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# SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

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## CONTENTS

### Special Focus

**Environment and Public Welfare in the Creation and Development of Economic Infrastructure in Southeast Asia, c. 1800–1930: Currency Supply, Forest Control, and Rail Transport**

#### Guest Editor: Ota Atsushi

- Ota Atsushi Introduction ..... ( 3 )
- Taga Yoshihiro The Nguyễn Dynasty’s Government Purchase System in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century: Multiple Functions and Economic Rationality ..... ( 13 )
- Mizuno Kosuke Creation of the State Forest System and Its Hostility to Local People in Colonial Java, Indonesia ..... ( 47 )
- Hayati Sari Hasibuan  
Okamoto Masaaki  
Farha Widya Asrofani
- Kakizaki Ichiro Why Did the Railways Fail to Monopolize Transport? The Limits of Rail Transport in Thailand and Burma before World War II ..... ( 89 )

#### Articles

- Kuno Genta Geography of Insecurity in Contemporary Jakarta: Cross-Class Spread of Residential Street Barriers ..... (121)
- Hatib Abdul Kadir From *Pengusaha* (Businessperson) to *Penguasa* (Ruler): Migrant Traders and the Politics of Hospitality in Indonesia ..... (147)
- Nguyen Quang Phuc Farmers’ Reactions to Compulsory Land Acquisition for Urbanization in Central Vietnam ..... (169)

#### Book Reviews

- Ooi Keat Gin Soda Naoki. *Conceptualizing the Malay World: Colonialism and Pan-Malay Identity in Malaya*. Kyoto: Kyoto University Press; Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2020. .... (189)
- William N. Holden John Scott Reed. *The US Volunteers in the Southern Philippines: Counterinsurgency, Pacification, and Collaboration, 1899–1901*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2020. .... (194)
- Thiti Jamkajornkeiat Takashi Shiraishi. *The Phantom World of Digul: Policing as Politics in Colonial Indonesia, 1926–1941*. Singapore: NUS Press in association with Kyoto University Press, 2021. .... (199)

Adele Webb                    Vicente L. Rafael. *The Sovereign Trickster: Death and Laughter in the Age of Duterte*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2022. .... (202)

Fujihara Sadao                Michael Falser. *Angkor Wat: A Transcultural History of Heritage, Volume 1 Angkor in France. From Plaster Casts to Exhibition Pavilions; Angkor Wat: A Transcultural History of Heritage, Volume 2 Angkor in Cambodia. From Jungle Find to Global Icon*. Boston: De Gruyter Art & Architecture, 2019. .... (206)

## SPECIAL FOCUS

# Environment and Public Welfare in the Creation and Development of Economic Infrastructure in Southeast Asia, c. 1800–1930: Currency Supply, Forest Control, and Rail Transport

## Introduction

Ota Atsushi\*

There is a general consensus that human intervention is the most decisive factor to have affected the natural environment over the last two centuries. As economic activities are major human interventions in nature, recent scholarship has paid increasing attention to the impacts of economic activities on the natural environment, with an emphasis on the negative impacts of, for example, monocrop agriculture and urbanization on the environment and the lives of local people (Boomgaard *et al.* 1997; Boomgaard 2007; Austin 2017a).<sup>1)</sup> Historians have also explored the motives behind human interventions, examining “people’s attitude towards the nature, or rather . . . all beliefs, norms, and values that have a bearing on the environment” (Boomgaard 1997, 3).

As the rapid expansion of the modern economy was achieved at least in part as a result of the development of economic infrastructure, it is important to pay attention to its impacts on the natural environment and to people’s ideas about and attitudes toward nature in relation to the construction and development of economic infrastructure.

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1) In the introduction to his edited volume, Gareth Austin claims that environmental history has not focused on the economic implications in the environmental imprints of humans (Austin 2017b, 8). In my opinion, however, various historians have discussed the environmental impacts of economic activities such as the collection of forest products and the production of food and cash crops in relation to population growth and growing foreign markets (Potter 1997; Boomgaard 2007). Contributors to Austin’s volume have indeed deepened our understanding of the above-mentioned aspects (among others, Parthasarathi 2017; Ross 2017; Roy 2017).

Here, modern economic infrastructure is taken to encompass economic-legal systems such as standard currency, taxation, and banking as well as transport and communication infrastructure such as railways, roads, and telegraph cables. The state forest system is also included in economic infrastructure because, in a sense, governments consider the forest to be a platform to buttress the local economy and to secure state revenue through the supply of timber, in addition to the ultimate goal of maintaining forest resources and environments in the state system as an ecological base for economic development.

Numerous studies have indicated how the development of modern economic infrastructure led to enormous economic and social transformations in Southeast Asia (Maung Shein 1964; Kaur 1985; Knaap 1989; Prince 1996; Dick 2002; Houben 2002; Kakizaki 2012; Hartatik 2019). These studies were conducted solely from the viewpoint of economic history; consequently, the impacts of economic infrastructure on natural environments and the welfare of ordinary people did not fall within their scope.

In contrast, historians and anthropologists in the field of environmental history have dealt with the impacts of transport infrastructure such as roads and railways on the natural environment and local society in Asia and beyond, and they are very critical of it. Prasannan Parthasarathi (2017) emphasizes that in the early phase of the colonial railway system in South India, engines and other steam-powered machines were hugely destructive of local biomass because they used firewood rather than coal. In their edited special issue focusing on the environmental and social impacts of roads, Freek Colombijn (2002) and various contributors discuss the negative impacts of road construction, such as deforestation and the marginalization of people living away from the roads (Porath 2002; Rigg 2002; Windle 2002). As a consequence, these two streams of studies in economic history and environmental history, which have developed in very different directions, give the common impression that modern economic infrastructure was constructed and developed without due consideration for the natural environment or the welfare of ordinary local people.

