would try tattooing their age-mates, such as close friends, sisters, or cousins.

There is the added element to Malin's story of having dreamt that she should be a tattoo practitioner after she fell asleep while observing her aunt at work for the first time. She did not expressly read this, however, as a special "message" (as dreams may be interpreted to be)—as she said, it was "just a dream."

There is no period of formal apprenticeship, but budding practitioners who show a talent for it are encouraged by their older relatives to continue. This informal form of guidance is made possible by the fact that young, would-be *mangotoeb* practice in open or public spaces (such as in front of their houses) where their work may be seen by others. There is no formal rite of recognition that one has already attained the status of *mangotoeb*. A *mangotoeb* begins to be recognized as such when word of her/his skill begins to spread and other fellow Manobo begin to seek out her/his services.

A skillful *mangotoeb* can be very busy. Malin recalls her aunt working as a *man-gotoeb*: "So many people would come . . . sometimes as much as 10 [in a day]. And sometimes, she would do nothing else for two days straight but to tattoo." Lunid, whose deceased mother was a famous *mangotoeb*, claimed that her mother would tattoo from 10 to 15 individuals a day.

What is common among the interviewed tattoo practitioners is the element of enjoyment. As youngsters, they already had an initial attraction to the tattoo practice, which is why they would observe their local *mangotoeb* at work. They persisted in this role because they "liked" it; in the words of Erinea, a Matigsalug practitioner, tattooing was "*kaupiyahan*," or "a joy."

Both men and women are tattooed. Many elder Pantaron Manobo cannot reckon their exact calendar age, and so their age at their first tattoos cannot be exactly determined. However, they all agree that for the women, their first tattoos were placed before menarche. Both elderly men and women recall that they were first tattooed before marriage. Another way to convey their estimation of their age when they were first tattooed is to point to one of the pre-pubescent children who would always be milling about during interviews and say that "I was that age" when he or she first got tattooed (the ages of these children fall between 8 to 10 years of age).

At present, children are still allowed and even encouraged by their parents to get tattoos. Jo and Min (who were both 15 years of age at the time of the interview in 2015) were 13 and 11 years old respectively when they were first tattooed along with eight other friends. Their parents had told them that a gigantic creature called the *Ologasi* would eat people who did not have tattoos. Jo added that the tattoo "is pleasing to see,"

and that seeing the tattoos of others makes one also want to be tattooed. Their friend Niki, who was 14 years of age at the time of the interview and who was tattooed with her elder sister a few years before, said that they “were thankful” after getting tattooed because they would no longer be taken by the *Ologasi*. When asked if they were afraid at the time they were tattooed, all three teenagers answered that they were not.

When asked about what preparations they did beforehand, they said that they readied *baliog* (beads), *tikos* (leglets made of fiber), and some food that they must give to the *mangotoeb*. However, being a *mangotoeb* is not seen by the Pantaron Manobo to be a lucrative occupation or economically rewarding role. Sometimes, as Malin told us with a touch of humor, it was she who had to feed the tattoo recipient: “I would be the one to spend for the person to be tattooed . . . the stomach is soft if it is empty, so it needs to have something inside it so that it will be full and taut [so that the tattoo will be applied better].”

Nevertheless, it is required that the tattoo recipient give even just a small item to the *mangotoeb* in return. This is similar to Manuel’s observation that a “gift” (2000 [1973], 95) must be given to the specialist who carries out the tattooing. When asked what sort of items can be given, the immediate answers given by *mangotoeb* and other Manobo adults are the aforementioned beads, leglets, and food. The value of this item is not what is at stake here but rather, the giving of this item serves to “remove the blood from the practitioner’s eyes,” referring to the blood that is shed by the recipient that the tattoo practitioner sees during tattooing. If this blood is not “removed,” it is believed that this will result in the failure of the practitioner’s eyesight in the future.

A similar view was also recorded among the Kayan in the early twentieth century. A small gift generically called “*lasat mata*” (which may be beads or any small item) must be given to the female tattoo practitioner, and “if it were omitted the artist would go blind” (Hose and McDougall 1912a, 254). In Kayan language, *lasat mata* literally comes from the categories “eyes” (*mata*) and “to wipe clean” (*lasat*)⁶ (Southwell 1980, 114, 139). This denotes that the name of the gift for the Kayan practitioner follows a similar logic as that of the Pantaron Manobo practice of “removing the blood from the eyes” of the tattoo practitioner, also through gift-giving (although the Pantaron Manobo do not give a special name to the gift given to the *mangotoeb*).

During the tattoo process itself, the only prohibition, called *liliyan* or *pamaleye*, has

6) Southwell (1980, 114) has the following entry for *lasat* (note the example for the second definition, “wiping clean”):

LASAT (verb) . . . 1. rubbed or worn by abrasion; . . . 2. wiped clean; *uh lasat nah ngah aleng te’ neng ka’ anan dih* - that soot on your face has been wiped clean. 3. to wipe dry; . . . 4. a wooden pat or bat for flattening soft surface. 5. an eraser or cleaner. 6. sandpaper; . . .

to do with the recipient grabbing hold of someone as the tattoo is being applied. According to Malin, “If you get a tattoo, you cannot grab on to me even if it is very painful, because I can be victimized during a *pangayaw* [raid]. . . . If you grab [the *mangotoeb*], her life is placed in danger. If there is a raid, she will be the one taken, or killed.” For the Matigtalomo (the group to which Malin belongs), grabbing on to *anyone* while being tattooed will effectively doom that person in a future *pangayaw*. But for Erinea, a Matigsalug *mangotoeb*, this restriction applies only to the tattoo practitioner, and that the tattoo recipient may touch other people present as the tattoo is being applied. However, because the researchers have not yet observed first-hand the actual application of the tattoo, the question of whether this taboo is still actively observed is still open for direct verification.

Apart from the requirement of giving an item to the practitioner and the prohibition against grabbing someone whilst being tattooed, the Manobo today do not recount any other practices related to the supernatural in the process of tattooing. There are no prayers said before, during, or after the tattooing, and the recipient can immediately resume normal activities right after being tattooed.

As for post-tattoo care, the *mangotoeb* recommend that the tattooed portion of the body be covered with clothing for the next three days. Additionally, the portion of the body that was tattooed should not be washed with water in order to keep its dark color. An epiphyte called the *kagopkop* may also be applied at this stage (see below).

IV-2 *Manobo Incising Technique as a Third Modal Technique in Southeast Asian Tattooing*
In Northern Luzon, the general term for tattoo is *batok* (Salvador-Amores 2013). Among the Manobo, the term *batok* is also present as a verb that refers to a staccato cutting motion. This cutting motion approximates the application of the tattoo using a bladed tool. However, the process of being tattooed is simply called *pagpapangotoeb*, with the *pangotoeb* as root word and the prefix *pagpa*—denoting “the process of,” hence, the process of being tattooed.

The specialized bladed tool for tattoo application is called *goppas*, but without the *goppas* the *ilab*, or a short knife that is also used to prepare betel-chew, can also serve. The *goppas* or the *ilab*, held by the practitioner like a pen, is wielded with quick *batok* motions upon the skin to cut short dashes a few millimeters in length and in depth, producing the basic element of *pangotoeb* design.

This technique is distinguished from the hand-tapping and hand-poking processes that are both present in the northern Philippine Cordilleras (*ibid.*). The first important difference concerns the tool: both hand-tapping and hand-poking use a sharp point (such as needles or lemon thorns), either singly or bundled together, hafted onto a wooden

stick (*ibid.*, 91, 95). In hand-tapping the stick with the hafted needles or thorns is hit with a separate tool (often another stick) repeatedly. This percussive motion drives the pointed tool to strike the skin with the tip of the needles or thorns to prick the skin and allow the ink to seep in. In hand-poking, the pointed tool is pushed directly by hand by the practitioner to pierce the skin; this does not require a second implement.

“Pricking” the skin is also how early Spanish chroniclers described the tattooing process among the Visayans in the Central Philippines whom they first encountered (Alcina 2012, 143; Chirino 1904 [1604], 205; Bobadilla 1905 [1640], 287; Morga 1904 [1609], 72). Chirino (1904 [1604], 206) stated that pricking was done “with sharp, delicate points,” while Loarca (1903 [1582], 115, 117) claimed that “small pieces of iron dipped in ink” were used. According to Scott (1994), Loarca wrote this account in Iloilo in the island of Panay, and Jocano (2008 [1968], 23), in his very brief description of tattooing among the Sulod of Panay, wrote that tattoos called *batæk* “are pricked into the skin with a needle or any pointed iron instrument.”

Alcina (2012, 143) described “sharp instruments” or “little combs, made of brass,”⁷⁾ that “pricked the flesh,” and according to Colin (1906 [1663], 63–64) tattooing was done “with instruments like brushes or small twigs, with very fine points of bamboo. The body was pricked and marked with them until blood was drawn.”

While hand-tapping and hand-poking with pointed tools result in points, cutting with a knife produces dashes. As mentioned above, applying the *pangotoeb* is similar to the process described by Schandenbergh (1885). The *ilab* knife also resembles the *sagni* (in Plate III Fig. 17 of his manuscript; see Figs. 5a and 5b) knife Schadenbergh said is used by the “Ata” tattoo practitioner. It is also apparent from the woodcut illustration of an example of tattooing in Schadenbergh’s manuscript (in page 10; see Fig. 6) that the overall design is composed of small dashes. Aside from hand-tapping and hand-poking with pointed tools that prick or pierce, the Pantaron Manobo *pangotoeb* thus presents a third technique in indigenous tattooing in the Philippines that utilizes a bladed tool, and entails incising, or cutting, small dashes instead of puncturing the skin.

Among Philippine groups that practice skin modifications, this technique of incising may be comparable instead to the scarification of various Negrito groups as reported by Garvan (1963) in the provinces of Tayabas (now Quezon), Bulacan, Rizal, Zambales, Camarines Norte, and Camarines Sur, all in Luzon. Various tools that were used to wound the skin are bladed implements like the bolo and betel-knife, as well as other tools made of bamboo and stone. However, Garvan did not clarify if certain tools were associ-

7) These may be similar to what Ambrose (2012) called “multi-toothed tattooing blades,” common throughout Oceania (also see the illustrations of these tools in this cited paper).

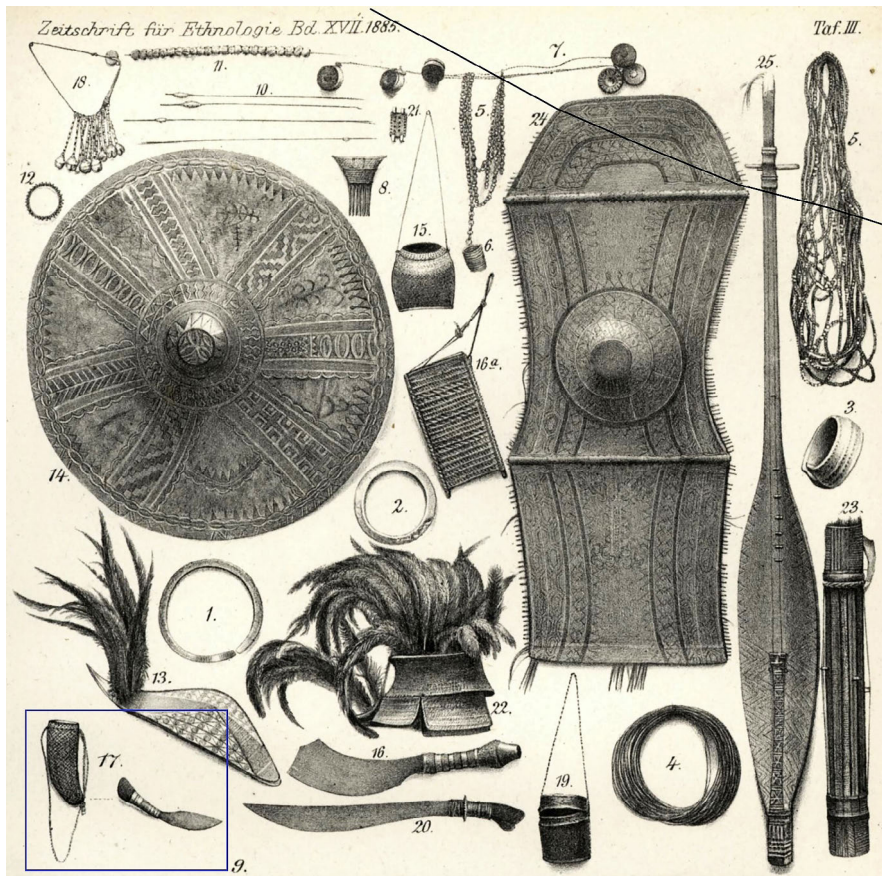


Fig. 5a Bagobo Material Culture, from Alexander Schadenberg (1885); The Bagobo *Sagni* is in the Square



Fig. 5b Pantaron Manobo *Ilab*

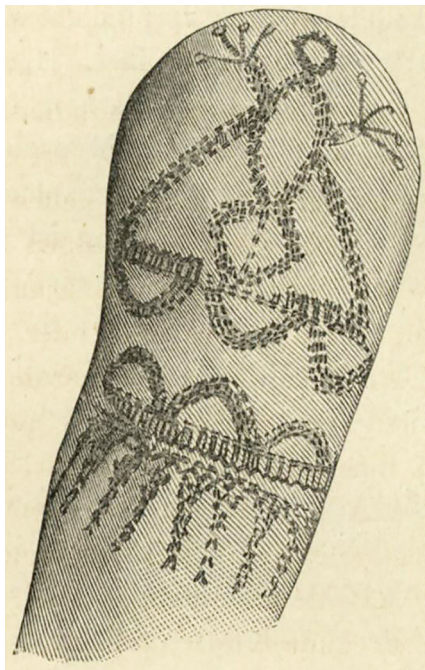


Fig. 6 Bagobo Tattoo on the Upper Arm, from Alexander Schadenberg (1885)

ated with particular groups or areas, or if different tools were used within the same group or area. Garvan's illustrations of samples of scarification designs (Garvan 1963, 50) show that the resulting marks also consist of lines and dashes that are similar to the Manobo tattooing.

Outside of the Philippines, among the Ainu, van Gulik (1982, 188) wrote that "no use is made of needles" to tattoo. Instead, they use "a small knife with razor edge by means of which the flesh is incised." In the survey of tattoo technologies Ambrose (2012) provided in his exploration of connections between tattooing and Lapita pottery, cutting with sharp-edged tools (like obsidian flakes) is present in Melanesia (particularly the Admiralty Islands, New Ireland, New Britain, New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia), but is not noted elsewhere in Oceania or Island Southeast Asia. Drawing from historical documentation (from the nineteenth century) of the practice in Manus Island in the Admiralty Islands, Ambrose (Ambrose 2012, 13) described tattooing in the area as "made up of a series of short lines or cuts," or of "repeated parallel cuts of about 5mm."

The pigment used for the tattoo is the soot from a chunk of *salumayag*, or *almasiga* in Tagalog (*Agathis philippinensis* [Warb.]), a hardened tree resin that quickly ignites if

placed near a flame. The burning *salumayag* is placed below a *kaldero* (metal pot), and the accumulated soot from the flame of the burning *salumayag* is carefully scraped off. This same method of collecting soot for ink is done among the Kalinga (Salvador-Amores 2013), the Kayan (Hose and Shelford 1906, 68), and the Ainu (van Gulik 1982). The *mangotoeb* then moistens his or her fingers with water, dips them in the collected soot, then rubs the soot on to the wounds that have already been made by the *goppo*s. The pigment is simply allowed to stay onto the wounds without being washed off to ensure that it stays.

Another important plant source is the *kagopkop*, an epiphyte that has not yet been scientifically identified thus far. This is not used during the time of tattoo application, but when the wounds of the tattoo are healing, as indicated by the itching the recipient feels at the tattooed area. At this stage, heated nodules of *kagopkop* are rubbed onto the tattooed area not only to soothe the itching, but also to keep the black coloration darkly vibrant. Nowadays, with the reduction of forests from which these plant materials are normally gathered, soot from burned rubber tires is also considered to be suitable ink by some tattoo practitioners.

IV-3 *Body Placements of the Tattoos*

The *mangotoeb* say that the recipient's preferences are followed with regard to what design, what part of the body is to be tattooed, and how extensive the tattoo will be. Currently, adult Manobo also claim that it is up to the individual Manobo whether to get tattooed or not. Thus there are individuals with the complete repertoire of tattoos, some with just a few lines, some with what appear to be unfinished tattoos, and some with no tattoos at all. Not being tattooed is not viewed negatively, and no terms exist which distinguish a tattooed person from a non-tattooed person.

Though there is some leeway for the preferences of the individual recipient, these preferences are limited by the recipient's sex, prescribed locations, and the suite of designs. The Pantaron Manobo traditionally only tattoo specific portions of the body: the forearms from the wrists up to just below the elbow, around the abdomen and back, breasts, and the distal third of the leg ending at the ankles. Though both Garvan (1931) and Schadenberg (1885) had noted the presence of tattoos on the upper arms, the authors have not encountered members of the older generation of Pantaron Manobo with upper arm tattoos. They generally consider these to be "new" (in Bisaya lingua franca, *bag-o*) or derived from the modern tattooing of non-Manobo. This may suggest a difference in tattoo placement on the body between the Pantaron Manobo of today on the one hand, and the Agusan Manobo and the Bagobo (as observed by Garvan and Schadenberg respectively) on the other.

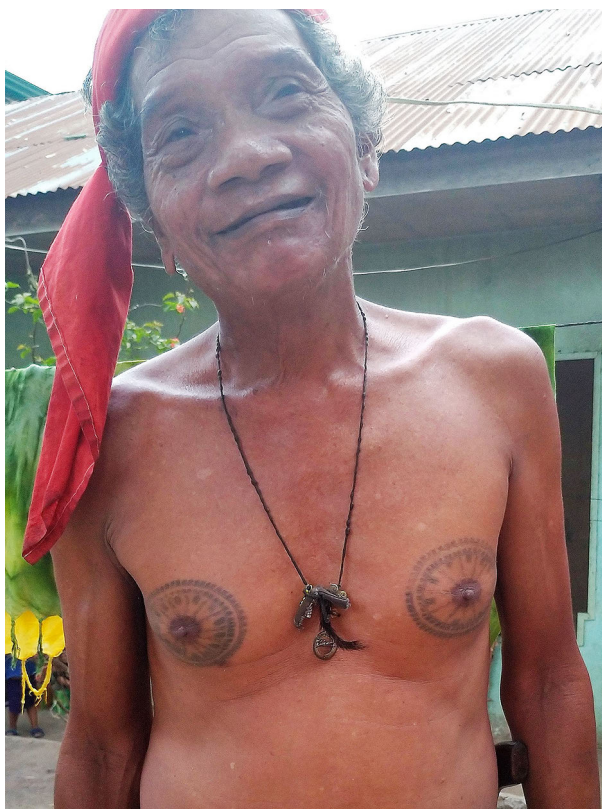


Fig. 7 Pantaron Manobo Male Chest Tattoo

There are further regulations with tattoo placement in terms of sex. The forearm tattoos can be found on both men and women, as are those on the breast or chest area (see Fig. 7). But the tattoos on the abdomen and lower leg are said to be restricted to females. While they relate the former to their belief that tattoos can help “ease childbirth,” no reason is provided for the restriction of tattooing on the lower legs to females.

IV-4 *Basic Elements and Designs*

If broken down to its most basic element, the *pangotoeb* is composed entirely of short dashes. This is a function of the bladed tool (either the *goppas* or the *ilab*) used in tattooing and the *batok* motion of cutting, rather than puncturing, to which it lends itself best—resulting in short, cut dashes instead of points. Even designs that appear curvilinear from afar are rendered as conjoined short segments of straight dashes.

The short dashes made by cutting are, by themselves, not named, but grouped

combinations of dashes are. The identification of these named groups presented an interesting methodological challenge, especially in delineating their borders within, for example, the wider abdominal or forearm tattoo. This was compounded by the blurring of tattoos due to time on the body of our more elderly interlocutors. It was the interlocutors themselves who came up with the solution by simulating tattooing with a cassava peel and applying some soot to allow the patterns to be visible. As explained in the section above regarding the process of becoming a *mangotoeb*, this technique is one way by which a budding tattoo practitioner trained him or herself. The resulting lines on the cassava peel are neat and well-defined, making it easier to distinguish which dashes go together as group.

The dominant figural designs of the *pangotoeb* are simple geometrical shapes like circles, triangles, squares, and lines. Some figurative designs are derived from, or seen as, objects found in nature, such as the *paloos* (monitor lizard) (Fig. 8 r, s, t), and the *salorom* (fern) (outer borders of Fig. 8 r). Parallel diagonal lines are called *linabud*, from a medicinal grass called *labud*. Other designs are abstract, such as the *ngipon-ngipon* (teeth-like)—a pair of parallel dashes placed one after another. These segmented dashes sandwich an unbroken straight line called the *pisol* (the repeated bands in Fig. 8 a, c, d, f, h). The *pisol* is distinguished from a straight line occurring by itself, which is called a *linayon*. The *linayon*, in turn, may either be thin or thick (Fig. 8 n, o, p, q).

The *ngipon-ngipon* and the *pisol* combination, if it appears on the ankle, is called by a different name: *kinorow* (Fig. 8 i). This comes from *korow*, a Manobo time-keeping instrument to remind one of a future event that aids in counting the days prior to that particular event. The *korow* consists of a strip of rattan knotted according to the number of days; the person holding on to that strip must cut one knot for each day that passes until the event that is waited for arrives.

The *panalinsing* and *tirog* are two other distinct named groups of tattoo designs. The *panalinsing* is commonly a border motif consisting of a central vertical line crossed by several shorter segments along its length which, blurring with age, appears as thick horizontal lines (top borders of Fig. 8 m, n, p, q).