In contrast to such studies, this special focus argues that economic infrastructure developed more in balance with the natural environment and the lives of ordinary people than has previously been assumed, either under the initiative of governments or private actors, or as a result of interactions between the government and local people. The first paper, by Taga Yoshihiro, elaborates on how the government of Nguyễn Vietnam pursued its economic policies keeping in mind peasants living under harsh environmental conditions. The second paper, by Mizuno Kosuke *et al.*, discusses how the forest control system in colonial Java developed through interactions between the forest authorities and local people, both of whom pursued their own goals. The third paper, by Kakizaki

Ichiro, argues that in British Burma and Rattanakosin Siam, newly constructed railways coexisted with naturally powered means of transport for a number of decades and were therefore in a sense environmentally friendly.

Turning to people's ideas about and attitudes toward the natural environment, scholars in environmental studies have set their sights on three objectives. The first deals with how political ideas on a governmental level influenced the planning and implementation of environment-related policies. Often using terms such as "political economy," "environmental politics," or "environmental governance," a number of studies have discussed issues such as government conceptions of the natural environment in relation to "development" and "modernity," and negotiations between policy makers and economic stakeholders (Chew 1996; Peluso and Watts 2001; Neilson 2017).<sup>2)</sup> The second objective focuses on local people in remote areas directly affected by environment-related policies, looking at the situation from an anthropological point of view in order to deal with issues evolving in more recent history. Studies by this group have revealed how roads bring local people new understandings of both the outside world and themselves, how certain local people have to give up some control over resources while others retain it, and how people see opportunities brought by the new roads in complicated ways, certainly as more income but also as an increased burden of financial management (Porath 2002; Windle 2002). The third objective concentrates on civil society—including NGOs working on environmental issues—while discussing the development of movements for environmental protection and their international networking (Surendra 1996; Riddel 2014).

This special focus examines the ideas and attitudes of both governments and people in various sections of local society with regard to the environment and environment-related policies, placing an emphasis on their mutual interactions. The cases discussed indicate complicated negotiations rather than simple confrontations between multiple parties—such as government institutions, village administrations, ordinary cultivators, and private companies and traders—over matters such as their rights to and benefits from natural resources. The following three papers examine how the government and people in different sections of society became entangled with each other through environmental issues, and how these entanglements affected the course of government policies and the development of economic infrastructure.

In the first paper, Taga explores state intervention in the economy in Nguyễn Vietnam during the first half of the nineteenth century, focusing on the state purchase of important items such as major grains, metals, tea, sugar, and other products from local

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2) Recent handbooks on the environment in Asia do, in fact, discuss the development of scholarship in environmental studies under headings such as "political economy" and "environment governance" (Harris and Lang 2014; Hirsch 2017).

markets and producers, and imported fabrics from China and Europe, in predetermined amounts at fixed prices. Some items were consumed at the court, while others were exported through state-run trade. Although there was an exploitative aspect to the heavy burden placed on villagers to provide these items at low prices, the government purchase was also undoubtedly intended to boost the economy by circulating zinc currency in the cash-deficient market. Another governmental purpose was to rescue citizens in times of poor harvest or natural disaster by purchasing items from them, with rice stockpiled in state granaries normally used to cushion seasonal fluctuations in the rice market. Taga concludes that the Nguyễn Dynasty had dual facets: it was an agrarian empire focused on rice cultivation as well as a commerce-oriented state dependent on international trade. It can also be pointed out that the Nguyễn economic policy considered the welfare of peasants through relief policies for environmental problems such as poor harvests and natural disasters.

In the second paper, Mizuno *et al.* discuss the development of the state forest system in Java from the 1850s to the 1930s. The idea that every forest was a state domain was launched by the militant Governor-General H. W. Daendels (1808–11). After strenuous debates about who should manage forests, the Dutch colonial state was finally recognized as the sole body responsible for the management of most of the forest. The Forest Administration was established for this purpose in the 1860s. The ensuing laws and regulations prohibited local people from felling trees and collecting fallen branches without permission, and the government banned their swidden agriculture. However, these regulations were regularly infringed upon by local people who believed that they had customary rights to the forest in their vicinity. Mizuno *et al.* conclude that government neglect and willful incomprehension of local interests were the most important causes of the never-ending series of forest “offenses” perpetrated by local people, such as felling trees to sell them—a problem that still persists. On the other hand, the government did attempt to compromise with the local economy by introducing the intercropping system, which allowed local people to plant secondary crops or cash crops between rows of saplings. Although other state attempts to compromise with local economies were not successful, the intercropping system became standard practice in wide areas of Java. To combat local “offenses” in Java’s forests, the Forest Administration strengthened its control in cooperation with village officials and the police. “Illegal” activities never ceased, partly because the village administration implicitly or explicitly allowed local people to cut and sell trees clandestinely. This was not an intention of the Forest Administration, but the illicit collaboration between the village administration and local people seems to have helped to maintain a balance between high-handed government policies and the interests of local people.

In the third paper, Kakizaki discusses the changes in transportation after the construction of railways in British Burma and Rattanakosin Siam from the 1880s to the 1930s. Kakizaki argues that the railways had different impacts depending on the environmental conditions and existing transport methods in different areas. In the mountainous upper Irrawaddy and Chao Phraya regions, where river steamers were not available in the dry season and animal-powered transport was difficult, the railways largely supplanted existing means of transport. However, in the middle and lower basins, the railways' share in the transport of bulky items did not grow much, because of their higher charges. Steamer transport was more competitive, especially when it was downstream bound, because it charged less than when upstream bound. The existing transport system hardly felt a ripple, especially in the case of two items: teak and animals. Traders largely continued to transport teak by floating logs down the rivers, without any need for extra power. The transport of livestock, such as cattle, buffalo, mules, and horses, was not affected by the railways because the animals could walk by themselves, not even incurring the cost of fodder, because there was plenty of grass along the way.