Like the *panalinsing*, the *tirog* too can function as a border, but may be integrated within a thicker design band, for example on the forearm (Fig. 8 m, n, q). The *tirog* is a ladder-like image (Fig. 8 m, n, q). The tattoo practitioners and other Pantaron Manobo adults interviewed were explicit in saying that the *tirog* functions as the lower border of the abdominal tattoo (which, as a whole, is also referred to as *pangotoeb*). Indeed, it can be considered the foundation of the abdominal tattoo, for it is the first design band of the abdominal tattoo that is applied (Fig. 8 b, g). Further, practitioners and informed adults are likewise explicit in saying that the placement of this *tirog* band is based upon the

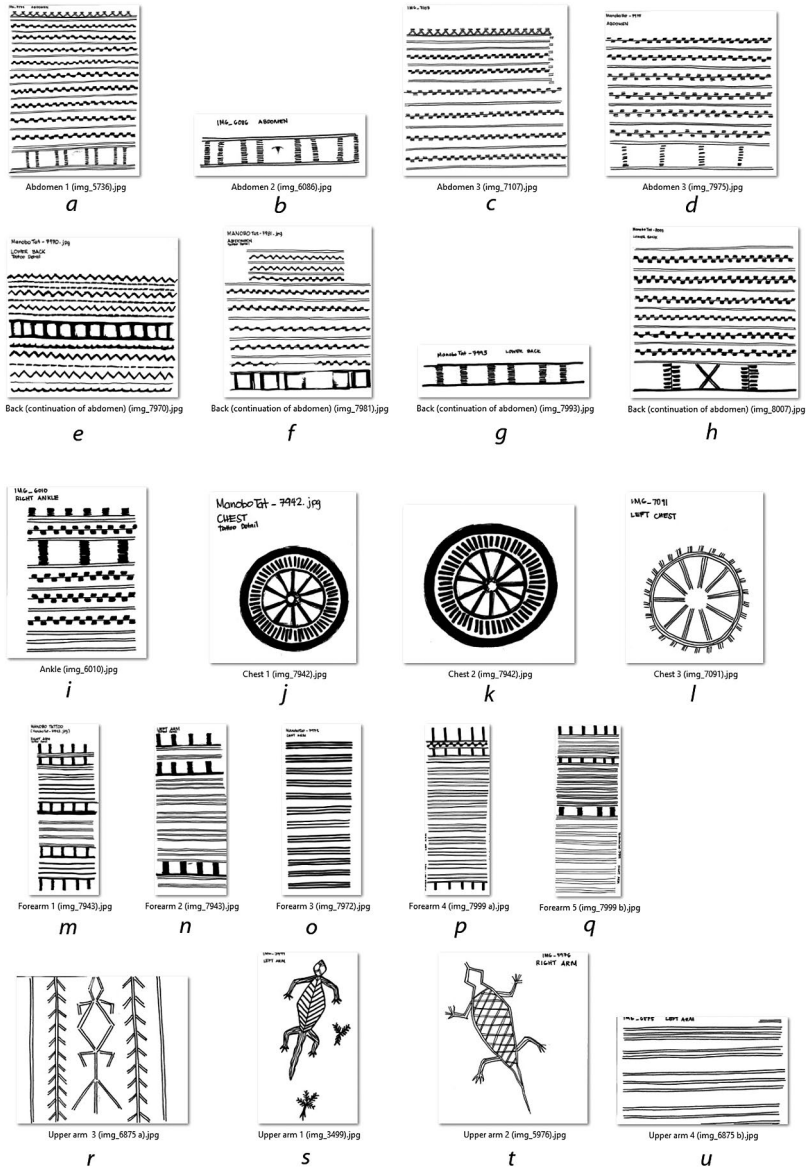


Fig. 8 Variation of Pantaron Manobo Tattoo Designs

navel. The navel is purposefully centrally placed between the “rungs” and “handles” of the ladder-like *tirog* (Fig. 8 a, b). The placing of the *tirog* corresponding with the navel serves as the caudal terminus of the entire abdominal *pangotoeb*. Once affixed, several succeeding bands of the *ngipon-ngipon-pisol* group are tattooed on. These are topped with the *liliongan* design, composed of an inverted “V” and a horizontal dash on top of

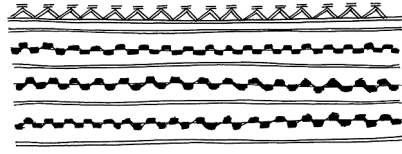


Fig. 9 *Liliongan* or "Ridge-Pole" Design



Fig. 10 Two of our Manobo Interlocutors Who Have Abdomen Tattoos



Fig. 11 Female Abdomen Tattoos; on the Right Picture, Note the *Bagakis* Design below the Navel

its apex (topmost layer in Fig. 9). *Liliongan* is also the term for the ridge-pole of the Manobo house, a significant component of the house structure that will be further discussed below.

There is another set of abdominal tattoos that are less commonly placed. This short band, applied below the individual's navel, is called *bagakis* (see Fig. 10 and Fig. 11, right),

composed of *tirog*, *ngipon-ngipon*, and *linayon*. While the abdominal *pangotoeb* can occur by itself, the *bagakis* that the researchers have seen so far only occur with a complete abdominal set, suggesting that the *bagakis* is placed after the abdominal *pangotoeb*, possibly at a later stage in the life of the individual.

The forearm *pangotoeb*, present on both men and women, is more a loose combination of designs (some individuals have “mismatching” tattoos on the left and the right arms). The *linayon* is almost always present (Fig. 8 m, n, o, p, q); less frequently, the *tirog*, *ngipon-ngipon*, and figurative designs like the *linabud*. A forearm tattoo is finished off with the *panalinsing* border on both the proximal and distal ends of the forearm group (Fig. 8 m and p).

Men and women have breast tattoos, but the designs are different for each sex. The design group (which does not have a properly articulated group name) for men are placed around the nipple; for women it is above it.

The breast tattoo for women consists of *linayon*, *ngipon-ngipon*, *tirog*, and a short band at the top called *papinuan*. On applying the tattoo, the first mark to be made is a line right above the areola, which, like the *tirog* corresponding to the navel, demarcates the caudal extent of this tattoo group. This line is called the *binunsuran*; this term’s root word is *bunsud*, which primarily means “beginning,” and secondarily as “the foot of the ladder into the house” (SIL 2016, entry on “*bunsud*”). *Binunsuran* is also the term for the bottom edge of a shield (*banwaloy*), which is likewise struck to the ground by a Manobo *bagani* (warrior) during warrior display. The women’s breast and chest tattoos depicted in Garvan (1931, see Plate 1a and 1b; see Fig. 12) do not resemble the breast tattoos for Pantaron Manobo women. At this point, it can be underlined that these important, and rare, early twentieth-century images from Garvan (1931) (Fig. 12) and van Odiijk (1925) (Fig. 4a and Fig. 4b) give some indications of the difference between the tattoo designs of the Manobo of the Agusan plains, and the highland Pantaron Manobo.

The breast tattoo for men is a circular design consisting of several straight lines called *dalan* extruding radially from the areola, ringed by repetitive *panalinsing* demarcating the circular pattern (Fig. 8 j, k, l).

IV-5 *Why the Manobo Tattoo Themselves*

The reason most often spontaneously given for getting a tattoo from both old and young Manobo alike is that it protects the bearer of the tattoo from the creature called the *Ologasi*. The *Ologasi* is a giant that is said to eat untattooed persons when the *baton* (an event similar to the notion of “the end of days”) occurs. The *Ologasi* appears as a villain in the story of Manobo folk-hero Banlak and his kin as they traveled on a boat to “the other world” where “there was no more death.” According to the tale the authors



Fig. 12 Agusan Manobo Designs, from John Garvan (1931)

recorded in 2014, and another version from Bajo (2004, 157–165), the *Ologasi* blocked Banlak’s company at the portal to “the other world” and demanded that Banlak give the giant his sister in exchange for passage. Banlak agreed, and left his sister behind as the rest of the group made their way to “the world with no death.” That tattoos protect against the *Ologasi* is also a reason that is present among the Matigsalug Manobo of Marilog.⁸⁾

Another common reason for getting a *pangotoeb* is that the tattoos would serve as a “light” to guide the soul to the afterlife after one dies. Among the Pantaron Manobo, the realm into which the departed enter after death is called the *Somolow*. This belief appears to be more widely recorded across Mindanao, as this is recorded to be present across these other Manobo groups: the Matigsalug of both Marilog and Kitaotao (Tima 2005), the Kulaman (TRICOM 1998), Kapalong (Bajo 2014), and Arakan Manobo (Arumpac 2012).

The link between tattoos and the afterlife is one that is also widespread among various groups in Southeast and East Asia. Tattoos for the Kalinga served to make one

8) This specific information from Marilog (downstream Salug) is from Pilarte (2012); we have independent verification of this among upstream Salug villages.

recognizable to and “worthy to live with the deceased ancestors” in the *jugkao* or afterlife (Salvador-Amores 2013, 133). The same function—of tattoos allowing one entry into the afterlife—was briefly mentioned by an unnamed Spanish chronicler in the sixteenth century for the Ibanags of northeast Luzon (Scott 1994, 264). The Kayan in the early twentieth century believed that after death, tattoos “act as torches in the next world” (Hose and Shelford 1906, 67), without which their souls would be left in total darkness. Also for the Kayan, tattoos on the hands of a successful headhunter was said to allow him to be able to easily cross the single log that served as the bridge into the afterlife. This log was said to be guarded by, and incessantly disturbed by a supernatural being called *Maligang*, and so being tattooed facilitated a soul’s crossing of it (Hose and McDougall 1912b, 41).

Among the Bugotu of the Solomon Islands in the nineteenth century, the “mark” of an outline of the frigate-bird had to be “cut” on their hands before they were accepted in the hereafter (Codrington 1957 [1891], 180, 257), and a tattooed Ainu woman is “assured of life after death in the realm of her deceased ancestors” (van Gulik 1982, 214). For the Atayal, an ancestral spirit stood guard at the end of a long bridge leading into the spirit world. If the dead person could “pass the test of adulthood”—i.e., tattoos associated with headhunting for men, and exceptional weaving for women—then that person could cross quickly to the other side; if not, souls had to take a longer route to reach their final destination (Ho 1960, 9).

Other cited reasons are more physical than metaphysical. For some Pantaron Manobo, the thick tattoo band that encircles women’s stomachs is believed to ease childbirth. This is echoed by the Arakan Manobo who say that tattoos signify strength for women, and allow them to work in the fields (Arumpac 2012). This association with childbearing and birthing is the only physically therapeutic purpose ascribed to Manobo tattoos, unlike among the Kayan (Hose and Shelford 1906; Hose and McDougall 1912a, 248) and Dayaks (Lumholtz 1920, 347) in Borneo, where tattoos helped cure other illnesses.

Finally, in interviews with some Pantaron Manobo, they also say that the tattoo functions as a marker of their identity, that is, “to be recognized as Manobo” (in Bisaya lingua franca: *para mailhan na Manobo*). At present, the Pantaron Manobo do not associate tattooing with ascribed or achieved status. Neither do they explicitly consider tattooing as a rite of passage; the recollection of elders that they were tattooed before menstruation and marriage may be suggestive in this regard, but they also do not say that tattooing is today a requirement to become marriageable or to become an established member of Pantaron Manobo society.

V Declustering the Study of Tattooing from Male, Warrior Identity

The preceding discussion of the reasons for tattooing given by the Pantaron Manobo may raise the question of the common association of tattooing with “male” gender roles and “warrior” attributes and activity. This association is reflected in both popularized presentations (e.g. Wilcken 2010; Krutak 2012 [2005]) and academic literature. For example, historian William Henry Scott (1994, 20) plainly states that tattoos among sixteenth-century Visayans “were symbols of male valor: they were applied only after a man had performed in battle with fitting courage and, like modern military decorations, they accumulated with additional feats.” In his typology of groups that remained “unhispanized” until the end of the Spanish colonial period, Scott (1982, 132) underlined that in “warrior societies” (such as the Agusan Manobo, Mandaya, Bagobo, Tagakaolo, Blaan, Isneg, Tingguian, and Kalinga), a “distinct warrior class . . . are recognizable by distinctive costume or tattoos.”

Following this line, Junker (2000, 348) categorizes tattoos as “warrior insignia” that signified success in warfare and the prestige that comes with it. More recently, in arguing that the body (*lawas*) is instrumentalized by the community’s inner self (*kaloobang bayan*), Villan (2013, 69) asserts that it is the “duty of the tattooed (Visayan) warriors” (or *nabatukang hangaway*)⁹ to “maintain the life, breathing (*ginhawa*), and pride (*dangal*)” of their community (*bayan*) through “raiding (*pangangayaw*) and waging of battles [against the enemies] (*pangungubat*).”

In the case of sixteenth-century Visayas, a close rereading of the primary sources will show that tattooing *as such* was *not* the exclusive domain of “warriors.” Women, who presumably did not fulfill “warrior” roles, were nevertheless tattooed as well, albeit to a lesser degree (Chirino 1904 [1604]; Alcina 2012; also see *The Boxer Codex* [Souza and Turley 2016]).¹⁰ Amongst the men, Alcina’s (2012) reliable account is informative in this regard:

. . . one thing is certain: **all the Bisayan men usually tattooed themselves**, except those who were called *asug*. . . . Not all, however, practiced it in the same way nor did they execute it all at one time.

They began tattooing themselves at about the age of twenty years and up; although some, overcome

9) In his paper, Villan (2013) equates, without historical warrant, the category “tattooed warrior” with the colonial term “Pintados,” which actually refers *both* to warrior and non-warrior Visayans.

10) And assuming that even if they did—and more research is needed in this regard—then this begs the question of why, as warriors, they were not fully tattooed as the “tattooed-warrior” paradigm would call for.

by fear, deferred it until they were filled with shame when a little older they agreed to allow themselves to be tattooed.

. . . Among them it was a sign of cowardice not to tattoo oneself, for they said that if such an individual lacked the courage to suffer the pricking of friendly needles, how could he ever bear the pain of the spears of the enemy?

For this reason, **the bravest among them would add more tattoos, aside from the customary ones.** (Alcina 2012, 141, 143, emphasis added)

Alcina then proceeded to describe a set of designs that he described to be “the ordinary type of tattooing used by all of them” (*ibid.*, 143). His observations imply that tattooing was an ordinary practice that can be present among men and women of whatever status and social-heroic expectations. Further, the distinction of those who were recognized as “bravest” lay not in the presence of tattoos *per se*, but the amount or degree of their application. As Esteban Rodriguez (Anonymous 1903 [1559–68], 126) of the Legazpi expedition observed in 1565, “these Indians wear gold earrings, and the chief wears two clasps about the feet. . . . All the body, legs, and arms are painted; and he who is bravest is painted most” (ellipse in original published text).

The close association between tattooing and warrior identity was reinforced in American colonial scholarship on the “headhunters” of the northern Cordilleras, and this frame has persisted even in recent studies, as Salvador-Amores (2002, 110) noted. In response to this, she endeavored to uncover other meanings, symbols, and functional roles of Kalinga tattooing apart from, or beyond, this familiar frame (Salvador-Amores 2002). Nevertheless this remains to be the point of departure of her study on ritual, identity, and tattoo decline in Ilubo, Kalinga (*ibid.*), and she continued to grapple with this question in her more extensive treatment of Butbut tattooing (Salvador-Amores 2013), where she wrote:

A number of sources suggest that Butbut tattooing is **best understood within the context of headhunting and of the *maingor* (warriors).** I have long argued that for the Kalinga, tattooing is not only associated with headhunting, but that it has a deeper cultural meaning. Tattooed elders told me that in the past, *whiing* (chest tattoos) men **denoted bravery exhibited in defending the village against enemy attacks.** The tattoos **also determined which hierarchical social roles** the men would occupy (*ibid.*, 115–116, emphasis added).

The present article believes that this common and popular axiom of closely associating “tattooing” with “warriorship” (and “headhunting” or “social hierarchy”)—almost elevated as *the* paradigm when approaching Philippine indigenous tattooing—needs to be fully reassessed. The possible appropriation of tattooing by a “warrior group” within a broader (tattooed) community, like the colonial-period Kalinga, (*maingor*, Salvador-

Amores 2013) must explicitly be addressed as a separate inquiry in itself. Scott (1982, 144), approaching from a different direction, had already placed a finger on the issue when he wrote that the “class of warrior elite” was “not a warrior class among nonwarriors, but a class of superior warriors in a society where all males are expected to be warriors”—probably a fitting description of sixteenth-century Visayan society. Philippine tattooing as an object of study thus needs to be declustered from this spontaneous “warriorship” paradigm. It is not a historical nor ethnographic given that our understanding of indigenous tattooing be confined to “raiding” and “warriorship” (or as indicative of “courage” and “heroism”). As the current study shows, tattooing among the Pantaron Manobo assumes a totally different baseline configuration. The next section details the social domains in which Pantaron Manobo tattooing is located.

VI Towards a Heuristic Schema Underlying Pantaron Manobo Tattooing

The ethnographic, geographic, and demographic data, even at this preliminary phase, surfaces important elements which, when taken together, form lines of association or concordance. The most important element in Pantaron Manobo tattooing is the central role of the “female” gender, both in the socio-demographic and the symbolic realms. Two other objects are associated with this female figure in Pantaron Manobo tattooing practice: (a) the unique importance of the navel/abdomen as a tattooing region of the (female) body; and (b) the significance of the “ridge-pole” (and other parts of the house) as a named tattoo motif. These appear to be more resonant with many other aspects of Pantaron Manobo culture to warrant giving this schema (this female—navel/abdomen—ridge-pole/house links) a heuristic value that will be expanded below.

That tattooing can be said to be predominantly “a female domain” is consistently shown in the ethnographic and demographic data (see Fig. 13). Overall, more females tend to be tattooed than males: 82% of females aged 10 years and above¹¹⁾ are tattooed, as opposed to only 46% of males above 10 years of age. This pattern is also true across each village surveyed. Females also appear to receive tattoos earlier: all three individuals who were younger than 10 years of age and who had tattoos were girls. With regard to the sex of the tattoo practitioner, a significant majority (89%) of the tattooed individuals reported that they were tattooed by a female practitioner. At present, although the Pantaron Manobo do not say that it is forbidden for males to become a tattoo practi-

11) The lower age limit of 10 years was set in accordance with the ethnographic observation that it is at this age that Pantaron Manobo frequently begin to be tattooed, as per their own reckoning.

Gender and the Body in Highland Pantaron Manobo Tattooing

Gender Differences among Tattooed Individuals

	Surveyed Individuals	Tattooed	%
Male	104	48	46
Female	135	111	82
Total	239	159	67

Overall, more females (82%) tend to be tattooed than males.
This pattern is true across the six sampled villages.

Body Locations of Tattoos and Gender

	Male	%	Female	%
Breast	12	19	6	4
Abdomen	9	14	101	71
Forearm	42	67	35	25
Total	63	100	142	100

Abdominal tattoos are considerably more common on females (71%) than males.
Forearm tattoos are more common on males (67%) than females.

Gender of Tattoo-Practitioners

	Surveyed Individuals	%
'I was tattooed by a male practitioner'	17	11
'I was tattooed by a female practitioner'	139	89
Total	156	100

More recipients (89%) report being tattooed by a female tattoo-practitioner than by a male.

Fig. 13 Highlights of the Tattooing Survey Results

tioner, the tattoo practitioners identified in the course of this research were all females except for one. It is relevant to note here again that women tattoo practitioners enjoy more flexibility in their practice in terms of touching the bodies of both female and male recipients.

There are body locations of tattoos that they say are exclusively female, namely, the abdomen and the lower leg. As given above, there are only four traditional body areas that are preferentially tattooed: the abdomen, the forearm, the breast, and the lower leg. Across the six villages, the abdomen is the body part most frequently tattooed, consisting of more than half of the recorded tattoos (54%). While the leg tattoos are too rare to impact the demographic figures, the assertion that this is a “female” tattoo is made by the Pantaron Manobo, and Garvan (1931) and van Odijk (1925) make the same observation among the Agusan Manobo.

The “ridge-pole” of the “house,” as mentioned earlier, is a prominent figure in abdomen tattoo images. As an architectural element, this object is also rife with symbolic meaning. In the epic narratives of the Pantaron Manobo and in their ordinary conversation, the forging of relations between families through marriage is expressed as “linking the *liliongan* of two houses.” For Austronesian homes, the ridge-pole is what Fox (2006, 13–14) calls a common “ritual attractor” that may be specially decorated and where ancestor spirits and supernatural forces dwelt or converged. And with the overall visual prominence of the roof in traditional houses in Southeast Asia, the roof is often taken to

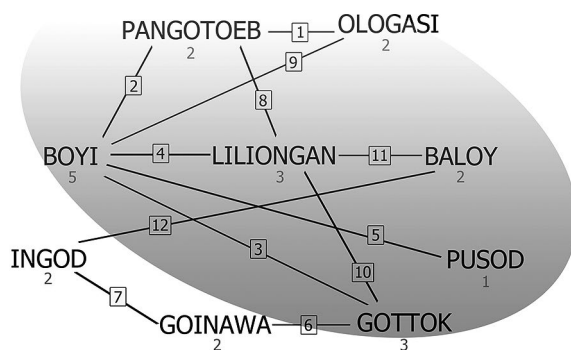
be a synecdoche for the house structure as a whole and the social relations contained within it (Waterson 2009).

From another line of associational link, the navel, which marks the beginning of the abdominal tattoo, is an important symbolic link to pregnancy, childbearing, and, again, the house. In some groups in the Philippines and Southeast Asia, the keeping or burying of the umbilical cord and placenta of children born in a particular house within its environs is a practice that is said to ensure their safety, and to forge a connection between them (these children may leave their home and family of orientation as they grow older) and hearth and home (Cannell 1999; Ng 2006). The abdominal tattoo's image, the whole complex layers of figures taken as one, is in fact also read by one of our interlocutors as denoting a "house" in general.

The protective function of the tattoo also has a gendered dimension, as the victim of the *Ologasi* creature is the female sibling of Banlak. That tattoos protect a person physically (for example, in childbirth) and spiritually (against malevolent creatures) could be related to the abdomen (and its internal organs) as the seat of well-being across various Filipino ethnolinguistic groups (Salazar 1995 [1977]; Paz 2008), as captured by the pan-Philippine category *ginhawa*. *Ginhawa* and its cognates, such as *goinawa* in Manobo, are related to physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being, as manifested in being able to "breathe well" and take in nourishment (Paluga 2012; Salazar 1995 [1977]). Lastly, the belief that tattooing eases childbirth relates it further to females.

In sum, there is a heuristic case to be potentially pursued in future Manobo tattooing studies that should trace these entities, figures, and metaphors linked to what the authors want to point as a "female—abdomen/navel—house/ridge-pole" schema. This schema can be seen as linking "tattooing" (*pangotoeb*) to at least eight other local Manobo categories: the "ridge-pole" (*liliongan*) of the "house" (*baloy*); the "abdomen" (*gottok*); the "navel" (*pusod*); the "female" (*boyi*) gender role; the "giant of the portal to the other-world" (*Ologasi*); the concept of "breathing and well-being" (*goinawa*); and the idea of "homeland" (*ingod*) (see Fig. 14).

Because the idea of an "ancestral domain" is, needless to say, a sustained view among Philippine indigenous peoples, the figure of the Pantaron Manobo "homeland" (*ingod*) cannot be overemphasized, especially in the context of tattooing. Two villages along the Talomo appear to be geographic "way-points" that play an important role in tattooing. The villages of Laslasakan and Bagang are most often reported to be the village of origin of tattoo practitioners: 19% of respondents say that their practitioner had been born in Laslasakan, while 16% say that theirs had come from Bagang. This result suggests two possible interpretations: either *many* tattoo practitioners were born in these villages, or the *most prolific* tattoo practitioners (even if they are in actuality few in num-



LINKS ARE BASED ON CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS (EITHER EMIC OR ETIC)

A number under a category (e.g., '2' under 'ingod') refers to counts of links to other categories; numbers in square are indexes for the listed points given below (e.g., 'boyi' [4] 'liliongan' refers to list number 4 below); the categories within the shaded circle are those directly linked to the category 'boyi' (woman), the one with the highest number of links

- (1) The tattoo is 'a protection against the *Ologasi*-giant' (Ethnographic data, this study)
- (2) Tattooing, by populational patterns, is largely a female (*boyi*) domain (Demographic data, this study)
- (3) The abdomen (*gottok*) tattoo is a female tattoo (Demographic data, this study)
- (4) The *liliongan*-ridge-pole is only found on the female tattoo (Ethnographic data, this study)
- (5) The *tirog* on the navel is only on females (Ethnographic data, this study)
- (6) The abdomen is associated with well-being/life/breath (Salazar 1995)
- (7) *Banwa/Ingod-Goinawa* is linked in the epic *Tuwaang* (Paluga 2012)
- (8) The *liliongan* is a culturally visible design in tattooing (Ethnographic data, this study)
- (9) In folklore, a woman is the victim of the *Ologasi* (Ethnographic data, this study; Bajo 2004)
- (10) The *liliongan* tattoo is found only on the abdomen (Ethnographic data, this study)
- (11) The ridge-pole is a culturally meaningful part of the house (Ethnographic data and *Tolalang* epic)
- (12) The 'homeland' (*ingod*) can be construed as a territorial 'house': the *tuluhan/talugan/torogan* 'house' is also used to mean 'territory' (Paluga 2012)

Fig. 14 Pangotoeb and Other Linked Categories

ber), were born in these villages. These two villages are also the most frequently reported location where respondents say they got tattooed (19% in Laslasakan and 15% in Bagang).

That Laslasakan and Bagang are the two most prominent villages for tattooing fits their being culturally meaningful to the Pantaron Manobo who live along the Talomo River. Based upon the authors' earlier ethnographic work, Bagang appears to be a spiritual center where Manobo *baylan* or spiritual practitioners (shamans and healers) periodically converge during times of crisis. This meeting, called *pahahano*, is signaled when *baylan* from different villages have the same dream. They thus come together to discuss the possible portents of such an event, to chant the epic entitled *Tolalang*, and to listen to the admonitions of their *bujag* (elders).

On the other hand, if Bagang is more of a spiritual center, Laslasakan is historically linked to more "secular" but specialized pursuits like metalworking. Laslasakan is also recognized even among the Manobo themselves as the village famous for the *oranda*,

their spontaneously sung verse substantially shorter and more variable than a fixed, full-length epic. The authors infer that tattooing straddled the “sacred” and “profane” spheres of Manobo life, an inference that is also supported by the direct ethnographic data and data from the literature of the spiritual and “practical” correlates of the practice.

To conclude, this article posits as a heuristic guide that entities linked by our proposed schema fall into place as *longue durée* category-nets with several lines of association in social, symbolic, and demographic levels. Seeing them as a network of notions (or cognitive and linguistic categories) with degrees of cultural valence gives us a glimpse of what it is like to “think about and do tattooing” in the world of the highland Manobo. What this evokes is a limited but meaningful cluster of terms or objects featuring “irresistible analogies” (Bourdieu 1990), operative as a durable schema among the Pantaron Manobo.

Accepted: March 15, 2019

Acknowledgments

Initial seed funding for this study was provided by the University of the Philippines-Mindanao Office of Research in 2013–14. More substantial support in 2015 was provided by the University of the Philippines-System Enhanced Creative Work and Research Grant (Grant Number ECWRG-2015-1-004). AM Rragio’s Early Career Grant (Grant Number EC-KOR-45049R-18) from the National Geographic Society allowed more intensive fieldwork for this research. Our BA Anthropology students, Petal C. Cagape, Geallaika O. Delideli, Karen Joyanne B. Chua, and Rose Marry Tranquilan, collected the survey data, and conducted interviews, transcriptions, and translations during the 2014 evacuation of the Pantaron Manobo to Davao City. An earlier version of this article was read and commented upon by Ramon Guillermo and Zeus Salazar. The comments from the anonymous reviewers have greatly refined and sharpened the arguments of this article and are very much appreciated.

All photos made as basis for the figures were taken by AM Rragio and Anthony Montecillo, which were rendered into figures by Sherwin Puntas. Fig. 1 composite photo was taken by M. Paluga. All maps were processed by M. Paluga using georeferenced data from NAMRIA topographic maps and the PRISMA software of PBCP (Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Priorities).

References

- Alcina, Ignacio Francisco. 2012. *History of the Bisayan People of the Philippine Islands*. Part One, Book 1, Volume 1. Translated, edited, and annotated by Cantius Kobak and Lucio Gutierrez. Manila: UST Publishing House.
- Ambrose, Wal. 2012. Oceanic Tattooing and the Implied Lapita Ceramic Connection. *Journal of Pacific Archaeology* 3(1): 1–21.
- Anonymous. 1903 [1559–68]. Resume of Contemporaneous Documents. In *The Philippine Islands 1493–1898*, edited by Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson, Vol. 2, pp. 77–160. Cleveland: The

- Arthur H. Clark Company.
- Arcilla, Jose S., ed. 2003. *Jesuit Missionary Letters from Mindanao*, Vol. 6. Manila: University of the Philippines-Center for Integrative and Development Studies, and the National Historical Institute.
- Arumpac, Alyx Ayn. 2012. Pang-o-tub: The Tattooing Tradition of the Manobo. *GMA News Online*. <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/271561/newstv/reeltime/pang-o-tub-the-tattooing-tradition-of-the-manobo>, accessed May 11, 2015.
- Bajo, Rolando O. 2004. *The Ata-Manobo: At the Crossroads of Tradition and Modernization*. Kapalong City: CARD-Davao.
- Banks, Marcus. 2007. *Using Visual Data in Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Barton, F. R. 1918. Tattooing in South Eastern New Guinea. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 48 (Jan.–Jun.): 22–79.
- Benedict, Laura Watson. 1916. A Study of Bagobo Ceremonial, Magic and Myth. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 25(May): 1–308.
- Bobadilla, Diego de. 1905 [1640]. Relation of the Filipinas Islands. In *The Philippine Islands 1493–1898*, edited by Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson, Vol. 29, pp. 277–311. Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1990. *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Cannell, Fenella. 1999. *Power and Intimacy in the Christian Philippines*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chirino, Pedro. 1904 [1604]. Relacion de las Islas Filipinas. In *The Philippine Islands 1493–1898*, edited by Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson, Vol. 12, pp. 169–321. Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co.
- Codrington, R. H. 1957 [1891]. *The Melanesians: Studies in their Anthropology and Folk-lore*. New Haven: HRAF Press.
- Cole, Fay-Cooper. 1913. *The Wild Tribes of Davao District, Mindanao*. Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History.
- Colin, Francisco. 1906 [1663]. Native Races and Their Customs. In *The Philippine Islands 1493–1898*, edited by Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson, Vol. 40, pp. 37–98. Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company.
- Fox, James J. 2006. Comparative Perspectives of Austronesian Houses: An Introductory Essay. In *Inside Austronesian Houses: Perspectives on Domestic Designs for Living*, edited by James J. Fox, pp. 1–30. Canberra: Australian National University Press.
- . 1980. Models and Metaphors: Comparative Research in Eastern Indonesia. In *The Flow of Life: Essays on Eastern Indonesia*, edited by James J. Fox, pp. 327–333. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Garvan, John M. 1963. *The Negritos of the Philippines*. Horn-Wein: Verlag Ferdinand Berger.
- . 1931. *The Manobos of Mindanao*. Washington, DC: National Academy of Sciences.
- Geirnaert-Martin, Danielle C. 1992. *The Woven Land of Laboya: Socio-cosmic Ideas and Values in West Sumba, Eastern Indonesia*. Leiden: Centre of Non-Western Studies, Leiden University.
- Gell, Alfred. 1993. *Wrapping in Images: Tattooing in Polynesia*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Gloria, Heidi K.; and Magpayo, F. R. 1997. *Kaingin: Ethnoecological Practices of Upland Communities in Mindanao (Ata, Dulangan Manobo, Higaonon)*. Davao City: Ateneo de Davao University.
- Godelier, Maurice. 2018. *Claude Levi-Strauss: A Critical Study of His Thought*. Translated by Nora Scott. New York: Verso.
- Guillermo, Ramon; Paluga, Myfel Joseph; Soriano, Maricor; and Totanes, Vernon R. 2017. *3 Baybayin Studies*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press.
- (van) Gulik, Willem R. 1982. *Irezumi: The Pattern of Demography in Japan*. Leiden: EJ Brill.
- Ho Ting-Jui. 1960. A Study on Tattooing Customs Among the Formosan Aborigines. *Bulletin of the*

- Department of Archaeology and Anthropology* 15–16(Nov.): 1–48.
- Hose, Charles; and McDougall, William. 1912a. *The Pagan Tribes of Borneo*, Vol. 1. London: Macmillan and Co., Limited.
- . 1912b. *The Pagan Tribes of Borneo*, Vol. 2. London: Macmillan and Co., Limited.
- Hose, Charles; and Shelford, R. 1906. Materials for a Study of Tatu in Borneo. *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 36(Jan.–Jun.): ix, 60–91.
- Jocano, F. Landa. 2008 [1968]. *Sulod Society: A Study in the Kinship System and Social Organization of a Mountain People of Central Panay*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press.
- Junker, Laura Lee. 2000. *Raiding, Trading and Feasting: The Political Economy of Philippine Chiefdom*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.
- Krutak, Lars. 2012 [2005]. Return of the Headhunters: The Philippine Tattoo Revival. *Lars Krutak Tattoo Anthropologist*. <https://www.larskrutak.com/return-of-the-headhunters-the-philippine-tattoo-revival/>, accessed January 10, 2019.
- . 2007. *The Tattooing Arts of Tribal Women*. London: Bennet & Bloom.
- Lebar, Frank M. 1975. *Ethnic Groups of Insular Southeast Asia*, Vol. 2: Philippines and Formosa. New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press.
- Loarca, Miguel de. 1903 [1582]. Relacion de las Islas Filipinas [Narrative of the Philippine Islands]. In *The Philippine Islands 1493–1898*, edited by Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson, Vol. 5, pp. 34–187. Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company.
- Lumholtz, Carl. 1920. *Through Central Borneo*, Vol. 2. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Manuel, E. Arsenio. 2000 [1973]. *Manuvu Social Organization*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press.
- Morga, Antonio de. 1904 [1609]. Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas [Events in the Philippine Islands]. In *The Philippine Islands 1493–1898*, edited by Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson, Vol. 16, pp. 25–209. Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company.
- Mosko, Mark S. 2009 [1985]. *Quadripartite Structures: Categories, Relations and Homologies in Bush Mekeo Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ng, Cecilia. 2006. Raising the House Post and Feeding the Husband-Givers: The Spatial Categories of Social Reproduction Among the Minangkabau. In *Inside Austronesian Houses: Perspectives on Domestic Designs for Living*, edited by James J. Fox, pp. 121–144. Canberra: Australian National University Press.
- (van) Odijk, A. [Antonius Henricus]. 1925. Ethnographische Gegevens over de Manobo's van Mindanao, Philippijnen [Ethnographic data about the Manobos of Mindanao, Philippines]. *Anthropos* 20(5/6): 981–1000.
- Paluga, Myfel Joseph. 2012. Ginawa, banua, at iba pang eko-sikolohikal na mga katagorya para sa pag-aaghamtao (at pag-aaghambuhay) [Breathing, country, and other eco-psychological categories for anthropology (and the life sciences)]. Plenary lecture given in the 34th National Anthropological Conference UGAT: Ugnayang Pang-Aghamtao (UGAT/Anthropological Association of the Philippines), October 25–27, 2012, University of San Carlos, Cebu City.
- Pastells, Pablo. 1906 [1887]. Extract Form a Letter from Father Pablo Pastells to the Father Provincial, Juan Capell, SJ. In *The Philippine Islands 1493–1898*, edited by Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson, pp. 268–287. Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company.
- Paz, Consuelo J. 2008. Bukal ng emosyon [Fount of emotion]. In *Ginhawa, Kapalaran, Dalamhati: Essays on Wellbeing, Opportunity/Destiny, Anguish*, edited by Consuelo J. Paz, pp. 147–153. Diliman, Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press.
- Pilarte, Lyra. 2012. Himan of the Matigsalug. Unpublished BA Anthropology research paper submitted to the Department of Social Sciences, University of the Philippines Mindanao (Davao City, Philippines).

- Polenda, Francisco Col-om. 2002. *A Voice from the Hills: Essays on the Culture and World View of the Western Bukidnon Manobo People*. Manila: Linguistic Society of the Philippines.
- Rose, Gillian. 2012. *Visual Methodologies*. London: Sage Publications
- Salazar, Zeus A. 1995 [1977]. Ang kamalayan at kaluluwa: Isang paglilinaw ng ilang konsepto sa kinagisnang sikolohiya [Consciousness and soul: Clarifying concepts of accepted psychology]. In *Sikolohiyang Pilipino teorya metodo at gamit* [Filipino psychology, theories, methods and uses], edited by Rogelia Pe-Pua, pp. 83–92. Quezon City: Philippine Psychology Research and Training House.
- . 1968. Le concept AC + ‘anitu’ dans le monde austronésien: vers l’étude comparative des religions ethniques austronésiennes [The concept of ‘anitu’ in the Austronesian world: Towards a comparative study of Austronesian ethnic religions]. Ph.D. Dissertation (Ethnology), Université de Paris (Sorbonne), Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines.
- Salvador-Amores, Annalyn V. 2013. *Tapping Ink, Tattooing Identities: Tradition and Modernity in Contemporary Kalinga Society, North Luzon, Philippines*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press.
- . 2002. *Batek*: Traditional Tattoos and Identities in Contemporary Kalinga, North Luzon Philippines. *Humanities Diliman* 3(1): 105–142.
- Schadenberg, Alexander. 1885. Die Bewohner von Süd-Mindanao und der Insel Samal. Nach eignen Erfahrungen: 1. Süd-Mindanao [The inhabitants of Southern Mindanao and the Island of Samal. After own experiences: 1. Southern Mindanao]. *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 17: 8–37.
- Schildkrout, Enid. 2004. Inscribing the Body. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33: 319–344.
- Scott, William Henry. 1994. *Barangay Sixteenth-Century Philippine Culture and Society*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.
- . 1982. Class Structure in Unhispanized Philippines. In *Cracks in the Parchment Curtain*, pp. 126–147. Quezon City: New Day Publishers.
- SIL Summer Institute of Linguistics. 2016. *Ata Manobo Dictionary*. <https://atamanobo.webonary.org>, accessed June 13, 2018.
- Southwell, C. Hudson. 1980. *Kayan-English Dictionary*. Sarawak, Malaysia: C. H. Southwell [Self-Published].
- Souza, George Bryan; and Turley, Jeffrey Scott, eds. 2016. *The Boxer Codex: Transcription and Translation of an Illustrated Late Sixteenth-century Spanish Manuscript Concerning the Geography, Ethnography and History of the Pacific, South-East Asia and East Asia*. Leiden: Brill.
- Thomas, Nicholas. 1995. *Oceanic Art*. London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd.
- Tima, Raffy. 2005. Ang tipo kong babae [My type of woman]. (Television series episode) *I-Witness: The GMA Documentaries*. GMA News and Public Affairs.
- Tiu, Macario. 2005. *Davao: Reconstructing History from Text and Memory*. Davao City: ORP-AdDU.
- TRICOM (Tri-People Consortium for Peace, Progress and Development of Mindanao). 1998. *Defending the Land: Lumad and Moro People’s Struggle for Ancestral Domain in Mindanao*. Mindanao: Tri-People Consortium for Peace, Progress and Development of Mindanao.
- Villan, Vicente C. 2013. Ilub, Unong, at Amok: Pag-unawa sa katatagan ng Buut ng mga bayani sa Himagsikang Pilipino sa Panay, 1896–1898 [*Ilub, Unong, and Amok*: Understanding the robustness of *Buut* or “inner self” of the hero in the Philippine Revolution in Panay, 1896–1898]. *Diwa E-Journal* 1(1): 58–92.
- Waterson, Roxana. 2009. *The Living House: An Anthropology of Architecture in South-East Asia*. Singapore: Tuttle Publishing.
- Wilcken, Lane. 2010. *Filipino Tattoos: Ancient to Modern*. Pennsylvania: Schiffer Publishing.

Chinese Business in Indonesia and Capital Conversion: Breaking the Chain of Patronage

Trissia Wijaya*

Taking issues from mainstream research, which has overly coalesced the discussion around patronage-ridden relationships and money politics, this paper argues that democracy has restructured the pattern of state-ethnic Chinese business relationships into a dispersed network, due to the dynamics of capital convertibility within varying scales of power and interests. Offering a unique perspective on capital conversion, this paper aims to debunk the orthodox view of Chinese capital as being merely money that accommodates politics. The revival of Chinese conglomerates in the political-economic life of Indonesia in the aftermath of crises was subject to capital in various forms: economic capital, socio-political capital, ideas, and knowledge. At the time of capital restructuring, an ever-increasing dispersed network of Chinese businesses demonstrated that their position was neither higher than politics nor independent of it, yet the arrangement allowed them to dovetail well with various forces and power holders in a pattern of horizontal connection.

Keywords: political economy, Southeast Asian studies, state-business relationships, patronage, capitalism, Indonesian Chinese, democracy

I Introduction

From petty traders to emigrant workers in the first half of the twentieth century, who struggled over the Japanese occupation and the rise of economic nationalism in Old Order Indonesia, ethnic Chinese and their business firms have long maintained a presence in the trajectory of Indonesia's development (Robison 1986; Thee 2006). The New Order regime under Soeharto made overtures to Chinese capital acumen to back the regime's development policy, and a small group of Indonesian Chinese capitalists were co-opted as business clients of the New Order power holders from 1966 onward (Coppel 1983). This patronage-ridden state-business relationship—egregiously dubbed “Cukong and

* Asia Research Center, Murdoch University, 90 South Street, Murdoch, Western Australia 6150, Australia

e-mail: trissiawijaya92@gmail.com; trissia.wijaya@murdoch.edu.au

Mr. Ten Percent”¹⁾—paved the way for Chinese capitalists to be more active in the economic sector at the expense of their political rights and cultural freedom. Being patronized by Soeharto, they did extraordinarily well in wielding resources (Vatikiotis 1993). For instance, the *cukong*’s coalition (comprising many ethnic-Chinese businessmen) was endowed with a \$6 billion timber industry, along with cheap access to forest resources and virtual immunity from forestry regulations for decades (Barr *et al.* 2010). Among the capitalists in the coalition, Prajogo Pangestu, the head of the Barito Pacific Group, controlled 5.5 million hectares of the world’s tropical rainforests and became the largest borrower of state funds: his loans amounted to more than \$1 billion (Dauvergne 2005). Soeharto’s longtime business associate Liem Sioe Liong became the undisputed king of Indonesian agricultural commodities, banking, and cement, while his company, the Salim Group—with a market capitalization of \$8 billion in 1990—accounted for roughly 5 percent of Indonesia’s GDP (Schwarz 1994).

At the beginning of the new millennium the Asian Financial Crisis, followed by a full-blown political crisis, had severe consequences in Indonesia—for the capitalist group in particular. On the one hand, they suffered from high debt; some of them were even left technically bankrupt or without working capital (Purdey 2005). On the other hand, the consolidation of democracy gave rise to a list of *reformasi* mandates in which the capitalists sought to reposition themselves in a new mode of conducting political business. The former Foreign Investment Law 1967 and Domestic Investment Law 1967—which had been astutely manipulated by power holders for allocating concessions, business licenses, and other material benefits for *cukong*—were revised into Law No. 5/1999 Stipulating the Ban on Monopolistic Practices and Unfair Business Competition (Thee 2006; Chua 2008). In tandem with the IMF liberalization package and increasing need for foreign investment, many skeptical pundits predicted that Indonesian Chinese capitalists, with their over-reliance on patronage ties, would not be able to withstand the onslaught of competition on a global scale (Suryadinata 2006).

Despite the sweeping political, economic, and social changes, the Indonesian capitalists continued to do well in business and even achieved record profits during the post-authoritarian regime. On the 2017 Forbes Indonesia Rich List, only 8 of the 50 people were non-Chinese. The remainder were all Indonesian Chinese businessmen—both new players and politically connected Chinese capitalists from the Soeharto era. Clearly, this illustrates how ethnic-Chinese-controlled conglomerates have grown and become an integral part of the democratic regime. How can these contradictory outcomes be

1) “Cukong” refers to the politically well-connected ethnic Chinese businessmen whom Soeharto granted access to state resources, contracts, and other material benefits in exchange for their support of the regime, including 10 percent of business commission to Soeharto’s family and relatives.

explained, since democracy and economic restructuring would be expected to lessen the Chinese businesses' competitive advantage? Does the patronage network remain relevant in the post-Soeharto era, or is there a new pattern in the state-Chinese business relationship?

Drawing upon both primary and secondary research materials, this paper unpacks those questions by reintroducing Chinese business into the notion of capital and, with it, accumulation and all its effects on state-business relations. This paper argues that the "fall of capital" embedded in the patronage network led to the rise of a new form of social and economic capital that enhanced Chinese capitalists' bargaining power and simultaneously restructured state-business relations. The decentralization and economic restructuring due to *reformasi* generated economic and social capital that was vital for the expansion of Chinese economic capital. Chinese capitalists had greater opportunities to tap into the lucrative sectors from which they had been restricted during the New Order (see Dieleman and Sachs 2008; Dieleman 2011). In a nutshell, restored civil rights are often viewed simply as social capital, yet they have been used as a powerful tool for political leverage and for pursuing economic interests.

As a result, the greater flexibility in converting capital (adapting the function of a particular form of capital to make it serve a given purpose) amidst political changes has ultimately restructured patronage into a dispersed network. The dispersed network assumes that Chinese capitalists' position is neither above the government's nor independent of politics, and the government's position is neither above the capitalists' nor independent of economics. Such a network has enabled Chinese capitalists to dovetail well with any (economic, social, and political) forces or groups/interests and power holders in a pattern of horizontal connection. Any Chinese capitalists, whether new or old, embedded in the dispersal arrangement can play a dual role—both as patron and as agent—depending on the forms of capital they possess and the political circumstances. This new arrangement demonstrates not only shifts in power configurations but also changes in the sociopolitical characteristics of orthodox patronage relationships tailored in the New Order era.

The following section identifies gaps in knowledge, particularly the tendency to over(focus) on the literal meaning of Chinese capitalism in the Indonesian political arena. It introduces a critical context by inserting the concept of capital convertibility into the picture and putting forth a conceptual framework to better analyze how the dynamic of capital convertibility has restructured state-business ties. The third section elaborates on the nexus of the state and Chinese business during the New Order era. The fourth section discusses the new political arena resulting from democracy through which capital conversion takes place. For purposes of analysis, the section is thematically divided

into three subsections: (1) the politics of unity in diversity, (2) diversification of political power, and (3) the politics of globalization and nationalism. The last section discusses the trajectory of capital conversion in state-Chinese business relationships and concludes with a summary of the main findings.

This article makes two primary contributions. First, it provides a fresh perspective on the political-economic debate over Indonesian Chinese business through an analysis of capital conversion. By delving into the dynamics of the sociopolitical and economic capital of Chinese business, this paper offers a nuanced, contextual understanding of how Chinese capital has revived in the aftermath of *reformasi* and since then been converted according to its content, spaces, and viability within various forces in Indonesia. Second, it contributes empirical evidence of the actual dynamic of capital conversion in restructuring the state-Chinese business relationship and reshaping the politics of development in Indonesia. Without neglecting the fact that democracy has given rise to new Chinese business elites at the local level, the term “Chinese business” in this paper refers to top-listed ethnic-Chinese-controlled conglomerates. The argument presented here depicts an overview of Indonesia’s past and contemporary economic development trajectory, in which Chinese conglomerates (*cukong* and new big players) have become an important, if not decisive, component of development.

II Critique and Analytical Framework

This section aims to establish an analytical framework that underpins the revival of Indonesian Chinese capitalism and identifies changes in the state-Chinese business relationship in the scheme of capital conversion. Mainstream camps tend to underpin Chinese capitalism with pragmatism or unlimited flexibility in political business dealings (Cragg 1995; Hui 1995; Ong and Nonini 1997; Hamilton-Hart 2005) in a bid to ensure survival in the midst of political changes. This is also aligned with the term “ersatz capitalist” coined by K. Yoshihara (1988), projecting the “flexibility” of Chinese businesses in running roughshod over their counterparts. Yoshihara describes Southeast Asia’s Chinese businessmen in a pejorative way. Insofar as the businessmen perceive life as a matter of adaptation, they cultivate informal networks of “ersatz” protection, including collusion with ruling elites, when the legal system fails to provide adequate protection.