What motivated the government to take the natural environment and the welfare of local people into consideration in its policy making was, in the case of the Nguyễn court, the Confucian concept of good/just rule. This idea, including the creation of a healthy economic environment through which to enrich the government's subjects, makes us aware of the multiple roots of modern economic thought in nineteenth-century Southeast Asia, which was not limited to concepts derived from Europe. The Nguyễn court was determined to rescue its people from famine, an indication that it recognized natural disasters such as droughts and excessive rainfall, both often followed by poor harvests, as among the greatest causes of suffering. In the forest system of Java, the Forest Administration attempted to achieve a balanced relationship between the forest and the local people to some degree by securing economic benefits for the latter. In fact, when local people believed that government forest regulations affected their lives too adversely, they took their revenge by setting the forest on fire. The intercropping system was therefore the Forest Administration's compromise with the local people in order to protect the forest, although it refused to make concessions to swidden agriculture, which it was convinced was extremely harmful to the forest. In British Burma and Rattanakosin Siam, private traders chose the cheapest transport method for practical reasons, regardless of any environmental considerations. Hence, it is sheer coincidence that they chose the energy-saving—and therefore ecology-friendly—transport methods of floating teak logs down rivers and having livestock walk under their own steam. This combination of artificial and natural power was not unusual in the early phase of the development of modern transport infrastructure, for practical, technical,



and economic reasons—for example, ships powered by both steam engine and wind. The coexistence of teak floating, animal walking, and railway transport presents one such example.

A fundamental element behind these developments was the contemporary growth of commerce. The Nguyễn regime, which held Confucianism in very high regard, was also not unaware of the enormous wealth to be derived from international commerce; therefore, as Taga explains, the government dispatched its ships to European-dominated cities in the region such as Singapore, Batavia, and Manila. Its economic policy was therefore rooted in realistic observations of the growing external economy as well as in the Confucian idea of good/just rule. In colonial Java, local people's forest "offenses" were their response to a growing local economy. The sale of timber generated large profits because of the high prices fetched by the firewood and charcoal used in the sugar and other developing industries. Local people recognized that the new purposes assigned to forest resources would be more beneficial to them economically than maintaining their traditional way of life. In Burma and Siam, teak became one of the most important export commodities from the highland regions, as the flow of international trade grew rapidly in newly opened ports. The need for food and food transport also increased as rice frontiers were opened in the deltas, and the division of labor became more obvious between different regions. All three papers indicate that under these conditions, all the parties concerned—such as the government, village administration, cultivators, and private companies and traders—had to struggle to establish a new relationship between the economy and the environment, seeking to secure their positions and increase their benefit in the changing economic climate. In this struggle, the natural environment played a number of roles in their decision making as an important element affecting their economic activities.

Another element behind the developments discussed in this special focus is that the relationship between the colonial authorities, private companies, and local people was entering a new phase. In Java, before 1890 the colonial government and Western private companies had pursued almost exclusively benefits for their own and their home countries, without due consideration for the welfare of local people. However, facing growing discontent and rising tensions with local people, certain sections of the government such as the Department of Internal Affairs (*Binnenlandsch Bestuur*) started to mediate some disputes after 1890 in favor of local people, as was the case in the water dispute between sugar factories and local people in Central Java. During a short period before 1915 (when there was a conservative policy reaction), the welfare and benefits of local people were largely taken into account. Government policy swung between the interests of companies and local peasants, and there was a certain weight on the latter in government policies from 1890 to 1915, in relation to the so-called ethical policy (Schaik, forthcoming). The

regulations giving local people permission to cut commercially valueless firewood and timber in 1901 and 1907, and the intercropping system that became popular by 1924 in Java (as discussed in Mizuno *et al.*'s paper), must be situated in the context of this "benign" period. Additionally, in Rattanakosin Siam and British Burma, the governments did not prohibit local traders from relying on teak floating and animal transport.

These developments also imply that local people were not merely powerless victims of the colonial authorities and Western companies, but in fact persistently and sometimes shrewdly defended their interests, through their fights against—or avoidance or neglect of—pressures from the government and Western companies, as was the case in colonial Java. In Siam and Burma, local traders persisted in their transport methods to save costs.

The results of the environment-conscious policies and the eco-friendly development of transport discussed in this special focus might have been fairly small and were at any rate not long-lasting. The state supply of zinc in Nguyễn Vietnam must have had an impact, considering the limited channels available for this metal to flow into the market. However, the results of the government's famine rescue policy are more difficult to assess, and the policy was indeed short-lived because it was eclipsed by the French overlordship that followed. In Java, the aforementioned collaborations between the village administration and local people were stigmatized as "corruption" in the official records. However, considering that forests in Java remained fairly well maintained despite the never-ending forest "offenses" during the period under study, it seems reasonable to assume that a subtle balance was retained between the state forest system and the local economy. Nevertheless, the balance must have been fragile and difficult to sustain, as long as it depended on the village administration turning a blind eye to the villagers' forest "offenses." Kakizaki explains that teak floating and animal transport in Burma and Thailand gradually disappeared after World War II, when the construction of dams and highways rendered them unfeasible or uncompetitive.

Nevertheless, we can learn many lessons from the fact that, for decades, these cases did cause ripple effects. They suggest that not only the latest theories and technology but also local knowledge and local economic-environmental conditions played an important part in the implementation of economic policies and the development of transport infrastructure. The conflicts between state policy and local people were not a simple version of the modern-vs.-traditional dichotomy, but arose from both parties' interest in having a share in the growing economy, a supposition that also seems relevant and applicable to the present-day situation. Given that sustainable energy use is urgently required today, the combination of artificial and natural power in the past deserves to be paid more attention. Although this special focus is a preliminary attempt, its exploration of the historical explanations behind the considerations of both government and private actors

toward natural environments and the development of economic infrastructure gives us important hints about creating a more desirable human-environment relationship in the future.