Accordingly, regarding the political transformation in Indonesia, a vast amount of literature laments the institutional deficits and inadequacies in the face of competing coalitions of interest and power (McLeod 2000; 2010; Schwarz 2004; Aspinall and Klinken

2010). The new commercial and competition laws designed in haste after the fall of Soeharto proved to be much easier to manipulate than the previous versions because regulations were skewed in favor of entrenched commercial interests in the less predictable environment of democratic Indonesia (Rosser 2002; Hadiz 2003; Aspinall 2005; Fukuoka 2012; Mietzner 2013). Another camp identifies significant changes in the patronage-ridden relationship after the political transformation in Indonesia, where Chinese businesses insinuated their position into the political machinery surrounding prevailing oligarchs (Winters 2013) as well as non-oligarchic forces (Mietzner 2014). In one instance, Indonesia's new era of democracy was dominated by oligarchic elements, including the circle of political-business families operating from the New Order regime that leveraged power relations of wealth and authority (Hadiz and Robison 2004). In another instance, there was a significant influx of non-oligarchic forces in contemporary Indonesia that became active in the national and local political domains and challenged the oligarchy (Ford and Pepinsky 2014; Mietzner 2014). C. Chua (2008) pinpoints a twofold approach most Chinese capitalists adopted to accommodate such political dynamics. First, they continued with business as usual, taking advantage of their capital and skills. Second, they sought multiple patrons (unlike during the previous era, when Soeharto was the sole patron) in order to withstand political instability. This approach helped to tailor a new pattern of state-business relations that was often associated with "money politics." The latter to a great extent resonated with the new pattern of state-business relations that W. L. Chong (2015) identifies at the local level. So far as Chinese capitalists remain oriented to their habitus in which the predatory political-business system has been nurtured, they continue to reshape the system in a bid to safeguard their capital and position (Chong 2015).

Although scholarly literature largely depicts current conditions in the Indonesian political economy, it is by no means static. The majority of literature situates the state and Chinese capitalists in a framework of syllogism—in which money is always the vehicle for Chinese capitalists to cope with sudden shifts in the political system, while the state is the predator that seeks legitimacy and power by capitalizing on Chinese money. Simply put, the literature tends to generalize the symbiotic relationship between power holders and Chinese business in the context of conventional features of Chinese capital and consequently can lead researchers down the wrong analytic path. Such a generalization also hinders scholars from acknowledging the interplay of various forms of capital—economic capital, socio-political capital, ideas, and knowledge—that have affected Indonesian Chinese capitalists' endeavors and their relationship with the state. In hindsight, we need a proper concept to analytically link capital dynamics with changes in the state-business relationship.

Drawing inspiration from P. Bourdieu's "The Forms of Capital" (1986), I am keen to take his reasoning of capital conversion into account. Bourdieu does not neglect the fundamental existence of economic capital, but he laments scholars who reduce every type of capital to economic capital. For Bourdieu, the notion of capital extends beyond its economic constraints and takes into account a wide variety of resources, such as political, social, and cultural. Economic capital refers to material resources that can be turned into money or property rights. Social capital stands for networks of contracts that can be utilized to leverage one's social position. Cultural capital consists of non-material goods such as knowledge and ideas, skills, and expertise that can be converted into economic capital (Bourdieu 1986, 243). Political capital refers to a subtype of social capital that has the capacity to mobilize social support (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 119). In essence, the convertibility of different types of capital is the actual basis of social-power relations that reshape the dynamic of power struggles, as Bourdieu (1993, 73) argues:

The field of power is the space of power relations among agents and institutions who own enough capital to share leading positions in the different fields (especially the economic and cultural fields). It is the site of struggles among the holders of different kinds of capital or power. . . . The stakes in these struggles are the rules of transformation or conservation of the different kinds of capital, their comparative values, which themselves rule, at any moment, the forces which can be invested in these struggles.

In other words, differing combinations of capital serve to constitute the resources necessary for the production of other types of capital. For example, social capital such as personal ties with power holders can be converted into economic capital in the form of land or money, either directly or via gathering economic capital for a political purpose such as a campaign fund, in exchange for officials' discretionary favors to expand the business (Bourdieu 1991; Swartz 2013). Relatedly, convertibility hinges upon the varying degrees of accumulation and the value of different elements of capital. Regardless of its form—be it cultural, social, political, or economic—capital can be materially effective only if it is appropriated by a given agent and the agent has a network of connections where he can effectively mobilize the capital he possesses (Bourdieu 1991). In Bourdieu's words (1986, 252), forms of capital other than social capital

can be obtained only by virtue of a social capital of relationships (or social obligations) which cannot act instantaneously, at the appropriate moment, unless they have been established and maintained for a long time, as if for their own sake and therefore outside their period of use.

How Bourdieu's capital conversion relates to the state-Chinese business relationship is the way in which varying combinations of capital embedded in any given state-business relationship, such as a long-standing patronage-ridden relationship, have been maintained

as well as simultaneously transformed. If neoliberal pundits see the patronage network in terms of institutional flaws, I instead interpret it as a site of struggle among the holders of different kinds of capital during the New Order. Chinese political vulnerability itself appeared to be a form of social capital that was less harmful for Soeharto's leadership, and thus it gave leeway for Chinese businessmen to expand their economic capital and nurture solid dyadic politico-business ties. However, such relations are not static, as there are always sites of struggle. State transformations, specifically due to democracy, led to the reconfiguration of power and interests; thus, the value of each form of capital was redefined in varying scales of social-power relations. The renewed capital conversion would finally reinforce the inclusion and exclusion of particular actors in state-Chinese business relationships and subsequently create new patterns of relationship.

To better understand how capital conversion has restructured the patronage system in Indonesia, it is worth using the features of patron-client ties developed by J. C. Scott (1972) as a basis for comparatively assessing shifts in state-Chinese business relations. There are three additional distinguishing features of patron-client ties: (1) their basis in inequality, (2) their face-to-face character, and (3) their diffuse flexibility. The basis in inequality refers to an imbalance in exchange between the two partners that reflects the disparity in their relative wealth, power, and status. In this context, the most embedded characteristic of reciprocity is that the patron unilaterally supplies goods and services that a potential client needs for their survival and well-being while simultaneously demanding compliance from the client who has been enjoying those scarce commodities (Scott 1972; 1977). The balance of reciprocity depends mostly on the competitiveness among patrons and the value of services the client brings. If the client has highly valued services to reciprocate with, or if he can choose among competing patrons, or if he can theoretically manage without the patron's help, the balance will be close to equal. On the contrary, if the client has weak bargaining power or has a few exchange resources to spoon a monopolist-patron, the patron-client ties tends to be coercive (Scott 1972; 1977; Scott and Kerkvliet 1977; Wolters 1983).

The second feature of this dyadic tie, its face-to-face character, relies on the quality of the relationship. Reciprocity that takes shape over the long term eventually nurtures a solid patron-client bond with trust, voluntarism, and affection between the partners. The roots of reciprocity are not simply limited to mutual advantage but are associated with a mutual devotion and values that thrive among both sides because of the endurance of the patron-client framework (Scott 1972; Roniger 1994). The third salient reflection of patronage relationships is that they are "multiplex." They are diffuse, "whole-person" relationships rather than explicit, impersonal-contract bonds (Scott 1972). The needs

Table 1 Fundamental Features of State-Business Relationship in Indonesia

Features	Benchmark
1 Basis in inequality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bargaining power of clients and patron – In the realm of monopolist patrons, ties tend to be coercive and demand high compliance.
2 Face-to-face character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Quality of the relationship and frequency of reciprocity – Patron-client bonds: trust, voluntarism, and affection
3 Diffuse flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Needs and resources of the patron – Nature of the exchange

Source: Compiled by author.

and resources of the patron, as well as the nature of the exchange, may vary widely over time, so the language of flexibility is paramount (Gamson 1968). Table 1 presents a tentative framework to analyze how the interplay of different forms of capital has affected the characteristics of the above-mentioned features and resulted in a centrifugal network of state-Chinese business relationships.

III The New Order:

A Long-Lasting Patronage and Indestructible Economic Capital

While a democratically elected politician knows how long he will face the challenge and leave the oath, authoritarian leaders like Soeharto were fundamentally insecure because they could face a challenge at any time. Political legitimacy based on *pembangunan*, or the “development” mandate, thus became the nerve center of Soeharto’s vision. To build the economy from scratch, Soeharto acknowledged that the regime had to avoid risky decisions by distributing resources—such as licenses to invest and additional credits—to reliable partners (Vatikiotis 1993; Chua 2008). Clearly, a small group of ethnic Chinese businessmen with whom Soeharto had developed the nucleus of a military financial base prior to the New Order was the right choice (Australia, DFAT 1995). The group included Liem Sioe Liong, Bob Hasan, Prajogo Pangestu, and Eka Tjipta Widjaja, whose economic capital could be put to good use for accomplishing *pembangunan* without posing any threat to Soeharto’s political power. Consequently, the government’s policies resulted in a heavy concentration of wealth in the hands of a few trusted *cukong* and indeed became an enabling factor in the rise of Chinese capitalists (Robison 1986; Schwarz 2000).

R. Robison and Vedi Hadiz (1993) labeled this convenient relationship between Soeharto and Chinese capital as *dirigisme* (dirigisme), a relationship in which the economy was led by one man and a bunch of cronies, which eventually fostered the great leap

forward of well-connected *cukong* to big conglomerates. To a greater extent, such a *dirigiste* economy nurtured the much-touted patronage network, which was originally tailored by politico-bureaucrats and Chinese capitalists from the Old Order. The patronage-ridden relationship allowed policy formulation and resource distribution to be concentrated in the hands of certain political elites and economic actors, including well-connected *cukong*.

Yet the relationship was by no means static. Over a period of time, the political dynamics of development and resistance during the New Order reshaped the composition and role of actors embedded in the patronage network. What did not change was that Soeharto remained the sole locus of political power who managed the network. During the oil boom period, the nature of the state-business relationship was much simpler. If Japan's recipe for pursuing its remarkable development was strongly related to the much-touted robust iron triangle established between the bureaucracy, business groups (*keidanren*), and the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (Johnson 1995), Indonesia under Soeharto also unwittingly had an informal institution like the iron triangle interlinking Soeharto, the military, and *cukong*. Those three stakeholders simply took the lead as the "pilot ministry" in directing development. At certain levels of policy making, technocrats or the "Berkeley Mafia"² were also involved, but they had no greater influence than Indonesia's iron triangle. In short, the source of patronage was not concentrated on the Istana Merdeka (presidential palace), because the process of establishing long-running patron-client relations rested outside the official layers and instead centered on Rumah Cendana (Soeharto's residence) (Rosser 2002; Borsuk and Chng 2014).

Interestingly, the "cooperation" between the military and *cukong* made the state more coherent in its policies and autonomous from social interest groups. The military, represented by "Soeharto men" worth their salt, would get the green light from Soeharto to engage in income-generating activities while Soeharto remained the principal patron (Rieffel and Pramodhawardani 2007, 32). Thus, they were among the most powerful figures in controlling capital, as they could either take the lead as stakeholders of a project or function as "security guards" for *cukong* (Crouch 2007; McLeod 2010). Having provided the Chinese with the usual litany of favors—such as tax breaks, state bank funding, trading licenses, and introductions to foreign investors—the military displayed its political avarice as it also gradually became the capitalist and coalesced around *cukong* businesses (Crouch 2007). Powerful generals, such as the "finance generals" Alamsjah Ratu Prawiranegara, Sudjono Humardani, Suryo Wiryohadiputro, and Sofjar, and the

2) "Berkeley Mafia" is the term given to a group of US-educated Indonesian economists whose policy recommendations brought Indonesia back from poor economic conditions and the brink of poverty in the mid-1960s.

“money spinner” Ibnu Sutowo would have at least one *cukong* to partner with (Borsuk and Chng 2014).

Sudjono Humardani, one of Soeharto’s top fix-it men in the early New Order period, reportedly arranged a series of joint ventures between leading *cukong* and major Japanese investors, for example, bringing together Toyota and William Soeryadjaya (Tjia Kian Long) and Matsushita and Tjaheb Gobel (Schwarz 2000; Abbott 2003). Sofjar, who controlled Yayasan Dharma Putra Kostrad and Yayasan Trikora, established Bank Windhu Kencana, Seulawah, and Mandala Airlines utilizing a capital injection from Liem Sioe Liong (Crouch 2007). Obviously, the four finance generals held the top positions in the bank management: Sofjar was president director; Alamsjah was director; and Suryo and Sudjono were the chairman and vice chairman respectively (Borsuk and Chng 2014). Suryo also served as president director of the government-owned Hotel Indonesia and was given permission to build the Mandarin Hotel in Jakarta, in which Liem Sioe Liong became the main shareholder (*ibid.*). The money spinner, Sutowo, also had shares in PT Sarana Buana Handana, a logging company partnering with Bob Hasan, and in PT Atlas, a large paper milling venture that also had Bob Hasan as well as Sutowo’s son Ponco and Japanese companies as stakeholders (Ismantoro 2014).

Such solid ties between the military and *cukong*, which were supported by Soeharto, underwent changes particularly after the oil boom. There are two turning points worth emphasizing here. First, Soeharto’s favored treatment of Chinese economic capital evoked popular discontent with the New Order and led to widespread protests. In response to the threat of growing opposition from the economic nationalist and Muslim groups, Soeharto apparently decided to modify his policy on Chinese capital and promote a pribumi-favoring policy so as to maintain political stability. The Presidential Decree (“Kepres”) No. 14 of 1979, which was amended and reissued as Kepres 14A and Kepres 10 in 1980, gave the “weak economic group,” a code phrase for indigenous businessmen, priority in obtaining certain government contracts (Robison 1986; Schwarz 2000). A new team, known as Team 10, was set up to decide on project allocations. Headed by Sudharmono, the powerful state secretary, and Ginanjar Kartasasmita, the team gave great leeway for prominent pribumi businessmen to get government-related contracts; these businessmen included Aburizal Bakrie, Fadel Muhammad, Iman Taufik, Jusuf Kalla, Fahmi Idris, Hashim Djojohadikusumo, and Subagio Wiryoatmodjo (Winters 1996; Schwarz 2000). The second turning point was the emergence of “Soeharto Inc.,” the business empire linked to the Soeharto family. The growing economy provided opportunities for Soeharto’s family to create monopolies and toll-gate enterprises (Smith 2001). As of 1998, Soeharto Inc.’s wealth concentration consisted of 417 listed and unlisted companies, particularly state-controlled ones (Claessens *et al.* 1999).

The affirmative-sounding policy and the increasing share of the Soeharto family in the Indonesian development trajectory did not necessarily impede the accumulation of Chinese capital or erode the long-running patronage network. The two turning points discussed above neither broke down the Soeharto-Chinese network nor diminished Soeharto's position as an indispensable source of support to Chinese capital. This was possibly due to two underlying reasons. First, in the beginning of the 1980s, technocrats urged Soeharto to issue deregulations in some industries, including banking, transport, trade, and manufacturing, so as to parlay non-oil exports (Sato 1994). While the technocrats' objective was purely to liberalize the economy, the deregulation package in turn allowed *cukong* to amass capital, particularly after the lifting of restrictions on the Jakarta Stock Exchange. As a result, almost every Chinese business group founded one or more private banks, and thus their dependence on funds from state banks also decreased slightly (Chua 2008). Accordingly, soon after the world price of Indonesian oil plunged—from \$32 per barrel at its peak in 1982 to a low of \$9 per barrel in 1986—Soeharto set forth an export-oriented policy that encouraged the private sector, including his *cukong*, to inject more capital into non-oil products so as to allow the economy to rebound (Habir 1999). When it came to pushing exports, Chinese gained the upper hand as they controlled the economic resources that everyone wanted at the time, namely, sources of credit in the banking and leasing sectors (Borsuk and Chng 2014). In other words, Chinese capital became an integral part of state capital, which was required for advancing pribumi businesses. The established wealth of the Chinese, and their importance, further strengthened their utility in Soeharto's eyes. On the one hand, considering their political vulnerability, Chinese businessmen simply dovetailed their economic capital into the new political arena that was swayed by pribumi entrepreneurs and Soeharto's family (Shin 1991). To a greater extent, they even committed to reinvigorate Soeharto Inc. and rolled out what Robison and Hadiz (2004) termed "capitalist oligarchy." For example, in 1984 President Soeharto's youngest son, Tommy Soeharto, established the Humpuss Group, which was notorious for its favoritism and patronage rather than talent or professionalism. One of Humpuss's business dealings was the acquisition of Sempati Air. Established by PT Tri Usaha Bhakti (a military-controlled business group subsidized by prominent Chinese businessmen), it was the first private airline allowed to operate jet aircraft in Indonesia. In 1989 two companies obtained shares in the airline: PT Nusamba, a group controlled by Bob Hasan, got 35 percent; and Humpuss obtained 25 percent (Liddle 1999; Schwarz 2004). Meanwhile, besides Bank Central Asia, Liem also maintained links with Siti Hardiyati Hastuti Rukmana (Tutut) through a stake in Indocement and Citra Marga Nusaphala Persada (CMNP), her toll-road company that operated the Jakarta inner city roads (Davidson 2010). In short, the presence of Chinese capital was too big to ignore,

and it nurtured the network through which Soeharto patronized Chinese business in order to prioritize the overriding development focus on non-oil sectors.

The growth in trust between Soeharto and *cukong* has become invaluable social capital for both parties to pursue their respective interests. The value of this dyadic relationship should not be overlooked. Three decades of an indestructible patronage relationship that has weathered various political and economic headwinds has transformed the quality of the relationship from a material-oriented one into an interpersonal-based one. For example, in October 1990 Soeharto ordered Ginanjar Kartasasmita to dissolve a consortium of pribumi-owned companies led by the CNT group (which Kusumo Martoredjo, Agus Kartasasmita, Ponco Sutomo, and Wiwoho Basuki were part of) to build a joint petrochemical project with Mitsui and Toyo Engineering of Japan in Cilacap, Central Java (Schwarz 2000). Soeharto ordered Ginanjar to make Liem Sioe Liong and Prajogo Pangestu the principal domestic partners in big ticket projects. That decision was their payoff for having bailed out Bank Duta the month before (the bank was owned largely by charitable foundations headed by Soeharto). Between late 1988 and September 1990, it had reportedly lost \$420 million in high-risk foreign exchange speculation (Kingsbury 2005; Matsumoto 2007). The two tycoons were believed to have put up ready cash to compensate for the foreign exchange losses of the bank, whose major owners were three foundations connected to the president. Pangestu was also believed to have paid for a monorail at the Taman Mini theme park, a pet project of Tien Soeharto (Ascher 1999; Borsuk and Chng 2014). The *cukong* had raised the expense of winning the president's patronage by lavishing the first family with favors. Despite Ginanjar's reluctance to obey the order, the deal was done, Liem and Pangestu became the domestic partners for Japanese companies, and the pribumi business lobby inevitably was devastated.

The nature of Soeharto-*cukong* ties has been somewhat upgraded to a more voluntary one. Chinese capitalists frequently helped Soeharto accomplish some of his national development goals, for example, by investing in sectors that private enterprise inherently avoided. For instance, the Salim Group invested in the Krakatau steel-making facility, which eventually went bankrupt (Lim and Stern 2003). This was viewed as Liem's attempt to return Soeharto's favor. Following the 1980s post-oil boom there was a recession in Indonesia, which slashed cement consumption; this affected Liem's cement plants. To cover the severe losses, the government came to the rescue by merging Liem's five cement plants into a holding company, Indocement Tunggal Prakarsa. The government paid \$325 million for a 35 percent share of the company, which accounted for 44 percent of the country's cement capacity (Dieleman and Sachs 2008).

In sum, despite the growing inclusion of new actors such as pribumi entrepreneurs, the state-business relationship during the New Order was largely mundane. The patron-

age network centered on Soeharto, who held supreme authority to terminate deals, ink new concessions, as well as weaken opposition. No matter how large and powerful *cukong* became, they represented no political threat to Soeharto and thus were tacitly embedded into a “long-established social contract” with the leader. Economically powerful pribumi businessmen, on the other hand, could represent a threat and become a potent political faction. As Salim Said (2016, 21) argued: “Soeharto is like Stalin. First he eliminated the left, and then moved on to the rest of the political spectrum. Then he divided the Muslims and finally he turned on the minorities.” Nonetheless, the 1998 Asian Financial Crisis threw Soeharto a curveball and consequently created desperation among his proteges. For some in the optimist camp, the reform brought about a fair environment for the Indonesian political economy. For the critics, however, the aforementioned social contract was renewed and it restructured the state-business relationship amidst the extension of various forms of capital, as will be elucidated in the following section.

IV Democracy:

A Political Arena Riven by Struggles over Capital Convertibility

The 1998 Asian Financial Crisis caused a paradigm shift in the well-connected Chinese business portfolio. Not only did the dramatic effects of the crisis enforce a restructuring of Chinese business, but even populist forces in the country demanded structural reform, such as liberalization and a reduction of the government’s role in the economy, since there was a growing perception that the crisis was the result of political failures, including overly close business-government relations (Suryadinata 2008). As such, one of the reform products, namely, democracy, was expected to establish a more arms-length relationship between business and government and reduce opportunities for favoritism and corruption (McLeod 2000; 2010). While democracy could have limited Chinese business’s flexibility in exerting the art of political dealing with ruling elites, what we got on the ground was divergent political and economic approaches with varying outcomes that did not point back to the initial mandate of democracy.

The nexus between business and politics, established within networks of patronage, has been showing signs of moving beyond its origins. The post-Soeharto political constellation has paved the way for diverse institutional structures that are complex and fragmented, if not contradictory (Heryanto and Hadiz 2005). It embodies diverse groups of newly incorporated politico-bureaucrats, subnational business groups and elites, and counter-elites, while reaffirming the position of old political elites (Robison and Hadiz

2004; Ford and Pepinsky 2014). Given the growing vested political interests of various actors, *cukong*'s economic capital cannot immediately be converted into wealth accumulation solely by virtue of the *cukong*'s relationship with certain power holders, as happened in the Soeharto era. Democracy instead opened up a new political arena where Chinese businesses came to mesh with various socio-political forces. This encouraged them to diversify their political opportunities beyond the patronage-ridden relationship as well as to convert their social, cultural, and economic capital based on scales and scopes of interest. That kind of political arena appeared to be less "discriminatory" than the one during Soeharto's period. It gave various economic actors—new and old—greater flexibility to skillfully convert their capital and ultimately envisage a nuanced version of the state-business relationship. This section is divided into three parts that aim to examine three features of the new political arena through which old and new Chinese big business leveraged various forms of capital and restructured the state-business relationship.

(1) *Restored Civil Rights and Politics of "Unity in Diversity"*

While discussions about SARA³⁾ were forbidden under Soeharto, during Gus Dur's administration the nascent pluralism gained a distinct place in society, and civil rights for Indonesians of Chinese descent were restored (including the rights to use the Chinese language and establish political parties) (Lindsey 2005; Suryadinata 2008). It created a trickle-down effect, as the change in minority policies had a tremendous effect on all people categorized as Chinese—either mediocre Chinese or big players in business (Chua 2008). Political protections for the rights of ethnic Chinese simultaneously created social benefits for tycoons to leverage economic resources.

Chinese businesses—which were previously admitted as part of the elite within the crony system—have positioned themselves as *rakyat*⁴⁾ who are socially responsible for the consolidation of democracy. For example, given that the issue of race and religion must have been discussed openly after *reformasi*, businesses have been extensively using the media to promote "unity in diversity." Such a move was intended to prevent opposition forces from using ethnic clashes for political ends. When the *Tempo* journalist Harymurti was found guilty of naming the businessman Tomy Winata in a story that suggested Winata—who had strong ties to the military and Soeharto's family—stood to benefit from a fire that destroyed a Jakarta textile market in 2003, not only did Winata's supporters attack the *Tempo* offices, but Winata's lawyers also filed a series of civil and criminal complaints against the magazine (Woodier 2009). In this way, Chinese busi-

3) SARA stands for issues regarding ethnicity, religion, and race in Indonesia.

4) *Rakyat* in this context refers to *people*, yet it has connotations of nationalism.

nesses tended to see court trials as a legitimate weapon to curb the press as well as set back the opposition, instead of merely refusing to comment or relying on their patron to solve the problem as happened during the New Order era.

Under fire for having exploited Indonesian resources and created uneven development, Chinese businesses now attempt to position themselves with a more independent, open, and benign image. Starkly different from their previously demonized image of siphoning off funds to Soeharto's *yayasan* (foundation), most Chinese businesses now set up their own foundation as part of CSR (corporate social responsibility) programs, acting as key stakeholders of Indonesia's developmental trajectory with strong responsibilities toward the broader community. A myriad of activities and services, including scholarships, green economies, technical assistance, emergency relief, and so forth, can be publicly accessed. For example, the Sinarmas Foundation of Eka Tjipta Widjaja's Sinarmas Group, Tanoto Foundation of Sukanto Tanoto's Raja Emas Group, Arta Graha Peduli Foundation of Tomy Winata's Artha Graha Group, and Bakti Barito Foundation of Prajogo Pangestu's Barito Pacific are instrumental in showcasing the companies' good business ethics to the people rather than their image of colluding with power holders.

Another unintended consequence is the establishment of non-party organizations. Ethnic-based parties and sociopolitical organizations were banned at the time Soeharto officially assumed power in 1966. Yet the 1998 riots and the effects of *reformasi* generated a greater ethnic and political consciousness among Indonesia's ethnic Chinese. One significant turning point in the state-Chinese business relationship was the establishment of non-party organizations that are considered less contentious for Chinese capitalists to exercise their civil rights and gain a collective political position. These include Perhimpunan Indonesia Tionghoa (Chinese Indonesian Association), Panguyuban Sosial Marga Tionghua Indonesia (Indonesian Chinese Clan Social Association), and Perkumpulan Pengusaha Indonesia Tionghoa (Indonesian Chinese Entrepreneurs Association, Perpit), whose board of supervisors and members are mostly prominent tycoons (Soebagjo 2008; Suryadinata 2008; Setijadi 2016).

In fact, the organizations actively defended the enforcement of Indonesian civil rights (social capital) to parlay the affiliated companies' economic capital, rather than engaging in purely cultural and philanthropic activities. The organizations' practices brought more benefits to big business rather than pursuing the pure commitment of the country to guarantee civil rights to all levels of Chinese society. The organizations' extensive activities included maintaining close relationships with different levels of government on behalf of the "non-party organization" and hosting many Chinese trade delegations that visited Indonesia, as well as conducting visits to cities and provincial areas in China (Setijadi 2016). More important, these organizations have become key instruments for

Chinese businesses to expand their social capital by building networks with businessmen, regional government officials, and local chambers of commerce in China (*ibid.*; Suryadinata 2017). This also strengthens the organizations' collective political position during decision-making processes.

Thus, unlike the informal "iron triangle" during the Soeharto era, the post-*reformasi* Kadin (Indonesian Chamber of Commerce) enabled Chinese business to ostensibly be involved in a legal institutional framework. Kadin has a close partnership with the government and has become influential in policy formulation. Chinese business's authority is reflected through the organization's structure. Based on an interview I conducted with a former Kadin staff member, the most defining policy is not issued by the chairperson (this position always goes to an indigenous businessman); instead, it is issued by vice chairpersons (WKU) who are divided into different specializations. Indeed, most strategic sectors are managed by prominent big businessmen who wield extensive know-how and capital. Kadin's management structure in 2016 included five prominent *cukong* (mostly second-generation Chinese businessmen), among others: (1) James Riady (second generation of the Lippo Group) served as WKU Education and Health; (2) the agribusiness and forestry sectors were led by Franky O. Widjaja (second generation of Sinarmas); (3) the industry sector was led by John Darmawan (Astra); (4) Riady's son-in-law, Dato Sri Tahir (founder, Mayapada Group), served as WKU Investment; and (5) Hendro Gondokusumo (Intiland Group, previously the Dharmala Group) held a position in the most lucrative sector: property. Meanwhile, the old players and some media-shy tycoons such as Anthony Salim and Prajogo Pangestu occupied the supervisory board (Muhammad Idris 2015). The board is the highest division from where financial support comes, given that Kadin is not subsidized by the state. The *cukong*'s active participation in Kadin projects a more benign public image. Compared to the informal discussions carried out at Cendana House in the past, the *cukong*'s presence in Kadin demonstrates transparency in the way the institutions they belong to work under democracy.

Not least important, in their pursuit of "unity in diversity," Chinese businesses have also been engaging with Islamic groups, the new extra-political forces growing stronger since democracy. James Riady and Sofjan Wanandi repeatedly called for the business sector to engage with Muslim organizations in order to create a conducive atmosphere in Indonesia while fostering economic development. Speaking at the 2016 National Coordinating Meeting of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the largest Sunni Islam movement in Indonesia, Riady also acknowledged Lippo's contribution in the development of the NU head office in Jakarta (*Berita Satu*, November 19, 2016). More interestingly, the Lippo group recently joined with NU to build Syubbhanul Waton Hospital in Magelang Regency, Central Java (*Berita Satu*, March 21, 2018). The spirit of pluralism is certainly welcome

as it promotes inclusive and participatory development in advancing the health sector in Indonesia. Yet, politically speaking, the way the private sector engages with extra-political forces in this way somewhat illustrates a killing-two-birds-with-one-stone approach. On the one hand, the strategy is driven purely by economics to extend the hospital network into a Muslim-dominated region; on the other hand, it is aimed at accommodating the vested interests of emerging social forces that have considerable leverage in reshaping the Indonesian political economy.

Furthermore, Ahok's blasphemy case during the re-election of the Jakarta governor in 2016 led business groups to indirectly forge further alliances with the influential Muslim group. The rise of Islam as part of "identity politics" is a double-edged sword for Chinese business (Williams 2017). Islam is a social force that on the one hand could push Indonesia toward a more pluralistic society and encourage civic engagement, but on the other hand it has the potential to be engineered as a political tool to promulgate a counter-hegemonic force against restored civil rights for ethnic Chinese. As has frequently been mentioned in recent political discussions, the verdict in Ahok's case showed that there are invariably opportunistic politicians who continue to use religion to achieve their political goals and up the ante with the sensitive issue of ethnic Chinese.⁵⁾ In hindsight, this kind of political dynamic has additional implications upon the Chinese business approach, in which Chinese capitalists skillfully capitalize on unity in diversity and put a great effort into dovetailing their social capital with the interests of emerging forces in a bid to keep their business operations separate from the public face of the pure-ethnic-Chinese business empire.

(2) Diversification of Political Power: Who's the Horse, and Who's the Jockey?

In an interview for a book about property developers, Ciputra, one of Indonesia's top Chinese property developers, implicitly vindicated the symbiotic relationship between him and Jakarta's then governor, Ali Sadikin, during the New Order period: "I have the philosophy that I am a horse and the jockey is the Jakarta governor. If I want to be used,

5) Prior to running for the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, the incumbent governor at that time, Basuki Tjahja Purnama (Ahok), an ethnic Chinese and staunch Christian believer, was accused of conducting blasphemy by certain Islamic groups, including Front Pembela Islam (Islamic Defenders Front) and Majelis Ulama Indonesia (Indonesian Ulema Council). A video of Ahok's speech on Pramuka Island in the Thousand Islands District went viral via a variety of social media platforms. In the speech, on the topic of his own tenure, Ahok told his audience that they should not vote for him in the upcoming election if they felt that their Islamic faith prohibited them from doing so. He cautioned people that if they voted for him and neglected the mandate of *Surah Al-Maida* 51, the resulting guilt they felt may even cause them to have a stroke. Regardless of the manipulative action of the opposition in making the video, Ahok was ultimately punished for insulting the Qur'an for political gain and sentenced to two years' jail.

I have to be a horse that's good . . . A good horse will be used by any master" (cited in Harefa and Siadari 2006, 106). The entrenched privileges received by Chinese capitalists under the New Order are gone for good. The end of the monopoly of unlimited authoritarian power upended the well-established symbiotic arrangements between big business and the state. State power was much too fragmented, and thus it became impossible to have a single committee with all business, political, and bureaucratic interests in one basket (Chua 2008). In retrospect, the politically patronized Chinese business group are no longer dependent on Golkar, Soeharto, and powerful military groups.⁶⁾ Who is the horse and who the jockey has become a blur.

Owing to decentralization, the forging of new alliances involving politico-bureaucratic elements has extended to the local level. Consequently, Indonesia's political economy remains appropriated by state institutions and resources that are rife with political avarice and business interests. The system has unveiled a new trend of political ambitions. For example, small- and medium-scale businessmen who were either forcibly or voluntarily involved in graft to facilitate their business are now developing more lofty ambitions, such as expanding their business opportunities by seeking political office (Mietzner 2009). Likewise, some middle-level civil servants have been chasing after more than mere administrative power and are seeking to wield direct political power by contesting local elections. Bearing in mind how power has been reorganized and how more diverse players are involved in the game, most ethnic Chinese business representatives whom I talked to admitted that both old Chinese businesses and new Chinese businesses born after *reformasi* now must maintain many jockeys in various ways instead of acting only as a strong horse. Even they have in some way become jockeys for a specific horse.

By and large, varied approaches to playing the horse-and-jockey game are enmeshed in different scales of power and interest. Firstly, more inclusive and participatory political parties and parliaments (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat) have become the main locus of political power and state institutions—in stark contrast to the pre-Soeharto era, when elites other than Golkar and Soeharto's men were mainly ornamental (Hadiz 2003). While that kind of political constellation posed challenges to Chinese conglomerates, particularly those that were adept at relying on the central government, democracy has to some extent given business groups more options to accommodate powerful vested interests and their associated political parties. Some Chinese businessmen have even become visible parts of the interests. They have a broader political base and thus quickly convert their wealth power into political capital or vice versa.

6) Golongan Karya (Golkar) was the ruling party from 1973 to 1999 under Soeharto's New Order regime. Soeharto, as chairman of the executive board, had the highest authority in the party.

Borrowing party dichotomies developed by T. Reuter (2015), the direct involvement of Chinese businesses in political parties can be categorized into two patterns. The first is *partai milik pribadi*, a party created for the purpose of serving as a political tool for a private individual who wants to gain power within the DPR or as president, or both. Examples are Gerindra, founded by Prabowo Subianto and his billionaire younger brother Hasyim; the National Democrat Party, founded by Metro Group media tycoon Surya Paloh; and the Hanura Party of the wealthy former General Wiranto and his media tycoon friend Hary Tanoesoedibjo. Hary has even established his own party, named Perindo, whose branch representatives are spreading across 80,000 villages in Indonesia (Baker and Salna 2018). Hary, the new Indonesian Chinese conglomerate that emerged after the financial crisis, has been rolling out a non-mainstream political approach that the low-profile Soeharto *cukong* would never undertake. Having his own political party, Hary has been flexibly accommodating political dynamics and widening the scope for political maneuvering to curry favor with proper coalition partners and stiffen his spine, particularly in the legislature. While he joined the Prabowo camp in the previous election in 2014 and provided the latter with powerful media forces to compete against Jokowi, he surprisingly threw his support behind Jokowi's bid for re-election in 2019.

Another pattern of involvement in political parties is through *sewa kendaraan* or "renting vehicles." In Indonesia, electoral campaigns are expensive as state subsidies for political parties have been reduced since 2009 by almost 90 percent (Mietzner 2009; 2013). Meanwhile, parties have to conduct expensive opinion surveys in order to identify their nominees for the elections, shelling out hundreds of billions of rupiah for consultants, opinion polls, and media advertisements (Rinakit 2005). One egregious example is that of the PDI-P campaign costs, which reportedly reached Rp 376.3 billion in 2009 while the party received only around Rp 1.5 billion in state subsidies at the national level (Mietzner 2015). Consequently, political parties have become highly "transactional" and rely upon donations from individuals or corporations. Based on the 2011 party law, parties can receive Rp 1 billion (\$91,000) from individuals and up to Rp 7.5 billion from corporations every year (Mietzner 2007; Ufen 2008).

Against this background, in tandem with restored civil rights, some Indonesian Chinese business groups have openly "rented" an established party to accumulate both political and economic capital. For example, the National Awakening Party (PKB) appointed the prominent Chinese businessman Rusdi Kirana as its new deputy even though he was an outsider. Since then, the party's political advertisements have regularly appeared on national TV with, of course, Rusdi's face all over them. PKB Chairman Muhaimin Iskandar admitted: "Many Islamic parties, including the PKB, had been unable to compete with larger parties as they had no money to run massive political advertising

campaigns ahead of this year's elections" (Khoirul 2014). Meanwhile, taking advantage of the official recognition of civil rights for Chinese, Rusdi claimed that he had decided to enter politics because he wanted to preserve equal business opportunities (for all Indonesian people) as he had enjoyed during the post-reform era (Saragih 2014). Like Rusdi, a number of other businesspeople have claimed that their involvement in politics is driven primarily by social rather than economic motives (Christine Franciska 2014). Among them is Indonesia's current trade minister, Enggartiasto Lukita. Enggartiasto, a well-known Chinese property developer as well as the commissioner general of PT Unicora Agung, jumped ship in 2013 from Golkar to the NasDem party, one of Jokowi's coalition parties, and has been the head of foreign relations for NasDem since. He claimed that his objective in joining NasDem was not to seek a legislative seat but rather to implement a transformation of the Indonesian economy through the party (Aditya 2014). Indeed, his ultimate position as Indonesian trade minister, instead of a mere lawmaker of the party, carries a warning against creating sharp dichotomies between business and politics.

Another approach in horse-and-jockey games is splitting political loyalties to accommodate diverse pairs of political-bureaucratic relationships emerging outside the national realm. Decentralization has undoubtedly changed the structure of the national political economy as a result of constant power struggles among local elites and levels of government over control of natural resources and policy making (Hadiz 2003; Aspinall and Klinken 2010). Actors with different backgrounds and interests are vying for political leverage, but no one knows who will ultimately win given the spirit of democracy. Relatedly, business groups—regardless of whether they are Chinese or pribumi-owned—particularly those that do not rent or own political parties, like Rusdi and Hary, tend to divide their political loyalties into all-encompassing political blocs. For example, Chua (2008) vividly elaborates the "political network sharing" between the family and relatives of "old players." In the case of the Wanandi family (Gemala Group), Sofjan favored Golkar and Jusuf Kalla, while his brother, Jusuf Wanandi—the founder of CSIS—tended to secure relationships with Megawati. In the case of the Riady family (Lippo Group), James Riady courted the actual power holders while his father, Mochtar, sided with the opposition leaders (Chua 2008, 126). In another example, it is an open secret that Tomy Winata is close to Megawati through his business connections with her late husband, Taufik Kiemas (Wessel 2005, 81), while he maintains strong ties with former President Yudhoyono through T. B. Silalahi, one of Yudhoyono's closest associates, his key adviser, and former president commissioner of his Bank Artha Graha (Chua 2008, 126). Prior to the upcoming presidential election, the tycoon's outmaneuvering of political loyalties has been too dynamic to capture. Speculation was rife that Tony endorsed the Jokowi-Ma'ruf pair after a photograph of the tycoon, holding a white shirt that read "Jokowi Amin 01 Indonesia

Forward,” went viral on November 25, 2018 (*Jakarta Post*, November 27, 2018). Nevertheless, it is useful to remember an offensive point raised by Winata in an interview with Chua (2008, 76):

Up to now businessmen don't want to be seen as supporting just one party . . . It will be the end for many businessmen who supported the wrong person. You cannot put all money on one horse, because the uncertainty of winning is too high. Beside this the president now changes at least every 10 years.

Amidst the growing number of political parties in Indonesia, many Chinese businesses hold tight to long-standing parties such as PDI-P and Golkar while simultaneously engaging with relatively young parties. Thanks to the legacy of the New Order, despite Soeharto's fall, Golkar and its affiliates have not yet been left in the dust and are still significantly represented in the legislature. PDI-P, which has strong elements of a mass-based party and Megawati Soekarnoputri as a major drawcard for voters, has been dominating internal decision-making processes (Tomsa 2013, 33). Both parties have strong political bases in peripheral regions, especially in East and West Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and the central belt of Sumatra, where extractive industry projects are mainly located (*ibid.*; Simanjuntak 2014).

Rich businessmen do not have an issue with the growing necessity to donate money for elections (Mietzner 2015). Even though the bulk of campaign funds are referred to as donations, in fact they are investments of social capital aimed at yielding a bigger slice of the economic pie in the future. An ethnic Chinese businessman once told me in an interview that when funds are granted, tycoons normally expect that the politicians or elites with whom they co-allied will reward them with big projects should they win the election and have a hand in resource distribution. However, an electoral loss of a tycoon-backed candidate is not a zero-sum game. Given the unpredictability of politics, the candidate might win in other regional elections and thereby give the tycoon a return on his investment. In addition, having employed a diverse network of political support, Chinese businesses have political backup at different levels of government and interests.

The important role of Chinese in the development of the Indonesian real estate sector is a case in point. Benefiting from the rise of the Indonesian urban upper middle class, Chinese conglomerates have had property as one of their core businesses over the past decade. Among others, Tomy Winata's Artha Graha Group, which pioneered Sudirman Central Business District development in Jakarta through its subsidiary PT Danayasa Arhatama, recently listed an additional 19 subsidiaries focusing on property and infrastructure (Indonesia Investment 2015). Chinese businessmen have acquired not only economic capital but also political connections at the local level. As local governments have greater discretion in matters of urban development, the tycoons have rapidly

expanded their real estate business into both niche markets and residential markets in smaller provincial cities (Dieleman 2011; Arai 2015). Along the way, this has led to bribes in exchange for permits or for bypassing regulations. As M. Dieleman (2011, 77) wrote, based on her interviews with a former minister, “Developers bankroll the local elections by sponsoring candidates . . . If you are a rich developer, you can buy all the candidates, so that you are sure whoever wins is your man.” The arrest of Lippo Group executive Billy Sindoro, along with a government official from Bekasi Regency, in connection with the development of the Meikarta project in October 2018 illustrates the intensified political support Chinese businesses have built and maintained on an ongoing basis. Sindoro, consultants, and an employee allegedly bribed West Java’s Bekasi Regent, Neneng Hasanah Yasin, a total of Rp 13 billion (\$855,613) in exchange for property and other permits for the planned Rp 278 trillion Meikarta project⁷—the largest undertaking in Lippo’s 68-year history (Tani 2018).

Aside from positioning their capital in political fragmentation, Chinese businesses also took different approaches to accommodate diverse pairs of political-bureaucratic interests. To some extent, this replicated the practice of *amakudari* in Japan⁸—the way business groups recruited former politico-bureaucrats based on their specialization and vital knowledge of the rules of the game and put the latter in the highest levels of management. During the mid-2000s, the upper management of the Lippo Group consisted of former Minister of Domestic Affairs Suryadi Sudirja, former Minister of State-Owned Enterprises Tanri Abeng, and former IBRA Deputy Farid Haryanto, who were co-opted as directors. Ginanjar Kartasasmita serves as deputy chairman of the Lippo Group, and Theo L. Sambuaga, the parliament member and former minister of public works and public housing, is the president commissioner of Lippo Karawaci Tbk—one of Lippo’s key real estate subsidiaries (*Berita Satu*, December 14, 2015). Indofood, the mainstay of the Salim Group’s business in Indonesia, has Bambang Subianto, the former minister of finance, as an independent commissioner (Reuters Finance 2018a). Obviously, Tomy Winata, who had strong connections with the military, appointed Kiki Syahnakri, the former vice head of the Indonesian Army, as the president commissioner rather than

7) Meikarta, dubbed the “Shenzhen of Indonesia,” is the Lippo Group’s flagship project. It involves 10 global institutions developing 273,000 square meters of land in the satellite town with an investment value of \$550 million. Collaborating with the China State Construction Energetic Corporation, Lippo envisioned Meikarta in Cikarang, Bekasi, to be one of the largest manufacturing hubs in Indonesia and a modern city with complete infrastructure.

8) *Amakudari* refers to ties binding the bureaucracy and private corporations whereby government officials retire into top positions in Japanese companies. T.J. Pempel (1998) sees *amakudari* as the development and maintenance of ties between private interests and certain ministries of the central government.

himself (Reuters Finance 2018b). In sum, the relations between horses and jockeys can be like playing chess at different tables. Each table represents a different set of elements with varying political arrangements, and the businessmen are required to deal with those different arrangements by converting their capital. They are aware of the consequences that the various arrangements might generate and are keen to skillfully capitalize on them.

(3) Privatizing Globalization, Socializing Nationalism

Democratization and globalization have contributed to the transformation of the national state as well as capital acting through it, whether Chinese or pribumi. The conflicting nature of those two events is apparent. On the one hand, the traditional principle of public interest in a globalizing market is that economic policy should protect and preserve competition as the most appropriate means of ensuring the efficient allocation of resources and protection of local industries. State technocrats and political elites, needing to maintain legitimacy in a democratic system, therefore tend to adopt national rhetoric and locally geared policies (Warburton 2017). On the other hand, the liberalization of state policies along with the global flow of capital has, to some extent, led to increasingly globalized circuits of capital accumulation that extend beyond the state's control (Burnham 2006). Globalized circuits of capital accumulation tend to oppose protectionism and favor a regime of global free trade and investment. As such, what tends to happen is that outward-oriented, pro-globalization coalitions between businesses, politico-bureaucrats, and political parties become pitted against inward-oriented groups devoted to maintaining the status quo. An integral job of Chinese business is to accommodate both outward- and inward-oriented forces, which yield a myriad of opportunities as well as challenges.

Facing new challenges under popular mobilization and electoral politics, the government introduced a range of nationalist policies in the extractive sector—ranging from export bans to forced foreign divestments—in a bid to attract voters. For example, the enactment of Law No. 4/2009 under the Yudhoyono presidency fundamentally restructured the industry and reinstated the state's authority to force companies to pay more tax, increase loyalty rate, and require foreign companies to divest their shares.⁹⁾ More tellingly, in 2013 the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources introduced a new regu-

9) On January 12, 2009, Indonesia under Yudhoyono passed Law No. 4 of 2009 Regarding Mineral and Coal Mining, putting an end to the Mining Law 1967. It is a cornerstone in the management of mineral- and coal-mining areas in Indonesia. Under the new law, mining rights are regulated under a licensing system and take the form of Mining Business Permits, or IUP (Izin Usaha Pertambangan). In accordance with the mandate of Law No. 4 of 2009, a mining area is an area that has the potential for minerals and is not bound by the limits of government administration or part of national spatial planning. It also can be an area that has potential licensing by local authorities in coordination with ministries and the House of Representatives.

lation that compelled oil and gas companies to use more local providers of goods and services. The following year, Yudhoyono went ahead and put a large number of oil and gas service sectors, including onshore drilling and piping and construction services, on the Negative Investment List so as to limit foreign shareholdings (Negara 2015; Warburton 2017).