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# The Nguyễn Dynasty's Government Purchase System in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century: Multiple Functions and Economic Rationality

Taga Yoshihiro\*

This paper explores the government purchase system implemented by the Nguyễn Dynasty in the first half of the nineteenth century. A close examination of dynastic records reveals that the Nguyễn court purchased a vast range of natural and manufactured products, both those produced in its domain as well as various commodities imported from foreign countries. In order to procure foreign items, the court did not simply rely on commercial networks of Chinese merchants but also dispatched government vessels abroad. Official records demonstrate that government purchases assumed multiple functions in the fiscal administration of the Nguyễn Dynasty. In addition to obtaining necessary goods to maintain the state apparatus, these purchases were also designed for other purposes, such as increasing the money supply, famine relief through rice disbursement at cost, as well as collecting export products for the state-run trade. The massive sugar purchases undertaken in Central Vietnam are very useful in illuminating this point. Unquestionably, the central and regional authorities faced difficulties in their management of this institution; nevertheless, an analysis of the government purchase system provides fresh insight into the economic rationality underlying the fiscal policies of the Nguyễn Dynasty.

**Keywords:** government purchase, nineteenth century, Vietnam, Nguyễn Dynasty, economic rationality, fiscal administration, Chinese merchants, sugar

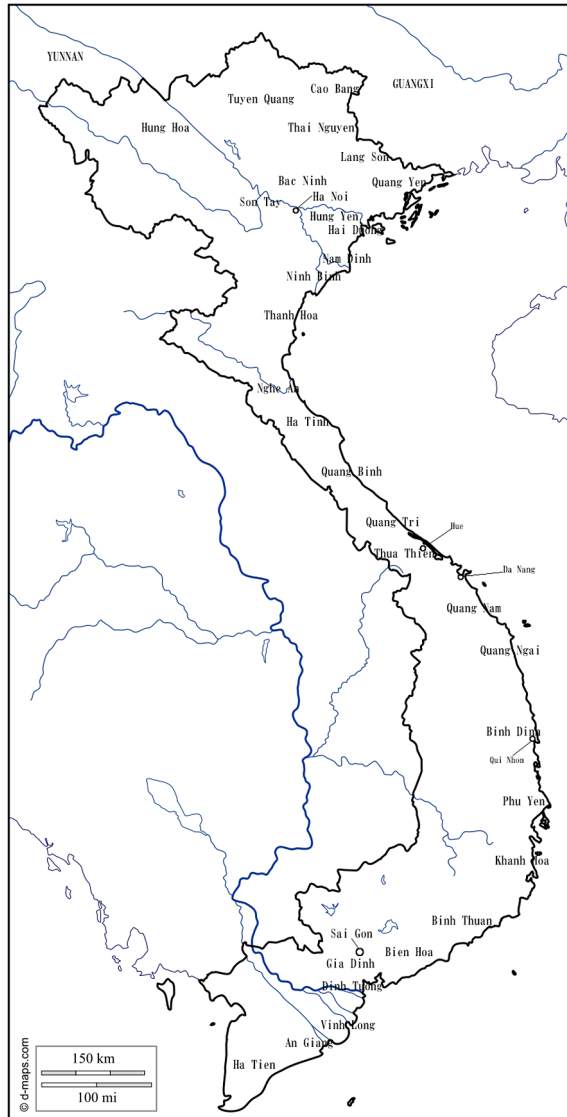
## Introduction

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the significance of the government as an economic actor in Vietnam increased more than ever before under the Nguyễn Dynasty. Compared with its predecessors, the Nguyễn Dynasty developed an elaborate, large-scale fiscal system to ensure that the central government could mobilize various materials and

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human resources nationwide. Given that the imperial capital of Huế was located a great distance from the economic centers of the north (Hà Nội) and the south (Sài Gòn), the redistribution of economic resources through the efficient functioning of the fiscal system was essential to dynastic rule (see Fig. 1). As its fiscal administration expanded, the Huế court wielded ever-greater influence over the economic activities of the private sector.



**Fig. 1** Map of the Provinces and Major Cities of Nguyễn Vietnam: Around 1840

Source: Based on <https://d-maps.com>, accessed February 2, 2023; author has added the names of places.

When discussing the economic role played by the Nguyễn Dynasty, traditional scholarship (especially that produced in modern Vietnam) has argued that its fiscal operations adversely affected economic development. For example, these studies contend that tax-in-kind on various products, combined with the conscription of skilled artisans for state-run workshops—depriving them of any incentive to improve techniques—eventually hindered or distorted the development of rural industry. Although this understanding was originally formed before the 1980s, when the Nguyễn Dynasty was criticized as a “reactionary feudal state” under the heavy influence of Marxist historical interpretation, it still continues to circulate, even after the reappraisal of the Nguyễn Dynasty set in motion at the beginning of the 1990s.<sup>1)</sup> The problem is that these arguments sometimes lacked sufficient evidence and did not take into account the economic motivation guiding Nguyễn fiscal policies.

For the purpose of reexamining the economic role played by the Nguyễn state, the theoretical framework presented by the historian R. Bin Wong seems quite helpful. In his book *China Transformed* (1997), Wong reviewed the economic policies of Chinese states in the imperial era that had been ignored or negatively interpreted by traditional scholarship premised on historical models derived from the European experience. According to Wong, successive Chinese imperial governments had a far stronger interest in peasant welfare than did their contemporary European counterparts. To encourage the stability of the agrarian population, imperial governments intervened in the economy by promoting land clearance and water control as well as regulating the commercial distribution of strategic products such as grain.<sup>2)</sup> A careful reading of the historical source material reveals that a similar consideration for peasant welfare and the stability of the agrarian economy also motivated Nguyễn fiscal policies.

The purpose of this article is to explore the economic rationality underlying the fiscal policies of the Nguyễn Dynasty in the early nineteenth century by analyzing the government purchase system.<sup>3)</sup> Alongside tax collection, the government purchase system constituted a prominent fiscal means by which to procure the economic resources necessary to administer the state. So far, little attention has been paid to the government purchase system in the Nguyễn period, although the products collected by

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1) For example, see Bùi Thị Tân and Vũ Huy Phúc (1998, 120–121), one of the best studies on the development of Vietnamese industry in the Nguyễn period published after the 1990s. For a reappraisal of the Nguyễn Dynasty, an insightful review can be found in Lockhart (2001).

2) For a discussion on the economic policies of Chinese imperial governments, see Wong (1997, 73–151).

3) In Sino-Vietnamese sources, the government purchase system is generally referred to using the terms “harmonious purchase” (*hòa mại* 和買) and “public purchase” (*quan mại* 官買), both derived from Chinese institutional usage.



this system were significant in terms of both variety and volume.<sup>4)</sup>

An analysis of the government purchase system is also important for understanding the relationship between the Vietnamese economy and the commercial networks of nineteenth-century Asia. The pioneering works of Wong Lin Ken (1960), Chen Ching-ho (1990), and Li Tana (1995) show that in the first half of the nineteenth century Vietnam traded actively with commercial centers such as the newly established port of Singapore, and the Vietnamese state's role in this trade was far from negligible. In particular, Li challenged the traditional interpretation that the Nguyễn court enforced a closed-door policy and that foreign trade had limited importance to the Vietnamese economy by demonstrating the importance of the vibrant rice trade in the Mekong Delta (Li 1995, 198–199). While sharing Li's argument about the importance of foreign trade in nineteenth-century Vietnam and the necessity of reevaluating Nguyễn economic policies, this article endeavors to clarify the close connection between fiscal administration and international commerce, which were not fully discussed in the above-cited studies. As will be explained below, the Huế court pulled in a considerable amount of export products from the state-run trade, relying on the government purchase system. The Nguyễn government purchase system reveals how deeply interconnected local producers, the state's fiscal administration, and international markets were in early modern Vietnam.

Considering its importance to the contemporary fiscal administration, it is not surprising that the government purchase system was richly documented in Nguyễn official sources. Stipulations and precedents relating to it can be found in the *Khâm định Đại Nam hội điển sự lệ* 欽定大南會典事例 (Official compendium of institutions and usages of Đại Nam, hereafter *KĐĐNHĐSL*) and the *Đại Nam thực lục chính biên* 大南寔錄正編 (Primary compilation of the veritable records of Đại Nam, hereafter *ĐNTLCB*). More detailed information can be obtained from the *Châu bản triều Nguyễn* 阮朝硃本 (Vermilion records of the Nguyễn Dynasty, CBTN), which recently became available to historians.<sup>5)</sup>

Drawing on these sources, this article argues that the government purchase system allowed Nguyễn rulers to procure remarkably diverse items necessary for dynastic rule centered on an imperial capital located far from Vietnam's economic centers (Section D).

4) As an exception, the Japanese scholar Okada Masashi discusses the government purchase system of the Nguyễn Dynasty in relation to the cinnamon produced in Central Vietnam (Okada 2021). Okada emphasizes the importance of the government purchase system as a conduit for collecting cinnamon, a prominent export item in the Nguyễn state-run trade.

5) The *Châu bản triều Nguyễn* or CBTN is a collection of court documents produced during the Nguyễn period, a substantial part of which consists of reports that metropolitan offices and provincial administrators submitted to the emperor. In these reports, the emperor wrote annotations and comments using a red ink brush, hence the title *Châu bản* (vermilion records). Documents included in the ↗

The fact that items bought by the Huế court included many foreign products implies that government purchase was closely related to the vibrant commercial networks of nineteenth-century Asia. Subsequently, multiple functions of the government purchase system will be discussed in order to shed light on the economic rationality of this system (Section II). Nguyễn official sources show that the Vietnamese government purchased items not only to fulfill its administrative demands but also to obtain export products for state-run trade, to increase the money supply available to the market, as well as to distribute rice for famine relief. These multiple functions performed by the government purchase system are particularly evident in the procurement of sugar produced in the central region, one of the most important export items for early-nineteenth-century Vietnam (Section III).

## I Institutional Aspects of the Government Purchase System

### I-1 *Products Procured through the Government Purchase System*

The origins of the government purchase system in Vietnam are obscure. Relying on extant sources, it would seem that it was not until the accession of the Nguyễn Dynasty that the government purchase system played a prominent role in fiscal administration. Before that, successive dynasties presumably acquired the goods required through tax collection and resorted to the government purchase system only on rare occasions. In fact, mentions of the system are rare in contemporary sources up to the eighteenth century. This situation changed at the beginning of the nineteenth century as the Nguyễn Dynasty asserted its rule over the whole country. In contrast to the official writings of preceding centuries, the *KĐĐNHĐSL* set aside four of its 262 volumes (Vols. 64 to 67) to record stipulations concerning government purchases, an illustration of the importance that the Nguyễn authorities placed on the system.

In the *KĐĐNHĐSL*, there were 195 products subject to government purchase. As shown in Table 1, these products were divided into 11 categories: “five grains” (*ngũ cốc* 五穀), “five metals” (*ngũ kim* 五金), “Northern fabrics” (*bắc thái* 北綵), “Western

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↘ CBTN preserve far more detailed descriptions of central policies (as well as details of the situation in local societies) than published materials like the *ĐNTLCB* and *KĐĐNHĐSL*, hence they constitute fundamental source materials for those studying Vietnamese history under Nguyễn rule. The documents that today constitute the CBTN were brought together and partially catalogued from the end of the 1950s to the early 1960s on the initiative of the historian Chen Ching-ho, but it was not until the 2000s that they were opened to the public, including foreign scholars at the National Archives Centre No. 1 in Hà Nội. For an overview of research on the CBTN in English and Vietnamese, see Chen (1962) and Phan (2014, 126–192), respectively.