Unlike Soeharto's risk-averse policies regarding the mineral, coal, and energy industries, which gave priority to foreign investors, this wave of economic nationalism gave opportunities to Chinese tycoons to diversify their business portfolio. The early 2000s was also a time of low global coal prices, which allowed local businesses—including Chinese businesses—to acquire assets from foreign miners. For example, the Adaro Group, which is considered an “Astra reunion,” gained prominence as Indonesia's largest coal company through acquisitions and foreign divestment deals (Erwide Maulia 2017). Among other divestment decisions, in 2016 BHP Billiton sold its 75 percent stake in the IndoMet project in East and Central Kalimantan to Adaro, as Indonesia's regulatory framework was difficult for international companies to negotiate. Adaro, which previously acted as BHP Billiton's joint venture partner and owned a 25 percent stake from 2010, now fully owned the coal-mining project (Reuters, June 7, 2016). One of Soeharto's *cukong*, Prajogo Pangestu, also diversified his company into the mining sector. In 2012 Prajogo's Barito Pacific signed \$393 million to PT Thiess Contractors to develop coal mining in Central Kalimantan, Muara Teweh (Thiess website 2012). Eka Tjipta Widjaja gained a foothold in 38,165 hectares of coal mines in Jambi, South Kalimantan, and Central Kalimantan through Sinar Mas's subsidiary Golden Energy Mines. The subsidiary also acquired shares of the British-owned coal investment company Asia Resource Minerals, which ultimately made it the major owner of Berau Coal Energy in East Kalimantan (Neil 2015; Warden 2015). While scrupulously focusing on its mainstream business, the Salim Group mobilized its subsidiary PT Adidaya Tangguh to manage coal and tin mining in Maluku. In March 2016 the Djarum Group, collaborating with the Wilmar Group of Martua Sitorus—a prominent Chinese Indonesian businessman—took over 95 percent of shares in PT Agincourt Resources, a gold-mining company in Martabe, North Sumatra, that was previously owned by G-Resources of Hong Kong (*Kompas*, December 7, 2015). A new player, the MNC Group belonging to Hary Tanosoedibyo—who seamlessly diversified his media empire—also acquired PT Nuansacipta Coal Investment, which focused mainly on coal mining (Didik Purwanto 2013). Economic nationalism yielded important resources necessary to back up Chinese economic capital, particularly in the extractive sectors that were restricted during the Soeharto era.

Despite the buoyant economic capital of Chinese business gaining traction on lucrative extractive projects, practices on the ground often reflect a varying pace and nature

of capital convertibility. As mentioned in the previous section, by figuratively riding many horses, wealthy businessmen were able to have more diversified entry points to access the state actors, and hence to access licenses and contracts, which enabled them to expand their business empires (Warburton 2017). However, as the state became fragmented, the interests of business and different levels of government were not always easily aligned. As decentralization led to the substantially expanded power of local business and political elites, the line between business and politics at the local level became increasingly hazy. The social capital possessed by Chinese conglomerates has its limits, and there was thus somewhat of an impasse when it came to dealing with the increasingly chaotic power relations at the local level. It was not uncommon for local companies, owned by either pribumi or ethnic Chinese, to cash in on the rise of economic nationalism and convert their strong connections with local elites into economic capital (Choi 2012; Chong 2015). This recent development trend led to the rise of local capture, a condition under which local business elites capture or influence local economic and/or political institutions that constrain Jakarta-based Chinese conglomerates' business expansion (Schulze and Sjahrir 2014).

For example, in the mining sector the IUP, a general license to conduct mining business activities in a designated area, is not issued by the central government; instead, the issuing authority depends upon the location of the mine infrastructure. If the mine infrastructure is located across more than one province, the IUP is issued by ministers. If a project is based in a regency or city, the mayor holds the authority to issue a license (PWC Indonesia 2016). No one knows for sure whether licenses inked at the national level will be honored by provincial or district authorities. In other words, city mayors—many of whom rise to power through money politics—have the power to issue and expunge licenses over hugely lucrative concessions. What follows is local capture. Many local political candidates who have personal connections with local businessmen or established politicians need support from local businesses. Once elected as local leaders, they repay the business elites in the form of contracts, projects, and even local policies. The most recent case involving the Salim Group vividly epitomizes the dynamics as well as the limits of Salim's social capital in a particular area. The SILO Group, which is reportedly affiliated with the Salim Group and Agung Sedayu Group through its CEO, Effendy Tios, has held coal concessions on Laut Island in South Kalimantan since 2010. However, according to a report published by *Tempo* magazine (2018), the operation was circumscribed as the South Kalimantan governor, Shabirin Noor, revoked the license with the intention of handing it to his closest ally, Andi Syamsuddin Arsyad (known as Haji Isam), who ran oil-palm estates in the region. Reportedly, the mining licenses were sold to Haji before the regional head election was held. The ownership dispute has become complex

as Haji is an important figure who has control over bureaucratic politics in South Kalimantan and enjoys the support of police officers. While the Salim Group, through its subsidiary Aetra Air, recently returned to the Jakarta water concession scene after almost 20 years (*Jakarta Post*, August 31, 2017), it seems that its capital convertibility in South Kalimantan is out of kilter.

Despite struggles over capital conversion in the mining sector, Chinese businesses have been forging the internationalization of their economic capital in a more innovative way. Their activities are no longer tied to centralized political power. Instead, new business trends they promote entail a rearticulation of economy and polity that supersedes cross-border mobility of capital. Old players, such as the Salim and Sinar Mas Groups, while often demonized as using “shadow companies” to hide their links to deforestation and unfair methods of concession (see *AidEnvironment* 2018), do a complete about-face publicly when it comes to the recent trend of industrialization, namely, the digital revolution. The big conglomerates portray themselves simply as entrepreneurs who have attained affluence and therefore have a responsibility to help others march toward the promotion of liberalization and globalization. Many of Soeharto’s *cukong* have become active in funnelling their capital toward digital services and venture capital to fund start-ups and early-stage companies that are believed to have long-term growth potential. The Lippo Group has made a noteworthy move through its sponsorship of Venturra Capital, which has \$150 million to invest in start-ups in Indonesia, and Southeast Asia in general (Dion Bisara 2015). In a similar vein, Sinar Mas has been a key investor in Ardent Capital, a venture capital firm that has built e-commerce companies worth over \$350 million throughout Southeast Asia and globally (Horwitz 2014). The richest conglomerate in Indonesia, the Djarum Group, also has its tentacles in tech investments through Global Digital Prima. Global Digital Prima has put money into many notable tech start-ups, ranging from digital communities, media, and commerce to solution companies such as Blibli.com, Gojek, Kaskus, Kumparan, and Merah Putih (Aruna Harjani 2012). This trend does not merely imply that Chinese businesses have staked a claim in the development of digital services. Rather, it demonstrates how they have been able to simultaneously shelter the expansion of their economic capital under the guise of economic nationalism and liberalization.

In sum, despite local constraints, democracy has led to the rolling out of economic and political ventures through which Chinese businesses have carved out varying degrees of capital conversion to suit their interests. Under such a complex, contradictory, and antagonistic interaction of capital and interests in the country, these businesses have skillfully appropriated political dynamics driven by both market and non-market discourses and practices and ultimately restructured the state-business relationship.

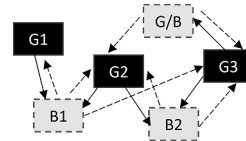
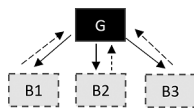
V Summary: Toward a Dispersed Network

An important point, as mentioned earlier, is that the state-Chinese business relationship is not static; it is driven by the varying pace and nature of capital conversion at the regional, national, and even international levels. The form of capital itself is varied—ranging from economic resources to social and cultural capital—and has waxed and waned over the years to eventually create a unique pattern of state-business ties. As such, democracy is not an end in itself but rather a new political space in which capital values are restructured and subsequently converted by various actors to suit their interests. Consequently, changes in the composition of interests and bargaining power of actors with varying degrees of capital at their disposal have redefined the state-business relationship.

As summarized in Table 2, it is clear that three features of the state-business relationship have undergone a fundamental transformation. First, regarding the basis of

Table 2 Mapping the State-Business Relationship

Features	New Order	Democracy
Typical pattern	Vertical ties (perceived as a medium for crony capitalism and rent-seeking)	Dispersed network
Basis in inequality		
Value of services	Patron had stronger bargaining power	Mixed actors with different levels of bargaining power
Reciprocity	Monopolist patron (generals, Soeharto, and Cendana family) and loyal clients (<i>cukong</i>)	Diverse political authorities with various economic and political incentives
Face-to-face character		
Quality and frequency of reciprocity	Intense, insistent reciprocity	Short-term, opportunistic
Patron-client bonds	Loyal, somewhat voluntary	Moderate; business can theoretically manage without politician's full support.
Diffuse flexibility		
Needs and resources	License, monopoly rights, political protection, cash cow for <i>yayasan</i>	Local rent-seeking, capital marketization, money politics, maintaining civil rights
Nature of exchange	Mutual, consistent	Great flexibility to maneuver



Source: Compiled by author.

Note: G = patron/state; B = business; G/B = dual role (politician and business, i.e., Chinese businessman-turned-politician)

equality, unlike during Soeharto's administration, when Chinese businesses were more vulnerable than patronage-minded generals and politicians, democracy has strengthened the former's bargaining power due to dramatic political shifts that have led to the dominance of the political sphere by business interests. A series of reforms, such as foreign divestment and restored civil rights, in turn, have created opportunities for Chinese business to harness an increased inflow of resources. Equally important, in terms of degree of reciprocity and value of services, the story is no more restricted only to monopolist patrons (prominent generals, Soeharto, and the Cendana family) that pledged monopoly rights and granted licenses to their well-connected *cukong* in return for favors in the form of company shares, funding for *yayasan*, or the bailing out of state-owned companies and helping Soeharto to accomplish certain unrealistic development plans. Democracy with the fragmentation of power has demonstrated that the president and military are not the nerve center of the state-business relationship; a wide range of "services" have been offered by mixed actors, including political parties, parliament members, and local authorities with bargaining power. To a greater extent, Chinese businesses even now can establish and manage their own political party.

Second, in the realm of face-to-face character, it is apparent that the old patronage system has "higher qualities" of dependencies and loyalties than the recent one. Beyond the symbiotic relationship, somehow patronage brought a certain degree of volunteerism to the fore. The unbridled strong bond between Soeharto and his *cukong* showed that the roots of reciprocity were not simply limited to mutual advantage but were genuinely associated with a mutual devotion stemming from the enduring patron-client framework and shared values between both sides. In contrast, democracy downgraded the "qualities" of state-business ties. A series of unintended consequences deriving from democratic consolidation, such as liberalization, restored civil rights, and economic nationalism, have continuously created opportunities for *cukong* to gain a foothold in the political sphere. Thus, the bonds between Chinese business and the state seem more pragmatic and moderate. Additionally, given the capricious political environment, where nobody can predict who will be the next leader, the relationship lacks intensity as it is presumed to be short-term, dependent on how long the politician will be in office or how long a project will take.

The last feature of the relationship that has changed is flexibility. While a democratized Indonesia has witnessed a diversification of power, a decrease of military affiliations with politics, as well as the emergence of groups such as Islamic political parties and radical movements, Chinese businesses have skillfully managed to remain at the center of the diverse political constellation and minimize their political vulnerability. They wield influence in lucrative sectors of the economy and have significant shares in

the media industry, which is a form of political capital required by politico-bureaucrats during their campaigns. As a result, they have greater space to maneuver in situations of either unpredictable political clout or contentious political choices.

As a corollary to the varying pace and nature of capital conversion, the orthodox formation of patronage has been broken up into a centrifugal network. As shown by the diagram in Table 2, the hierarchical patronage with Soeharto at the top has been diminished. The new pattern of state-Chinese business relations demonstrates chaotic horizontal connections among forces and interests, including Chinese business. Neither the Chinese position nor the state's is higher, as neither of them has absolute bargaining power. What remained unchanged was the flexibility in converting capital in accordance with political dynamics.

The arguments posed in this research can be a never-ending discussion on the arc of economic development in Southeast Asia. Paradoxically, despite creating economic growth, the relationship between politics and business is not rule-based; rather, it is a concession-based relationship that has enabled actors to survive in all political weather. On the surface, as nations develop further and their politics and business become more stable, we tend to lose sight of the details of the nation's development path. It is largely due to the common perception that has been developed to the point that the state-business relations should have been somewhat professionalized. We might have been thinking about how politics in the democracy era and Chinese business might interact in systems that are relatively depoliticized. Taking a different approach, this research has broken the myth and contributed to knowledge on the political spectrum of Asian economic development amidst the ebb and flow of capital.

Accepted: April 12, 2019

References

- Abbott, J. 2003. *Developmentalism and Dependency in Southeast Asia: The Case of the Automotive Industry*. London: Routledge.
- Aditya L. Djono. 2014. Enggartiasto Lukita, Pengusaha properti yang inginkan perubahan [Enggartiasto Lukita, property developer hoping for reform]. *Berita Satu*. September 5. <http://www.beritasatu.com/politik/207936-enggartiasto-lukita-pengusaha-properti-yang-inginkan-perubahan.html>, accessed December 1, 2018.
- AidEnvironment*. 2018. New Report Uncovers One of the Largest Cases of Illegal Rainforest Clearance in Borneo for Palm Oil Development. April 19. <http://www.aidenvironment.org/news/new-report-uncovers-one-of-the-largest-cases-of-illegal-rainforest-clearance-in-borneo-for-palm-oil-development/>, accessed December 6, 2018.
- Arai, K. 2015. Jakarta "Since Yesterday": The Making of the Post-New Order Regime in an Indonesian

- Metropolis. *Southeast Asian Studies* 4(3): 445–486.
- Aruna Harjani. 2012. Martin Hartono, Son of Indonesia's Richest Tycoon, Invests in the Internet. *Forbes Asia*. November 28. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesasia/2012/11/28/martin-hartono-son-of-indonesias-richest-tycoon-invests-in-the-internet/#73efba19471c>, accessed June 12, 2017.
- Ascher, W. 1999. *Why Governments Waste Natural Resources: Policy Failures in Developing Countries*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Aspinall, E. 2005. *Opposing Suharto: Compromise, Resistance, and Regime Change in Indonesia*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Aspinall, E.; and Klinken, G.V., eds. 2010. *The State and Illegality in Indonesia*. Leiden: KITLV Press.
- Australia, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). 1995. *Overseas Chinese Business Networks*. Parkes: DFAT.
- Backman, Michael. 2001. *Asian Eclipse: Exposing the Dark Side of Business in Asia*. Singapore: J. Wiley.
- Baker, S.; and Salna, K. 2018. Trump's Indonesian Partner Thought This Would Be More Fun. *Bloomberg Businessweek*. May 23. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2018-05-23/trump-s-indonesian-partner-thought-this-would-be-more-fun>, accessed August 6, 2018.
- Barr, Christopher *et al.* 2010. *Financial Governance and Indonesia's Reforestation Fund during the Soeharto and Post-Soeharto Periods, 1989–2009*. Bogor: CIFOR.
- Borsuk, R. 1999. Markets: The Limits of Reform. In *Indonesia beyond Soeharto: Polity, Economy, Society Transition*, edited by D. K. Emerson, pp. 136–167. New York: M.E. Sharpe.
- Borsuk, R.; and Chng, N. 2014. *Liem Sioe Liong's Salim Group: The Business Pillar of Suharto's Indonesia*. Singapore: ISEAS.
- Bourdieu, P. 1993. *Sociology in Question*. London: Sage.
- . 1991. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Oxford: Polity Press.
- . 1986. The Forms of Capital. In *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, edited by J. G. Richardson, pp. 241–258. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Bourdieu, P.; and Wacquant, L. 1992. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Burnham, P. 2006. Neo-Gramscian Hegemony and the International Order. In *Global Restructuring, State, Capital, and Labour: Contesting Neo-Gramscian Perspectives*, edited by A. Bieler, W. Bonefeld, P. Burnham, and A. D. Morton, pp. 28–44. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Choi, N. 2012. *Local Politics in Indonesia: Pathways to Power*. London: Routledge.
- Chong, W. L. 2015. Local Politics and Chinese Indonesian Business in Post-Soeharto Era. *Southeast Asian Studies* 4(3): 487–532.
- Christine Franciska. 2014. Tionghoa dan politik era baru di Indonesia [Chinese and politics in a new era]. *BBC Indonesia*. June 27. https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/berita_indonesia/2014/06/140610_lapsus_politik_cina, accessed June 12, 2018.
- Chua, C. 2008. *Chinese Big Business in Indonesia: The State of Capital*. London: Routledge.
- Claessens, S.; Djankov, S.; and Lang, L. 1999. Who Controls East Asian Corporations? Policy Research Working Paper No. 2054. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Coppel, C. 1983. *Indonesian Chinese in Crisis*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.
- Cragg, C. 1995. *The New Taipans: A Vital Source Book on the People and Business of the Pacific Rim*. London: Century.
- Crouch, H. 2010. *Political Reform in Indonesia after Soeharto*. Singapore: ISEAS.
- . 2007. *The Army and Politics in Indonesia*. Kuala Lumpur: Equinox.
- Dauvergne, P. 2005. The Environmental Challenge to Loggers in the Asia-Pacific: Corporate Practices in Informal Regimes of Governance. In *The Business of Global Environmental Governance*, edited by D. L. Levy, P. J. Newell, and L. Gasser, pp. 169–196. Cambridge: MIT Press.

- Davidson, J.S. 2010. Driving Growth: Regulatory Reform and Expressways in Indonesia. *Regulation & Governance* 4(4): 465–484.
- Didik Purwanto. 2013. KPPU: Akuisisi perusahaan batubara oleh MNC tidak monopoli [KPPU: MNC does not monopolize the coal mining acquisition]. *Kompas*. September 16. <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2013/09/16/1111501/KPPU.Akuisisi.Perusahaan.Batubara.oleh.MNC.Tidak.Monopoli>, accessed July 12, 2018.
- Dieleman, M. 2011. New Town Development in Indonesia: Renegotiating, Shaping, and Replacing Institutions. *Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia* 167(1): 60–85.
- . 2007. *The Rhythm of Strategy: A Corporate Biography of the Salim Group of Indonesia*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Dieleman, M.; and Sachs, W. 2008. Reluctant Internationalization: The Case of the Salim Group. In *Ethnic Chinese in Contemporary Indonesia*, edited by L. Suryadinata, pp. 154–176. Singapore: ISEAS.
- Dion Bisara. 2015. Lippo-Backed Venturra Capital Launches \$150 Million Fund for Southeast Asia Tech Investment. *Jakarta Globe*. October 8. <https://jakartaglobe.id/business/lippo-backed-venturra-capital-launches-150m-fund-se-asia-tech-investments/>, accessed December 1, 2018.
- Erwida Maulia. 2017. CEO in the News: Coal Is Still King for Adaro Energy's Chief. *Nikkei Asian Review*. December 21. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/CEO-in-the-news-Coal-is-still-king-for-Adaro-Energy-s-chief>, accessed August 1, 2018.
- Ford, M.; and Pepinsky, T. B., eds. 2014. *Beyond Oligarchy: Wealth, Power, and Contemporary Indonesian Politics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Fukuoka, Y. 2012. Politics, Business, and the State in Post-Soeharto Indonesia. *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 34(1): 80–100.
- Gamson, W. A. 1968. *Power and Discontent*. Homewood: Dorsey.
- Giras Pasopati. 2015. Mengenal tiga anak baru dalam geng orang kaya Indonesia [Three new members in the Indonesian conglomerate camp]. *CNN Indonesia*. December 3. <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/ekonomi/20151203095904-92-95678/mengenal-tiga-anak-baru-dalam-geng-orang-kaya-indonesia>, accessed April 22, 2017.
- Habir, A. D. 1999. Conglomerates: All in the Family? In *Indonesia beyond Soeharto: Polity, Economy, Society Transition*, edited by D. K. Emmerson, pp. 168–190. New York: M.E. Sharpe.
- Hadiz, V. 2003. Reorganizing Political Power in Indonesia: A Reconsideration of So-Called “Democratic Transitions.” *Pacific Review* 16(4): 591–611.
- Hadiz, Vedi; and Robison, R. 2004. *Reorganising Power in Indonesia: The Politics of Oligarchy in an Age of Markets*. London: Routledge.
- Hamilton-Hart, N. 2005. The Regionalization of Southeast Asian Business: Transnational Networks in National Contexts. In *Remapping East Asia: The Construction of a Region*, edited by T. J. Pempel, pp. 170–194. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Harefa, A.; and Siadari, E. 2006. *The Ciputra's Way: The Best Practice to Be a True Entrepreneur*. Jakarta: PT Elex Media Komputindo.
- Heryanto, A.; and Hadiz, V. 2005. Post-authoritarian Indonesia: A Comparative Southeast Asian Perspective. *Critical Asian Studies* 37(2): 251–275.
- Horwitz, J. 2014. Ardent Capital Nabs US\$127 Million from Huge Indonesian Conglomerate Sinarmas. *TechinAsia*. September 22. <https://www.techinasia.com/ardent-capital-nabs-us127-million-from-huge-indonesian-conglomerate-sinarmas>, accessed December 1, 2018.
- Hui, P. K. 1995. Overseas Chinese Business Networks: East Asian Economic Development in Historical Perspective. PhD dissertation, Department of Sociology, SUNY Binghamton.
- Indonesia Investment. 2015. Danayasa Arthatama. <https://www.indonesia-investments.com/business/indonesian-companies/danayasa-arthatama/item1751>, accessed July 25, 2018.