**Table 1** Categories of Products Subject to Government Purchase

Category	Products (extract of principal products from each category)
1. Five grains (五穀)	paddy, job's tears (薏苡), rice
2. Five metals (五金)	gold, silver, gold and silver leaf, copper, brass, zinc, lead, tin, steel, iron, tin leaf
3. Northern fabrics (北綵)	silk fabrics (錦緞 / 紗 / 綾 / 紬), gold thread, fur garments, buttons, pouch, pillow
4. Western fabrics (洋綵)	wool thread, wool fabrics (羽緞 / 羽絨 / 羽絹), velvet, white cloth, flower printed cloth, striped cloth (線布), canvas, lacquered cloth (漆布)
5. Southern fabrics (南綵)	silk fabrics (紗 / 綾 / 紬 / 紵 / 帛 / 絹 / 南紙), cloth, thread, cotton
6. Medicinal products (藥品)	prescription medication (單號), eaglewood, musk, cinnamon, ginseng, antler velvet, rhinoceros horn, nutmeg, bear gall, mercury, cardamom (砂仁), betel nuts, honey, pepper, lead powder, indigo powder, lotus seed
7. Tea (茶品)	Chinese tea (珠蘭 / 蓮心 / 芳泰 / 龍井 / 德本 / 春茗 / 金英 / 熙春 / 芳美 / 玉圃 / 粵泰)
8. Fruits (果品)	jujube (赤棗 / 烏棗 / 金棗), longan, litchi, grape, dried fruits, oranges, langsat, limes, watermelons, sugared potato (糖蜜芋), green rice (糯糯米 / 札糯米), pear (雪梨 / 砂梨)
9. Local products (產物)	sugar, birds, cattle, sheep, edible bird's nests, animal skins, ivory, tortoiseshell, shell of giant clams, fish fin, fish maw, sea cucumber, fresh and dried fishes, fish source, mulberry liquor, oil, resin, beeswax
10. Utensils (器用)	mat, fan, conical hat, lacquer, paper, lump, porcelain, earthen ware, vase, brazier
11. Miscellaneous materials (雜料)	incense, crude honey, paint (紅丹 / 廣硃 / 硃硃), glue, sulfur, saltpeter, shellac, timber, bamboo, rattan, hemp bark, sedge, palm leaf, firewood, charcoal, stone, caustic lime, firecracker (砲), fringe (纓毛), net, tile

Source: *KĐĐNHĐSL*, Vols. 64–67.

fabrics” (*duong thái* 洋綵), “Southern fabrics” (*nam thái* 南綵), “medicinal products” (*duoc phẩm* 藥品), “tea” (*trà phẩm* 茶品), “fruits” (*quả phẩm* 果品), “local products” (*sản vật* 產物), “utensils” (*khí dụng* 器用), and “miscellaneous materials” (*tập liệu* 雜料). It should be noted that in the Nguyễn sources, the term “Northern fabrics” was commonly used for fabrics imported from China, to distinguish them from Vietnamese ones, called “Southern fabrics.” Likewise, the term “Western fabrics” meant fabrics from Europe (probably including those produced in India), which saw a rapid expansion of circulation in Southeast Asia at the time under study.

The basic purpose of the Nguyễn government purchase system was to satisfy demand in Huế, where imperial court and government offices were concentrated. According to the description in the *KĐĐNHĐSL*, the purchasing procedure was highly centralized. First, the Ministry of Finance (*Bộ hộ* 戶部) and Ministry of Works (*Bộ công* 工部) dispatched inquiries to the provinces ascertaining the availability of the products required in their jurisdictions, and the replies from the provinces were filed for future consultation.

Every July in the lunar calendar, the Imperial Household Department (*Nội vụ phủ* 內務府) and Military Treasury (*Vũ khố* 武庫) submitted estimates of the goods needed for the coming year. Collating these estimates, the Ministry of Finance would then send purchasing orders to the provincial authorities in accordance with the availability of these products in each region. After receiving the purchasing orders, the provincial authorities procured the designated products from the producers or merchants. If the purchase volume was large or the price had appreciated, the provincial authorities were required to send a special report to the ministry apprising it in advance.<sup>6)</sup>

Purchased goods were forwarded to the capital and stored in allocated warehouses. For example, precious items such as gold, silver, and silk were stored in the depots of the Department of the Imperial Household, and base metals like copper and zinc were stockpiled in the Military Treasury. A special depot called the Timber Warehouse (*Mộc thuong* 木倉) was set aside to accommodate wood.

In the capital, purchased goods were dispensed for various purposes. While some were designated for daily use at the imperial court or government offices, others were used as materials in the state workshops attached to the Imperial Household, Military Treasury, and Timber Warehouse.<sup>7)</sup> These workshops employed large numbers of skilled artisans from all over the country to furnish different kinds of items. The workshop of the Imperial Household not only minted medals and ingots of precious metals but also produced fine textiles and garments for imperial wear. The Military Treasury consumed huge amounts of base metal to manufacture various kinds of military hardware and cannons. No less important than these workshops were the mint and the imperial shipyards established in Huế, which also consumed a high proportion of the materials.

Goods collected through the government purchase system were also indispensable for court ceremonies. For example, seasonal festivals in the lunar calendar involved the offering of fruit at the ancestral shrine. At auspicious events such as the celebration of the longevity of the emperor or empress dowager, luxury goods such as Chinese and Western fabrics were distributed as gifts to the participants, who included guests from neighboring countries. Precious items dispensed during or after the ceremony were significant gifts representing the authority and affluence of the Nguyễn monarch (Taga 2020).

Interestingly, as illustrated in Table 1, among the products the Nguyễn court purchased were many that were in high demand in the international market. They included

6) *KĐDNHĐSL*, Vol. 64, 6b–7a.

7) On the state workshops in Huế in the Nguyễn period, see Nguyễn (2001).

forest products such as eaglewood, cinnamon, rhinoceros horn, nutmeg, and cardamom, all of which constituted traditional Vietnamese luxury export items. Various marine products mentioned in the table, such as sea cucumbers, fish fins, and dried marine products, were highly sought after in the Chinese market. Sugar, listed in the category of “local products,” had been a preferred export item since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As will be demonstrated in the following sections, the Nguyễn court effectively employed the government purchase system as a means to procure export products for its state-run trade.

### I-2 *Suppliers and Price Determination in the Government Purchase System*

In the government purchase system, there were two main channels through which products were procured. The first option was to purchase goods directly from producers. The second was to purchase them from private merchants in the market.

In nineteenth-century Vietnam, the court organized the producers of some strategic products into units known as *hộ* 戶, literally translated as “household.” These units were instrumental for the state in collecting taxes levied on local products ranging from handicrafts to marine and forest products.<sup>8)</sup> Unquestionably, the existence of well-organized, productive units allowed the government to efficiently buy the products it needed from producers. In the *KĐĐNHĐSL*, 28 units are set out for different products in the rubrics covering taxes on local products,<sup>9)</sup> sugar producers (*đường hộ* 糖戶) in Quảng Nam and Quảng Ngãi Provinces also fell under the rubric of government purchase.<sup>10)</sup> There are also some units not referred to in these rubrics in the *KĐĐNHĐSL* but which do appear in the *ĐNTLCB*, such as a timber unit (*mộc hộ* 木戶) in Nghệ An Province. Producers who were grouped into these units are sometimes collectively called the “household of a profession” (*nghiệp hộ* 業戶) in official sources.<sup>11)</sup>

Under the Nguyễn fiscal regime, local officials were supposed to procure products from producers (*nghiệp hộ*) or merchants (*thương hộ* 商戶) upon receipt of orders from the central government. However, contemporary sources reveal that this system was not necessarily followed. To fulfill a purchase order, officials sometimes assigned the

8) In Nguyễn official writings, taxes levied on local products were generally called “product taxes” (*sản vật thuế* 產物稅) or “separate payment” taxes (*biệt nạp* 別納). For a study focusing on these taxes, see Trương (2008) and Taga (2021).

9) *KĐĐNHĐSL*, Vols. 45–46.

10) *KĐĐNHĐSL*, Vol. 66, 1b–4a.

11) Modern Vietnamese translations of the *ĐNTLCB* and *KĐĐNHĐSL* also interpret the term *nghiệp hộ* as *nhà sản xuất* or “producers.” What is troublesome for historians is that in contemporary sources this term is used in a somewhat ambiguous manner, allowing for the possibility of different interpretations. Okada (2021, 90) translates the term as “licensed merchants.”

procurement quota of the required product to communes (*xã* 社, the smallest administrative units established on a village level) that were not engaged in the production or trade of that product. Being ordered to deliver products not at their disposal, these communes were compelled to buy them on the open market to fulfill the quota. Such situations were reported by Lê Đức Tiệm 黎德漸, who was acting inspector of the Hải An circuit in 1833. He reports that on the occasion of a government purchase in northern Vietnam, the local officials just assigned communes to procure the quota based on the number of people registered. Despite the high prices, the peasants had no option but to buy the sought-after products on the open market. Adding insult to injury, peasants were subjected to extortion by commune leaders or local government clerks in the process of procurement. After he had received Lê Đức Tiệm's report, Emperor Minh Mạng (r. 1820–41) addressed the governors-general and treasurers of the provinces, ordering that thereafter these products be purchased only from producers or merchants, and banning the imposition of a purchase quota on peasant communes.<sup>12)</sup> In spite of this edict, inappropriate purchases diverted to the peasant population did not cease. Emperor Minh Mạng had to reiterate similar instructions in 1834 and 1835 to prevent local magistrates from purchasing products from peasants.<sup>13)</sup> As Lê Đức Tiệm's report illustrates, government purchases provided the opportunity for dishonest commune leaders to exploit villagers. On the pretext of procuring designated products, these leaders ran a side hustle to collect extra money from the villagers for personal gain.<sup>14)</sup>

In 1841 Emperor Thiệu Trị (r. 1841–47) ascended the throne as successor to his father, Minh Mạng. In November of that year, Lư Quĩ 劉揆 and four other officials presented a secret memorial to the emperor in which the difficulties accruing to the government purchase system were described as follows:

As for the government purchase system, in purchasing the required goods in the provinces, merchants and producers could not fulfill demand; therefore, (the local government) has allocated (this task of procuring the necessary products) to the ordinary population. However, as they are not producers, they are forced to purchase the designated products elsewhere. When people deliver the products to officials and receive payment, (the total cost of the procurement) can be several times higher than the original price.<sup>15)</sup>

The situation described in this memorial did not appear to improve in the following years. In 1844, three years after the Lư Quĩ memorial, an observation was made about the

12) *DNTLCB* II, Vol. 94, 21b–22b.

13) *DNTLCB* II, Vol. 138, 4a–5a; Vol. 147, 18a–b.

14) *DNTLCB* II, Vol. 173, 6a–b.

15) *DNTLCB* III, Vol. 12, 3b–4a.

heavy burden on the local population arising from the improper allocation of procurements.<sup>16)</sup> As the officials themselves repeatedly pointed out, the procurements assigned to the population, regardless of their specialties, highlighted the flaws in the government purchase system.