- Ismantoro Dwi Yuwono. 2014. *Mafia migas vs Pertamina* [Migas Mafia vs. Pertamina]. Yogyakarta: Galang Press.
- Johnson, C. A. 1995. *Japan, Who Governs? The Rise of the Developmental State*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Khoirul Amin. 2014. Entrepreneurs in Politics for “Personal Reasons.” *Jakarta Post*. February 19. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/02/19/entrepreneurs-politics-personal-reasons.html>, accessed December 4, 2018.
- Kingsbury, D. 2005. *Power Politics and the Indonesian Military*. London: Routledge.
- Liddle, W. R. 1999. Regime: The New Order. In *Indonesia beyond Soeharto: Polity, Economy, Society, Transition*, edited by D. K. Emmerson, pp. 39–70. New York: M.E. Sharpe.
- Lim, L.; and Stern, A. 2003. State Power and Private Profit: The Political Economy of Corruption in Southeast Asia. *Asian-Pacific Economic Literature* 16(2): 18–52.
- Lindsey, T. 2005. Reconstituting the Ethnic Chinese in Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Law, Racial Discrimination, and Reform. In *Chinese Indonesians: Remembering, Distorting, Forgetting*, edited by T. Lindsey and H. Pausacker, pp. 41–76. Singapore: ISEAS.
- Liu Hong. 2012. Beyond a Revisionist Turn: Networks, State, and the Changing Dynamics of Diasporic Chinese Entrepreneurship. *China: An International Journal* 10(3): 20–41.
- Matsumoto, Y. 2007. *Financial Fragility and Instability in Indonesia*. London: Routledge.
- McLeod, R. H. 2010. Institutionalized Public Sector Corruption: A Legacy of the Soeharto Franchise. In *The State and Illegality in Indonesia*, edited by E. Aspinall and G. V. Klinken, pp. 45–63. Leiden: KITLV Press.
- . 2000. Government-Business Relations in Indonesia. In *Reform and Recovery in East Asia: The Role of the State and Economic Enterprise*, edited by P. Drysdale, pp. 146–168. London: Routledge.
- Mietzner, M. 2015. Dysfunction by Design: Political Finance and Corruption in Indonesia. *Critical Asian Studies* 47(4): 587–610.
- . 2014. Oligarchs, Politicians, and Activists: Contesting Party Politics in Post-Soeharto Indonesia. In *Beyond Oligarchy: Wealth, Power, and Contemporary Indonesian Politics*, edited by M. Ford and T. B. Pepinsky, pp. 99–116. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- . 2013. Political Party Financing in Indonesia Is a Recipe for Corruption. *Indonesia 360*. http://www.sr-indonesia.com/in_the_journal/view/political-party-financing-in-indonesia-is-a-recipe-for-corruption?pg=all, accessed May 20, 2018.
- . 2009. Indonesia in 2008: Democratic Consolidation in Soeharto’s Shadow. *Southeast Asian Affairs*: 105–123.
- . 2007. Party Financing in Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Between State Subsidies and Political Corruption. *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* 29(2): 238–263.
- Muhammad Idris. 2015. Ini susunan kabinet baru Kadin Indonesia periode 2015–2020 [New Cabinet of Indonesian Kadin period 2015–2020]. *DetikFinance*. December 17. <https://finance.detik.com/berita-ekonomi-bisnis/d-3098618/ini-susunan-kabinet-baru-kadin-indonesia-periode-2015-2020>, accessed January 10, 2019.
- Negara, S. D. 2015. Rising Economic Nationalism in Indonesia: Will This Time Be Different? *ISEAS Perspective* 59.
- Neil, A. 2015. Indonesian Tycoon Takes on Nat Rothschild with Asia Resource Mineral Bid. *Mining Capital*. April 15. <http://www.miningcapital.com/companies/news/68055/indonesian-tycoon-takes-on-nat-rothschild-with-asia-resource-minerals-bid--79308.html>, accessed April 28, 2019.
- Ong, A.; and Nonini, D., eds. 1997. *Ungrounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism*. New York: Routledge.
- Pempel, T. J. 1998. *Regime Shift: Comparative Dynamics of the Japanese Political Economy*. Ithaca:

- Cornell University Press.
- Purdey, J. 2005. Anti-Chinese Violence and Transitions in Indonesia: June 1998–October 1999. In *Chinese Indonesians: Remembering, Distorting, Forgetting*, edited by T. Lindsey and H. Pausacker, pp. 14–40. Singapore: ISEAS.
- PWC Indonesia. 2016. *Investment and Taxation Guide: Mining in Indonesia*. 8th ed. <https://www.pwc.com/id/en/energy-utilities-mining/assets/May%202016/PwC%20Indonesia-mining-in-Indonesia-survey-2016.pdf>, accessed May 20, 2018.
- Reuter, T. 2015. Political Parties and the Power of Money in Indonesia and Beyond. *TRaNS: Trans-Regional and -National Studies of Southeast Asia* 3(2): 267–288.
- Rieffel, A.; and Pramodhawardani, J. 2007. *Out of Business and on Budget: The Challenge of Military Financing in Indonesia*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Rinakit, S. 2005. *Indonesia Regional Elections in Praxis*. Singapore: Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies.
- Robison, R. 1986. *Indonesia: The Rise of Capital*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Robison, R.; and Hadiz, V. R. 2004. *Reorganizing Power in Indonesia: The Politics of Oligarchy in an Age of Markets*. New York: Routledge.
- . 1993. Privatization or the Reorganization of Dirigism? Indonesian Economic Policy in the 1990s. *Canadian Journal of Development Studies/Revue canadienne d'études du développement* 14(1): 13–32.
- Roniger, L. 1994. The Comparative Study of Clientelism and the Changing Nature of Civil Society in the Contemporary World. In *Democracy, Clientelism, and Civil Society*, edited by L. R. Ayse and G. Ayata, pp. 1–19. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- Rosser, A. 2002. *The Politics of Economic Liberalisation in Indonesia: State, Market and Power*. New York: Routledge.
- Said, S. 2016. *Menyaksikan 30 tahun pemerintahan otoriter Soeharto* [Witnessing 30 years of authoritarian government of Soeharto]. Jakarta: Mizan Pustaka.
- Saragih, B. B. 2014. Lion Air Boss Joins PKB as Deputy Chief. *Jakarta Post*. January 13. <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/01/13/lion-air-boss-joins-pkb-deputy-chief.html>, accessed August 8, 2018.
- Sato, Y. 2004. The Decline of Conglomerates in Post-Soeharto Indonesia: The Case of Salim Group. *Taiwan Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 1(1): 19–44.
- . 1994. The Development of Business Groups in Indonesia: 1967–1989. In *Approaching Soeharto's Indonesia from the Margins*, edited by T. Shiraishi, pp. 101–153. Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University.
- Schulze, G. G.; and Sjahrir, B. S. 2014. Decentralization, Governance and Public Service Delivery. In *Regional Dynamics in Decentralized Indonesia*, edited by H. Hill, pp. 186–207. Singapore: ISEAS.
- Schwarz, A. 2004. *Indonesia: The 2004 Election and Beyond*. Singapore: ISEAS.
- . 2000. *A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia's Search for Stability*. Singapore: Talisman.
- . 1994. *A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia in the 1990s*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Scott, J. C. 1977. *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- . 1972. Patron-Client Politics and Political Change in Southeast Asia. *American Political Science Review* 66(1): 91–113.
- Scott, J. C.; and Kerkvliet, B. J. 1977. How Traditional Rural Patrons Lose Legitimacy: A Theory with Special Reference to Southeast Asia. In *Friends, Followers, and Factions: A Reader in Political Clientelism*, edited by S. W. Schmidt, pp. 439–468. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Sen, Krishna; and Hill, David, eds. 2010. *Politics and the Media in Twenty-First Century Indonesia*:

- Decade of Democracy*. London: Routledge.
- Setijadi, C. 2016. "A Beautiful Bridge": Chinese Indonesian Associations, Social Capital and Strategic Identification in a New Era of China–Indonesia Relations. *Journal of Contemporary China* 25(102): 822–835.
- Shin, Y. H. 1991. The Role of Elites in Creating Capitalist Hegemony in Post-Oil Boom Indonesia. *Indonesia*, Special Issue: 127–144.
- Simanjuntak, L. 2014. Ini parpol pemenang pemilu 2014 di tiap provinsi [List of political parties that won the 2014 election in each province]. *Merdeka*. May 12. <https://www.merdeka.com/politik/ini-parpol-pemenang-pemilu-2014-di-tiap-provinsi.html>, accessed August 10, 2018.
- Smith, A. L. 2001. Introduction: Abdurrahman Wahid's Economic Agenda: The Views of Leading Decision-Makers and Commentators. In *Gus Dur and the Indonesian Economy*, edited by A. L. Smith, pp. 1–24. Singapore: ISEAS.
- Soebagjo, N. 2008. Ethnic Chinese and Ethnic Indonesians: A Love-Hate Relationship. In *Ethnic Chinese in Contemporary Indonesia*, edited by L. Suryadinata, pp. 137–153. Singapore: ISEAS.
- Suryadinata, L. 2017. *The Rise of China and the Chinese Overseas: A Study of Beijing's Changing Policy in Southeast Asia and Beyond*. Singapore: ISEAS.
- . 2008. Chinese Indonesians in an Era of Globalization: Some Major Characteristics. In *Ethnic Chinese in Contemporary Indonesia*, edited by L. Suryadinata, pp. 1–16. Singapore: ISEAS.
- . 2006. Introduction. In *Southeast Asia's Chinese Businesses in an Era of Globalization: Coping with the Rise of China*, edited by L. Suryadinata, pp. 1–12. Singapore: ISEAS.
- Swartz, D. L. 2013. *Symbolic Power, Politics, and Intellectuals: The Political Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Tani, S. 2018. Indonesia Raids Home of Lippo Group CEO in Bribery Probe. *Nikkei Asian Review*. October 18. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Companies/Indonesia-raids-home-of-Lippo-Group-CEO-in-bribery-probe2>, accessed December 2, 2018.
- Thee, K. W. 2006. The Indonesian Government's Economic Policies towards the Ethnic Chinese: Beyond Economic Nationalism? In *Southeast Asia's Chinese Businesses in an Era of Globalization: Coping with the Rise of China*, edited by L. Suryadinata, pp. 76–101. Singapore: ISEAS.
- Tomsa, D. 2013. What Type of Party? Southeast Asian Party between Clientelism and Electoralism. In *Party Politics in Southeast Asia: Clientelism and Electoral Competition in Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines*, edited by D. Tomsa and A. Ufen, pp. 20–39. New York: Routledge.
- Ufen, A. 2008. Political Party and Party System Institutionalization in Southeast Asia: Lessons for Democratic Consolidation in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand. *Pacific Review* 21(3): 327–350.
- Vatikiotis, M. R. 1993. *Indonesian Politics under Suharto*, Vol. 69. London: Routledge.
- Warburton, E. 2017. Resource Nationalism in Post-Boom Indonesia: The New Normal? *Lowy Institute Analyses*. April 27. <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/resource-nationalism-post-boom-indonesia-new-normal>, accessed August 1, 2018.
- Warden, G. 2015. Sinar Mas Gains Control of Asia Resource Minerals as Rothschild Exits. *The Edge Markets*. June 8. <http://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/sinar-mas-gains-control-asia-resource-minerals-rothschild-exits>, accessed July 20, 2018.
- Wessel, I. 2005. *Democratisation in Indonesia after the Fall of Suharto*. Berlin: Logos Verlag.
- Williams, M. S. 2017. *Indonesia, Islam, and the International Political Economy: Clash or Cooperation?* London: Routledge.
- Winters, J. A. 2013. Oligarchy and Democracy in Indonesia. *Indonesia* 96(1): 11–33.
- . 1996. *Power in Motion: Capital Mobility and the Indonesian State*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Wolters, W. 1983. *Politics, Patronage, and Class Conflict in Central Luzon*. The Hague: Institute of

Social Studies.

Woodier, J. 2009. *The Media and Political Change in Southeast Asia: Karaoke Culture and the Evolution of Personality Politics*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Yoshihara, K. 1988. *The Rise of Ersatz Capitalism in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Oxford University Press.

Online-news references

Berita Satu. 2018. Lippo-NU bangun rumah sakit di Magelang [Lippo-NU build hospital in Magelang]. March 21. <https://id.beritasatu.com/home/lippo-nu-bangun-rumah-sakit-di-magelang/173437>, accessed December 3, 2018.

———. 2016. James Riady: Pengusaha ikut membantu NU [James Riady: Business should support NU]. November 19. <http://www.beritasatu.com/nasional/400101-james-riady-pengusaha-ikut-membantu-nu.html>, accessed July 23, 2018.

———. 2015. Tokoh-tokoh terkemuka gabung Lippo Group [Prominent figures joining Lippo Group]. December 14. <http://id.beritasatu.com/home/tokoh-tokoh-terkemuka-gabung-lippo-group/135223>, accessed July 2, 2018.

Forbes Corporate Communications. 2017. Indonesia's 50 Richest. <https://www.forbes.com/indonesia-billionaires/list/>, accessed July 13, 2018.

———. 2015. A Challenging Year for Indonesia's 50 Richest on Forbes List. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbespr/2015/12/03/a-challenging-year-for-indonesias-50-richest-on-forbes-list/#53b6110075cc>, accessed July 1, 2018.

Jakarta Post. 2018. Tycoon Tomy Winata Supports Jokowi-Maruf Pair. November 27. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2018/11/27/tycoon-tomy-winata-supports-jokowi-maruf-pair.html>, accessed December 1, 2018.

———. 2017. Salim Group Acquires Aetra Air, Jakarta Tap Water Operator. August 31. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/08/31/salim-group-acquires-aetra-air-jakarta-tap-water-operator.html>, accessed April 28, 2019.

———. 2014. Tycoons Spin the Wheel of RI's High-Cost Politics. February 19. <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/02/19/tycoons-spin-wheel-ri-s-high-cost-politics.html>, accessed April 28, 2019.

Kompas. 2015. Kongsi Djarum-Wilmar caplok tambang emas [Coalition of Djarum-Wilmar in gold mining]. December 7. <https://ekonomi.kompas.com/read/2015/12/07/151536126/Kongsi.Djarum-Wilmar.Caplok.Tambang.Emas>, accessed August 3, 2018.

Reuters. 2016. BHP Billiton Sells Indonesian Coal Assets to Adaro. June 7. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bhp-billiton-adaro-energy/bhp-billiton-sells-indonesian-coal-assets-to-adaro-idUSKCN0YT0VA>, accessed May 20, 2018.

Reuters Finance. 2018a. Indofood Sukses Makmur Tbk PT (INDFta,JK). <https://www.reuters.com/finance/stocks/company-officers/INDFta,JK>, accessed December 1, 2018.

———. 2018b. Bank Artha Graha International Tbk PT (INPCn,JK). <https://www.reuters.com/finance/stocks/company-officers/INPCn,JK>, accessed December 1, 2018.

Tempo. 2018. After Mining Task Force Was Done. April 12. <https://en.tempo.co/read/917513/after-mining-task-force-was-done/full&view=ok>, accessed December 2, 2018.

Thiess website. 2012. Thiess Indonesia Awarded US\$393 Million Mining Contract. May 8. <https://www.thiess.com/news/2012/thiess-indonesia-awarded-us-393-million-mining-contract>, accessed February 3, 2019.



Islam, State and Society in Indonesia: Local Politics in Madura

YANWAR PRIBADI

Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2018.

Taking into account the historical concept that always presents continuity and change, *Islam, State and Society in Indonesia: Local Politics in Madura* examines the factors that have shaped and characterized the development of Islam and contemporary politics in Madura, and recognizes and describes the forms and aspects of the relationship—between Islam and politics; between state and society; between conflict and accommodation; between piety, tradition, and violence in the area; and the form and character of the process of democratization and decentralization in local politics. With research spanning the period of 1990 until 2010, the author Yanwar Pribadi has produced a study that fills the vacuum of local political history and Islam in Indonesia.

This topic is complex, and spans discussions of the position of *juragan* (rich people), political affiliation, *kiai/ulemas* (clerics), diasporic communities, *syahbandar* (harbor masters), state intervention, and the existence of the Shiite sects in a Madurese community dominated by Sunnis. There are at least three important elements of the *santri* (pious Muslim) culture inherent in the Madurese community: Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) representing elements of traditional Islamic education; Nahdlatul Ulama (or NU) representing Islamic organizations; and *kiai* representing Islamic figures. All these three intertwine and form complex relationships between Islam and politics as practiced in Madurese society.

This problem then leads to another important question: does Islam in Madura have different characteristics and forms than Islam from other regions in Indonesia? To a certain degree, the difference exists.

In this regard, *kiai* is the main actor in Madura state–society relations. Together with other groups of local leaders, such as *blater* (local strongmen) and *klebun* (village heads), they color social, political, economic, and cultural life, contributing to the dynamics of society. In this book, he explains that the aspects of Islam in the culture of Madurese society are very strong, so politics at the local level cannot be separated from the aspects of Islam. At the very least, there are three main actors at play: the *kiai* (clerics); *blater* (the jagoan); and *klebun* (village head)—all related and

influencing the other.

Life in Madura villages are not free from conflict, whether between village officials and clerics, or among individuals throughout the region. The villagers themselves are divided into several loose groups, and have different orientations and interests.

Officials take advantage of their abilities and resources, but government officials and *kiai* seem to challenge each other, openly or not, in an effort to secure their own interests. Local governments, via village officials, have tried to reduce the political influence of the *kiai*, especially during general elections. Meanwhile, through a network of Islamic boarding schools and NU, the government has succeeded in convincing grassroots communities of the importance of development programs. Yanwar Pribadi notes that at the village level, the support of clerics is important when it comes to involving villagers in the implementation of government programs. This claim is supported by Elly Touwen-Bouwsma's study (1992).

Yanwar Pribadi also highlights the three main elements of the Madurese *santri* culture: *pesantren* representing Islamic educational institutions; NU representing the majority of Islam; and the *kiai* (as religious leaders) who symbolize the leader of Islam. All three have become traits, and are central elements of Islam and politics in Madura. The *kiai* are greatly needed by the government to ensure that development and politics run smoothly at the grassroots level. In the nineteenth century, the *tarekat kiai*, *pesantren kiai*, and other religious figures—such as the *guru ngaji* (Koran teacher), *imam* (prayer leader), *juru kunci* (guardian of the cemetery), *merbot* (gatekeeper of the mosque), *modin* (muezzin), and *naib* (sub-district head)—could increase their role and position in the village. This is still true for those involved in regulating religious life in the villages, including maintaining Islamic boarding schools. They are all needed especially during ritual celebrations, which are still held and maintained to this day.

In clear and great detail, Yanwar Pribadi describes the influence of Islam on Madura. First, Islam forms the Madurese community as “communal piety.” Second, Islam is integrated into all the habits and traditions of the fertile Madurese people (a traditional island). Third, Islam must deal with the culture of the Madurese community, which is also dubbed the “island of violence.” The third description is a stereotype that is often inherent in the identity of the Madurese community. Of course, being stereotypes, they are not always accurate, but they are not always wrong, either.

In my opinion, Yanwar Pribadi was able to explain effectively the historical context of the development of Islam in Madurese society, and how it formed a culture of resistance to the rulers, especially the New Order. This resistance can be seen in how the Madurese community rejected several development projects promoted by the New Order government, such as the Nipah Reservoir and Suramadu Bridge. In the case of the Nipah Reservoir, the authorities opened fire on residents and claimed casualties.

According to the author, both the Nipah Reservoir and the Suramadu Bridge developments

were considered by the *ulamas* and Madurese figures to have a negative influence on the Madurese people who held firm to Islamic values. They believed that industrialization and entertainment areas threatened places sanctified by society.

Yanwar Pribadi goes on to discuss how the position of the Madura people could be observed from the results of Huub de Jonge's research, which was later recorded as "Madura in the Four Eras." In addition, the political affiliation that occurred in the two eras he studied showed complex differences. In the First Era, the political affiliation of the people in the New Order was dominated by Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (Party of United Development or PPP) with little Golongan Karya (Golkar Party or Party of Functional Groups). The Second Era is the Reformation period, during which the influence of the Islamic party began to fade. In the Third Era, the author turns to the Shia issue, stating explicating that he did not include this element in his research, considering that this issue had only recently occurred in 2012, two years after his research was conducted. The assumption is that the basis of the conflict between the Shia and NU circles was theological differences. However, it cannot be denied that socio-economic jealousy also contributed to the problem.

The Fourth Era concerns the Madurese diaspora in the country—in this period, Yanwar Pribadi reveals that their influence was not very visible in terms of politics, but was influential in terms of culture; Madurese diaspora in other places tended to "lose" their identity.

In terms of state intervention on the Madurese community, the author explains that the state did not interfere too much in the violence that became entrenched in Madura. He also details the situation and conditions of Madurese society in the context of the previous period, particularly the eighteenth century, Indonesia's colonial era. He further pointed out that the Madurese community has long been loyal to the VOC company (the Netherlands colonial company), even becoming a "political leader" of the pro-VOC company parties in the face of rebellions. This continued until the twentieth century, when Madura was one of the important areas in Java.

The author asserts that Madura has never run out of resources, although this claim runs contrary to the results of the late Prof. Dr. Kuntowijoyo's research on Madura's social changes. The ecological perspective adopted by Kuntowijoyo affirmed that environmental and ecological conditions greatly influenced the formation of the culture of the Madurese community (Kuntowijoyo 2002).

The author shows how regional experience in dealing with Islam and politics can illuminate the socio-political trajectory of other developing Muslim countries presently experiencing a comparable and rhythmic transformation of democracy. He explains that he chose to conduct his research on Madura because it had one of the most complex relationships between Islam and politics during the last years of the New Order and the first years the post-New Order in Indonesia, and because it is a strong Muslim region with a very strong history of religious and cultural traditions.

The volume consists of eight chapters. The first contains an introduction explaining the influence of Islam in the local level of society in Madura, as well as from a national perspective to the Southeast Asian region. In Chapter Two, Islamic and *santri* cultures are explained in detail and link the *kiai* as important figures in the Madurese community. Chapter Three next discusses the position of the clerics as leaders in Madura: *kiai* is the ultimate leader who represents the local people's powers. Regarding the strong influence of religion on Madurese society, Madura was nicknamed "Serambi Medina" (Madina Porch), which juxtaposed with Aceh's "Veranda of Mecca."

Chapter Four, Yanwar Pribadi discusses local strongmen, as well as a tradition of violence that is deeply rooted in the culture of the Madurese community. The subsequent chapter then explores the development of Islam that influenced the resistance of the Madurese community toward development. Chapter Six goes on to examine electoral politics (elections) that reflect the political affiliation of the actors, especially the scholars. The affiliation is influential from the provincial level (*pilgub*), to the district (*pilbup*) and the village (*pilkades*).

Chapter Seven goes in depth about how village politics is a battleground for influence, given that the village is a "source" of basic-level power, and has complex relationships in building reputation, network, and influence. Chapter Eight concludes the volume, covering several aspects, namely: the transformation of Madurese society; aspects of Islam; political actors; Soeharto's New Order development politics; electoral politics; village politics; and the socio-political trajectory of the Madurese community.

Based on a wide range of field research incorporating anthropological and historical approaches, *Islam, State and Society in Indonesia* makes an important contribution to the analysis of Islam and politics in Indonesia, Southeast Asia, and the future socio-political trajectory of other developing Muslim countries experiencing similar and comparable democratic transformations. It is useful for academics, researchers, and students in the fields of religion and politics in Asia, especially politics, anthropology, and the history of Southeast Asia.

Herdi Sahrasad

*University of Paramadina and Department of Political Science,
University of Muhammadiyah Jakarta*

References

- Azra, Azyumardi; and Afrianty, Dina. 2005. Pesantren and Madrasa: Modernization of Indonesian Muslim Society. Paper presented in Workshop on Madrasa, Modernity and Islamic Education, Boston University, CURA, May 6–7.
- Kuntowijoyo. 2002. *Perubahan sosial dalam masyarakat agraris: Madura 1850–1940*. Penerbit Matabangsa. Translated from Kuntowijoyo. 1980. Social Change in an Agrarian Society: Madura 1850–1940. PhD dissertation, Columbia University.
- Touwen-Bouwsma, Elly. 1992. The Ulama of Madura: Rise and Expansion of a Religious Regime. In

- Faith and Polity: Essays on Religion and Politics*, edited by Mart Bax, Peter Kloos, and Adrianus Koster. Amsterdam: VU University Press.
- van Bruinessen, Martin. 2008. Traditionalist and Islamist Pesantrens in Contemporary Indonesia. In *The Madrasa in Asia: Political Activism and Transnational Linkages*, edited by Farish A. Noor, Yoginder Sikand, and Martin van Bruinessen, pp. 217–245. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- . 1999. Global and Local in Indonesian Islam. *Tonan Ajia Kenkyu* 37(2): 158–175.

Monastery, Monument, Museum: Sites and Artifacts of Thai Cultural Memory

MAURIZIO PELEGGI

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017.

“How plausible [. . .] is it to assume the existence of a shared Thai cultural memory?” (p. 4). This is the promising question that sets Thailand historian Maurizio Peleggi’s latest work, *Monastery, Monument, Museum*, into motion.

The monograph carries on with the author’s previous work on material and visual culture in the kingdom with a narrative that aims to bring memory studies into a dialogue with a vast array of Thai sources. Peleggi’s ambitious goal is to “conceptualize cultural memory not as a storeroom or archive of tangible and intangible materials, but, rather, as a dual process of recollection and reinscription,” whereby “(a)ny memorial act—individual as well as collective, concrete as well as symbolic—modifies the preexisting mnemonic landscape either by adding to it or by intentionally altering it” (p. 5). The author has also made the ambitious choice to consider sites and artifacts ranging from rock art to street art installations, and over a period spanning the pre-modern and contemporary.

Monumental in scope, *Monastery, Monument, Museum* makes for a surprisingly fast read. The Introduction makes up 9 pages, and there are eight chapters of approximately 20 pages each, which organize the book into three distinct parts.

The first part of the book, “Sacred Geographies,” explores Thai cultural memory by focusing on devotional art in the pre-modern and the early modern era. Chapter 1 takes the reader to sites across the kingdom that have been inscribed by religious myth—whether in the form of Buddha’s footprints or relics. Peleggi shows that myth becomes a form of memory that is embodied in the landscape. This is illustrated in the way that Thai Buddhists engage with sacred sites in an attempt to harvest the kind of magical potency that inhabits them (*saksit*).

The next chapter examines Buddha images that are regarded as embodiments of potency, and attributed magical powers and personalities. The author explores the circumstances under which apparently controversial processes—like the looting, displacement, replacement, borrowing, copying, and breaking of Buddha images—do or do not result in a loss of such extraordinary qualities.

Chapter 3 then investigates representations of foreigners—Westerners (*farang*) and Muslims (*khaek*)—in temple art, including wooden cabinets and murals. Here, Peleggi lets the court cosmology treatise of the *Three Worlds* (*Traiphumi*) guide his analysis. He therefore argues that foreigners in such contexts are mainly treated as opponents of the Dharma, and are thus used to fix the primacy of Buddhism over other world religions in Thai cultural memory. The author indicates that the royal court's adoption of "Western" cosmology during King Mongkut's reign (1851–68) is in reaction to European expansionism, and that it prompts a new search for national identity.

The second part of the volume, "Antiquities, Museums, and National History," is dedicated to the modern era. Peleggi argues that this is characterized by "the mergence and development of antiquarianism and eventually archeology, partly as the result of a shift in the elite's worldview and partly as a response to colonial and neocolonial projects of knowledge" (p. 5). Chapter 4 looks at the relationship between art and national identity in the face of European imperialism. By focusing mainly on the fourth, fifth, and sixth reigns of the Bangkok period (that is, the second half of the nineteenth century), he investigates how kings turned to the imported practice of antiquarianism in an attempt to rewrite the memory of Siam's past from a perspective that reflects European epistemological concerns.

Chapter 5 examines further the nexus between art and national identity by exploring how artifacts in museums of the 1920s were managed in response to dominant discourses of cultural evolutionism. The author argues that what was previously categorized as devotional images (*phrarup*) were then treated as antiquities (*boranwatthu*). This was because museum curators endeavored to create a cultural memory that testified to the "evolution" of the Thai people in accordance with (now-outdated) discourses of sociocultural evolutionism.

The problem of a search of origin within a nationalist narrative is also pronounced in Chapter 6. It deals with questions raised by the legacy of a non-Thai and non-Buddhist heritage in the light of the Ban Chiang excavations of the 1970s. Peleggi locates prehistory as a problematic feature in Thai memory, as its identity—especially problematized in a period of domestic and international political turmoil—does not always correspond to the nation's self-image.

The final part of the volume, "Discordant Mnemoscapes," explores the intersections between politics and memory in post-absolutism Thailand. Chapter 7 investigates the role of civic art in the period following the coup d'état that spelled the end of absolutism in 1932. Here, Peleggi examines the attempts of Thailand's new government to inscribe nationalist propaganda in Bangkok's landscape by seeking inspiration in Europe's monumental tradition—including, ambiguously, fascist civic art.

Chapter 8 concludes the book by focusing on art installations across a variety of media—including film, photography, performance, and ritual commemoration—from the 1990s onward. The author studies the forms of art that have emerged in response to the most infamous military-perpetuated massacres of the twentieth century, as well as to the political crisis and social polariza-

tion that has characterized the new millennium. He chooses to highlight the role of art in keeping the memory of state violence alive, ending his narrative on a melancholic albeit hopeful note on resistance.

Monastery, Monument, Museum is an accessible book that takes the reader on a journey into the making of Thailand's cultural memory. It deals with a dazzling wealth of materials and sources, and unravels along the way an impressive time framework. As a result, Peleggi has delivered a narrative that traces convincingly Thai cultural memory as embodied in sites and artifacts. As the author locates the development of a Thai cultural memory within greater processes of knowledge production to which Thai and foreign agents participate, he engages in an archeology of cultural memory, which often challenges standard narratives about sites and forms of art in the kingdom. I enjoyed Peleggi's insights on the role played by the US scholarly enterprise in shaping an identity of Thai prehistory during the Cold War. They reflected their own concerns with the Other in a period characterized by American imperialism and parallel struggles for democratization in Thailand. In addition to the author's main argument on cultural memory, I also appreciated his investigation of the role of the foreigner in art (Chapter 3), which I found to be an original, if somewhat still embryonal, contribution to Thai Studies, deserving of further research and attention.

Although this volume is obviously tailored to be reader-friendly, with brief chapters and jargon-free language, I found that the lineal temporal framework that organizes the narrative does not always render justice to the complexity of the material and the nuance of Peleggi's argument. At times, the chronological narrative seems to suggest that the "modern" simply overwrites the "pre-modern." This does not appear to be the case as the author himself observes, for example, that people in modern Thailand engage in practices, like the worship of sacred sites in search of potency, which are categorized as "premodern" (Chapter 1). I am similarly uncertain as to whether the adoption of a "Western" cosmology in the fourth reign necessarily replaces Buddhist cosmology, rather than dialoguing with it in more complex ways. Another instance in which I sense a too clear-cut dichotomy between the pre-modern and the modern is when the author writes that, in the modern era, "devotional images (*phrarup*) [. . .] acquired a novel epistemic status as antiquities (*borawatthu*)" (p. 87). I am reminded of those museum artifacts that are exhibited in the manner of antiquities and *simultaneously* offered flower garlands in the manner of devotional images.

With its gigantic scope and accessible format, *Monastery, Monument, Museum* makes for a gratifying read. It offers an original and unique perspective on cultural memory as seen in Thailand's sites and artifacts. The book is mandatory reading for anyone interested in Thai art and cultural history, as well as, more generally, in the role of memory in contemporary societies and especially the global South.

Edoardo Siani

Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University

Liberalism Disavowed: Communitarianism and State Capitalism in Singapore

CHUA BENG HUAT

Singapore: NUS Press, 2017.

In his latest book, Chua Beng Huat offers the reader a thoughtful and provocative interpretation of the principles and the operation of the Singapore government over a 50-year period, though with a decisive emphasis on recent and contemporary developments. It is part sociology (Chua's home discipline) and part history, but its strongest claims are in the arena of politics. The author's objective is to tease out the underlying principles/ideology that have driven the Singapore government's operation over half a century and so enable the reader to view the legacy beyond the simplistic dichotomy of "liberal vs. authoritarian" rule. He is also setting out to better understand the longevity of the Singapore regime, focusing on the regime-sustaining elements of features such as the public housing program and the operation of state-owned enterprises. Chua additionally analyzes the sinews of the Singapore government's political, social, and economic methods and outcomes through a prism that is relatively agnostic on concepts such as democracy and rights. He does not dismiss them completely, but keeps them in abeyance while he considers the complex political economy behind the Singapore success story.

Chua's basic argument is that when scholars assess the Singapore government's record, we should not do so by the standards of political liberalism (democracy, rights, etc.) since the People's Action Party (PAP) government has never claimed to be liberal. With this in mind, he sets out a convincing case to show how the PAP has always consciously and deliberately rejected doctrinaire liberalism. The author sets out a rather less convincing case to say it should be judged as a party of social democracy—or at least a party whose origins and inspiration have social democratic roots. He does so by applying a surprisingly simplistic understanding of social democracy involving little more than a strong role for the state in the economy and in society, and a government propensity to protect the vulnerable and build social harmony.

Put like this (and to be fair, these are my words, not Chua's), his vision of "social democracy" seems to have its roots in the communitarianism of which he has written so much in the past and which forms part of this book's title. In fact the PAP record seems rather remote from any conventional understanding of the term "social democracy," which has an inherently egalitarian foundation that is itself grounded in a notion of personal rights and respect for the individual. These elements are completely missing in Singapore's ruling elite.

In arguing his case for highlighting the PAP's social democratic credentials, Chua makes much of the PAP Old Guard's early attraction to British Labourite politics in the post-war years. But this was dead for the future PAP leaders long before the PAP was founded in 1954, let alone by the time it came to government in 1959. In 1996, I tentatively suggested to former Deputy Prime Minister Goh Keng Swee in a research interview that he [Goh] and Lee Kuan Yew might once

have been “conventional British Labour Party type socialists.” In response, he actually broke out in spontaneous laughter before dismissing my suggestion in more measured terms (Barr 2000, 116).

The Singapore government does have a record of distributing social goods throughout society, but its motivation is a mixture of pragmatic politics and elite beneficence (something akin to idealized versions of Confucianism), rather than any notion of egalitarianism or individual rights. By its own standard, its base line of self-judgement is rather the efficacy of its administration and the acceptance of its rule by society, than any notion of social democracy or its close cousin, social justice.

Chua nevertheless makes a valid point when he argues that, when assessing its record, the Singapore government’s routine infringements on civic and human rights, its heavy-handed imposition of social controls, and its rough treatment of democracy are not deal breakers. He describes the PAP’s historical record as one of constant achievement and innovation, which has won the support of most Singaporeans. Admittedly it comes at the cost of living in a nanny state that is more authoritarian than democratic. The author however clearly regards this as an acceptable impost, especially since the nanny/authoritarian state has been gradually loosening its micro-management of society over the last few decades. He concedes that his approach risks creating the impression that he is endorsing the government (Rodan *et al.* 2019, 205). On that matter, I suppose we must take Chua at his word when he says he is not, though it is difficult to escape the feeling that his concluding chapter reads like an advertorial for the PAP, praising much and putting a benign gloss on the rest.

Considerable praise for the government’s historical record is certainly warranted. It would be foolish for anyone to dismiss independent Singapore’s unique and often pioneering achievements in the areas of housing, healthcare, economic development, state capitalism, and the management of ethnicity. All these items are on Chua’s list of positives, along with its creation of a form of authoritarian governance that is nearly as stable as an outright dictatorship, but which foment a number of critical feedback loops that keep the politicians relatively responsive to their constituency. Indeed Singapore retains just enough features of democracy, open debate, and accountability to make it reasonable to speak of members of its ruling class as “politicians.” This is something that we would not do when talking about full-fledged authoritarian states like China, Vietnam, or North Korea.

The book opens with three chapters that set the historical and theoretical context, placing independent Singapore’s formative years squarely in the context of the island’s colonial and pre-colonial history, and an international climate determined by the Cold War and the post-WWII *pax Americana*. Chua also pays considerable attention to the theoretical underpinnings of liberalism and shows the extent to which Singapore’s leaders have disavowed them. In these chapters, the author is forthright in his account of the heavy hand of the authoritarian state, taking his account

of acts of repression well into the 1980s.

This opening set is followed by three chapters in which major markers of PAP rule and achievement are placed under the microscope: housing; state capitalism and state distribution (presented as one phenomenon); and “governing race.” The two common elements of the overarching argument (disavowing liberalism and embracing “social democracy”) are prominently and effectively presented throughout these chapters. For instance, the Singapore government’s abolition of property rights and its active interventions in both the economy and in society are rightly presented as evidence of its repudiation of liberalism. Chua also points to those elements of government’s programs that create or proactively spread a common good as evidence of “social democratic” impulses—notably in public housing and the imposition of “racial harmony as a public good” (p. 136).

The political advantages accrued by the government from delivering services to a grateful electorate is freely acknowledged with analysis that is always thoughtful and should be valued highly by any serious student of Singapore politics. There is nevertheless a surprising reluctance to consider the sources of patronage and power—or even acknowledge the existence of patronage—that give the most senior members of the elite a high level of leverage over the professional class and subordinate members of the elite. The discussion of state capitalism and the operation of Government-Linked Companies, for instance, reports without analysis or commentary, the assurances by the key government figures running Singapore’s sovereign wealth funds (including the Prime Minister’s wife) that GLCs are run free of political interference (p. 117). One does not need to be pursuing a dichotomy of “authoritarian vs. liberalism” to think that there is something seriously amiss in this analysis.

Likewise, assumed and accepted differences in social class permeate so much of the book—consider the public housing program and discussion of post-2011 politics, for instance. Yet where is the critical analysis of the impact of social class as a factor in political management? The creation and lavish government funding of the “scholar class” through the education and scholarship system is surely both a core foundation of the Singapore elite’s longevity, and also a point of political and social tension that is never far below the surface, yet it is completely absent in this account. I recognize that the government prefers to avoid class-based critiques of supposedly meritocratic outcomes, but this is nevertheless a truly surprising omission by one of Singapore’s most senior sociologists. There is additionally the glaring absence of any mention of Chinese privilege, much of which has been effected through those same education and scholarship systems mentioned above. Admittedly this is a taboo subject, even in Singapore’s universities, where a workshop on “Chinese privilege” recently needed to be converted into a discussion of “invisible privilege” before it was allowed to go ahead. Yet taboo or not, it is hard to see how a serious critique of the dynamics of Singapore’s regime can ignore this feature. Reading Chua’s volume, no one would ever know about the racial or class dimensions underpinning the operation of political power—nor the role

either plays in perpetuating the regime.

These three substantive chapters are followed by the penultimate chapter, titled “Cultural Liberalization without Liberalism.” Here, the author recounts the loosening up of social space since the beginning of the 1990s. This chapter proves to be crucial in the book’s final argument: that the Singapore system is likely to be “enduring” because it is proving itself to be sufficiently flexible in adapting to generational change in expectations. In identifying the grounds for optimism about the future, Chua points to social and political “liberalization,” along with increases in government gestures toward social welfare.

The author is to be congratulated for successfully pushing the analysis of Singapore’s political history beyond the usual dichotomy of “authoritarianism vs. democracy/liberalism.” I fear, however, that his alternative prism of analysis is also far from complete. Reading this book, I sometimes felt as if I were reading about another country to the one that I know. The problem is not so much the details of the analysis presented, which are mostly sound and insightful, but that the critical elements that are missing.

The persistence of critical gaps in the analysis give this volume a decisive feel that is rather different to that which one might expect from a conventional piece of scholarship. Chua has interpreted Singapore politics rather than analyzed it—much as a musician or a singer might be said to interpret a piece of music rather than analyze it. Taken as an interpretation, this book is a fine performance, opening the door to a new way of thinking about and studying the Singapore government’s half-century of achievement. In this spirit, it should be welcomed as a worthy contribution to the ongoing discussion about Singapore and its unique brand of politics.

Michael D. Barr

College of Business, Government and Law, Flinders University

References

- Barr, Michael D. 2000. Lee Kuan Yew’s Fabian Phase. *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 46(1): 110–125.
- Rodan, Garry; Clammer, John; and Chua, Beng-Huat. 2019. SOJOURN Symposium on “Liberalism Disavowed: Communitarianism and State Capitalism in Singapore.” *SOJOURN: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 34(1): 185–206.

Transforming Malaysia: Dominant and Competing Paradigms

ANTHONY MILNER, ABDUL RAHMAN EMBONG, and THAM SIEW YEAN, eds.

Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2014.

Racial divisions in Malaysia have long dominated academic and public discourse concerning Malaysia's domestic politics, its development, and its society. As Anthony Milner, Abdul Rahman Embong, and Tham Siew Yean argue in the preface of *Transforming Malaysia*, these divisions have consistently been used "as a weapon of mobilization, including by the right-wing elements in . . . UMNO (United Malays National Organisation)" (p. ix). However, following the downfall of the Barisan Nasional (The National Front) government, led by UMNO, in Malaysia's 2018 election, there were early indicators that the dominance of race-based politics and development was being challenged. Instead, there seemed to be an emergence of a transethnic solidarity and support for the competing Pakatan Harapan (Alliance of Hope) coalition and government.

Following some reform and success after the election, commentators of a "New Malaysia" have been hopeful for greater inclusivity for all. However, this optimism seems misplaced. Post-election politics has seen the re-consolidation of the importance of race, as well as enduring—if not intensifying—divisions between "Malay," "Chinese," and "Indian" communities. The government's intention to ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) was faced with strong Malay opposition—the latter fearing the loss of their constitutional privileges. By-elections have thus been dominated by the so-called "race-card" and explicit references to race-specific issues and fears. This makes the contribution of *Transforming Malaysia* increasingly significant. This book offers the critical and much-needed analysis of the dominant race-based paradigm in Malaysia, as well as the exploration of competing paradigms which could challenge it.

Transforming Malaysia discusses why the race paradigm, "the dominant societal paradigm of social and political life" (p. 1), requires critical analysis in relation to competing paradigms. Indeed, merely by identifying the role of race as a paradigm, and not some immutable fact of life, the editors are convincing in their conclusion that "the task of traversing the 'crossroads' becomes at least in part an ideological one" (p. 10). Such a critical and ideological focus on just how race became so important is one that has been sorely missing in prior discourse. Therefore, in examining the taken-for-granted nature of the divisions between the races, and its impact on Malaysia's politics and development, the book makes way for new frames of analysis, such as class. This contribution fits extremely well with the goals of the book, namely demonstrating how this race-based focus was constructed and evolved to become the dominant societal paradigm. It additionally questions whether it remains an adequate lens for analysis and a "foundational motif in public discussion" (p. 10) by provoking a thoughtful reflection on its nature.

The volume is essentially divided into two sections, the first of which is the strongest and

contributes most coherently to the discussion at hand. These first three chapters open up the most space for the re-thinking that the book wishes to provoke, as they analyze the construction and evolution of the race paradigm itself.

This is most evident in Milner and Helen Ting's Chapter 2, which directly builds upon the core thesis and persuasively argues that the race paradigm is a social construct. The authors demonstrate that our understandings of "Malay," "Chinese," and "Indian" are more flexible than commonly assumed, through a historical review of how race has been used and referred to. Focusing on the turning point of the British administration's role in the construction of the paradigm, Milner and Ting analyze how social relations previously structured on *kerajaan*—personal relations with the Sultan where people identified themselves as "subjects of a ruler" (*rakyat*, people)—came to be replaced by the emergence of a trans-sultanate Malay racial identity. This focus on early relations with the monarchy is of enduring relevance today. The authors convincingly argue that even though the monarchy consists of increasingly explicitly Malay rulers, "an older, inclusive *kerajaan* paradigm still exercise a degree of influence" (p.31) and "certain ingredients in this institution continue to have a potential for resistance" (p.26). Current debates concerning the role of the monarchy in a "New Malaysia" have intensified, with divisions becoming starker between royal institutions co-opted by ethno-nationalists, and inclusive democratic forces. As such, they not only unsettle our assumptions about the intractability of race, but also provoke reflection on essential institutions within Malaysia which are reaching a turning point regarding the direction they take. Despite questions intensifying over their current role, Milner and Ting argue that the monarchy's claims to represent the entire *rakyat*, regardless of race, continue to provide opportunities for a racially-inclusive paradigm. These opportunities should be taken, as further challenges to the race paradigm made by competing paradigms and policies—right up to Najib's "1Malaysia"—often become entangled with race, ensuring that framing has not been rejected and continues to be dominant.

Abdul Rahman also develops on this alternative, in Chapter 3. As the *rakyat* is now more related to sovereignty than exclusively related to the *kerajaan*, the author argues that this inclusive paradigm has the potential to provide the biggest challenge to race. This is despite the fact they have existed side-by-side. Through his analysis of its evolution, he brings up the divisions between the *rakyat* and racial paradigm, and the "infection" of the former by the latter. Concluding that it is a viable answer to uniting Malaysia may appear overly optimistic—even with the victory of Pakatan Harapan and the lauded multi-ethnic support—since the race paradigm continues to dominate. However, the chapter contributes well to intensifying the reflection over alternative paradigms in Malaysian society.

Rather than examining alternative paradigms, Ting in Chapter 4 prioritizes unsettling the taken-for-granted nature of the race paradigm. She does this through her analysis of how governmental nation-building policies have contributed to shaping and deepening it. Her analysis is

particularly compelling, as it demonstrates the way in which the paradigm has been utilized by the government for political expediency. It also shows that part of the challenge of overcoming the paradigm is by shining a light on the actors that use it. When explaining the chapter's focus, Ting identifies that the public sphere in which she focuses differs from the realm of the micro-level day-to-day interethnic interactions. By doing so, the author has perhaps identified most clearly one of the limitations of the book. It is overwhelmingly top-down, and pays most attention to the government and over-arching policies that have contributed to the paradigm's construction. There is much more literature emerging on everyday practices, however, and the impact that these can have on wider society. It would have been extremely insightful to have introduced these ideas into the volume and developed them. This would have shown how everyday practices and interactions may also contribute to both the construction and reification of the race paradigm, which does not exist independently at the levels all the authors have chosen to analyze.

While in the first section the authors rightfully emphasize the leading role of race, there are some limitations in the discussion. These include the lack of emphasis on the role that religion plays in the race paradigm—something which seems to be an oversight, considering how what it means to be Malay is so intrinsically linked to developments concerning Islam. The way the race paradigm remains the same or differs in the East Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak—with their radically different ethnic balance and trajectory—is also a significant gap which limits the potential for finding alternative paradigms. On the one hand, this can explain why this first section is largely a success in demonstrating the way in which the paradigm is constructed, and therefore in problematizing it. On the other hand, it is less successful in developing and analyzing viable alternatives and solutions. This has perhaps been identified by the authors, as there has since been work done that explicitly examines alternative paradigms such as class, that develops on the ideas in the book (Abdul Rahman 2018). As much as the race paradigm dominates Malaysian society, so too do the initial chapters in *Transforming Malaysia* struggle to escape from focusing solely on it, thus creating some overlap, repetition, and limitations.

The limitations in the first section become particularly problematic as the second section falters. The latter half of the volume continues to limit discussion to analyses of the influence of the race paradigm. Instead of developing the argument further, the chapters instead serve to reinforce the notion that the race paradigm has a strong influence in various sectors. In Chapter 5, Ragayah Haji Mat Zin explores the issue of poverty and income distribution, and demonstrates that the paradigm pervades all analysis of it despite attempts to move toward a class-based approach. Azizah Kassim in Chapter 6 also argues that the paradigm plays a role in foreign worker policy, through its subsuming to security considerations of not upsetting the racial balance. In Chapter 7, Tham Siew Yean demonstrates the linkages between trade policy and the race paradigm. Chapter 8, by K. S. Nathan, is perhaps the odd one out. Foreign policy is found to be not heavily influenced by the paradigm, and instead directed by “pragmatic calculation of how best the national interest

can be advanced” (p. 203). However, it is unclear if this has any lessons for other sectors. Across the chapters in this section, there is little cohesion in developing alternatives.

All in all, *Transforming Malaysia* is a thought-provoking and critically insightful book, and should be of interest to both scholars and practitioners of Malaysia’s domestic politics and development. Its conclusion—that the task of gaining public consensus for change will be difficult, as a result of the strength of the race paradigm—resonates extremely strongly with the current debates in Malaysian politics and society. While this conclusion may seem extremely pessimistic, the book is a useful starting point for change, as it achieves its goal of forcing a retrospection and problematizing of the racial paradigm’s inflexibility. More reflection of just how the race paradigm has become entrenched can increase skepticism of its employment and the actors that depend upon it. However, more work still needs to be done in terms of identifying, analyzing, and strengthening paradigms that can replace it.

Scott Edwards

School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies, University of Bristol

Reference

- Abdul Rahman Embong. 2018. Ethnicity and Class: Divides and Dissent in Malaysian Studies. In *Divides and Dissent: Malaysian Politics 60 Years after Merdeka*, edited by Khoo Boo Teik. *Southeast Asian Studies* 7(3): 281–307.