In their decisions on the purchase price to be allocated to the population, Nguyễn emperors repeatedly emphasized the importance of paying an “ample remuneration” (*hậu giá* 厚價).<sup>17)</sup> Nevertheless, the officials involved in the purchases often found themselves in a difficult situation because of the considerable discrepancy between the official price (*quan giá* 官價) and the market price (*thị giá* 市價). The official price was decided in Huế by the Ministry of Finance, based on previous purchase records. In contrast, prices in local markets invariably fluctuated but tended to be higher than official prices. In such a situation, insisting on purchasing at the official price could discourage the population from selling their products to the government. Official records are not lacking in examples attesting to the problems associated with these price discrepancies. In 1835, an official named Hoàng Văn Diễn 黃文演 was sent to northern Vietnam to purchase products. During his mission he could not purchase sufficient products because he insisted on buying at the official price decided beforehand and refused to raise his offer, although the local market price had recently appreciated. Hearing of Hoàng Văn Diễn’s failure, Emperor Minh Mạng insisted that purchasing should be done flexibly, taking into consideration fluctuations in the market price.<sup>18)</sup>

The gap between the official price calculated on previous purchases and what could be had on the open market grew so wide that, from the Thiệu Trị era, local authorities frequently submitted requests for the purchases to be based on current market prices. In 1844 the governor of Biên Hòa Province submitted a memorial to the emperor suggesting that products should be purchased at the market price, adding that the final price should depend on the distance over which the product had had to be transported. However, before this request obtained the emperor’s assent, yet more problems arose. Having attempted to purchase at the market price, the governor of Biên Hòa sent another memorial expressing his concern that current market prices far outstripped the official prices, meaning that purchasing at the market price would be detrimental to state coffers. Finally, on the advice of the Ministry of Finance, it was decided that the purchase price should be based on the precedent of the previous year, and additional prices should be paid in proportion to the degree of market price appreciation.<sup>19)</sup>

16) *DNTLCB* III, Vol. 45, 17a–20b.

17) For example, see *DNTLCB* II, Vol. 135, 8b.

18) *DNTLCB* II, Vol. 147, 28b.

19) *DNTLCB* III, Vol. 43, 3a–4b.



The problem of deciding the proper purchase price was discussed also on another occasion. In 1845 Vũ Trọng Bình 武仲平 and other officials maintained that the Ministry of Finance was still adhering to the original purchase price precedent, which led the population to suffer from the disparity in the compensation paid for the difference between the purchase price and the current market price. To resolve this problem, the courtiers proposed that henceforth government purchases should be made at the current price, and extra money should be paid if the prices of products were appreciating. The Ministry of Finance, the courtiers continued, should not insist on clinging to precedent and categorically declining the proposed price. Emperor Thiệu Trị read and approved the courtiers' proposal.<sup>20)</sup> These episodes offer insight into the efforts made by Nguyễn officials to manage the government purchase system without harming the interests of either the producers or the merchants.

### I-3 *Purchasing Foreign Products*

Establishing the government purchase system allowed the Nguyễn Dynasty to obtain not only Vietnamese products but also the foreign commodities they required. This can be seen in the products listed in Table 1. Aside from the aforementioned Chinese and Western fabrics, the items listed in the table include some with an apparently foreign origin, such as ginseng and Chinese tea. In the nineteenth century, the ways in which the Vietnamese government acquired foreign products could be divided into two patterns.

The first involved a purchase commitment to Chinese merchants. There are many cases in the dynastic records of Chinese merchants procuring commodities on behalf of the Vietnamese government. For example, in 1820, upon receiving the instruction from Huế, officials of the Northern Citadel (Bắc Thành 北城, the administrative unit encompassing today's northern Vietnam) had Chinese merchants residing on Hàng Buồm 行帆 Street in Hà Nội buy damask made in Suzhou.<sup>21)</sup> From the early nineteenth century, this street had served as a hub for Chinese merchants, especially those from Guangzhou (Canton) and Fujian (Yamamoto 1959). In 1824, the Northern Citadel again left the purchase of ginseng on the Guangzhou market to Hàng Buồm Chinese merchants.<sup>22)</sup>

Guangzhou, often referred to simply as *Đông* 東 or "East" in Vietnamese documents, figured prominently as a place where the Nguyễn court could procure Chinese commodities. In 1810, Emperor Gia Long dispatched Minh Hương Chinese merchants<sup>23)</sup>

20) *ĐNTLCB* III, Vol. 45, 17a–20b.

21) *KĐDNHĐSL*, Vol. 65, 1a–b.

22) *KĐDNHĐSL*, Vol. 65, 20b–21a.

23) The term *Minh Hương* (明香 or 明鄉) was originally applied to Ming Dynasty loyalists who fled to Vietnam in the late seventeenth century. Through intermarriage with local women, they had become acculturated into Vietnamese society, although to some extent they still preserved their ↗



to Guangzhou with 20,000 taels of silver.<sup>24)</sup> Following this initial foray, Chinese merchants living in northern Vietnam were again dispatched to Guangzhou with 10,000 taels of silver in 1813.<sup>25)</sup> In fact, the government's demand for Chinese goods was so high that in 1832, representatives of Guangzhou and Fujian Streets in Hà Nội were entrusted with the purchase of items produced in the two regions.<sup>26)</sup> There are some instances in which the amount of Chinese goods purchased attained an enormous scale. In 1857 the Vietnamese government asked Hàng Buồm Street Chinese merchants to procure products available in Guangzhou, including outer robes for the imperial court, silk textiles, and utensils. In his reply to this request, a former representative of the Hàng Buồm Street merchants named Quan Ngọc Ký 關玉記 estimated the total cost of the purchase to be 70,000–80,000 taels of silver.<sup>27)</sup> In addition to the Chinese merchants established in Hà Nội, Chinese merchants residing in Quảng Nam also engaged in government trade with Guangzhou. In 1847 a Qing merchant in Quảng Nam Province named Lý Thái 李泰, who also served the court as an interpreter, was rewarded with a promotion because he had been dispatched to Guangzhou many times and had successfully purchased goods for the court.<sup>28)</sup>

Metals mined in Yunnan and used to mint money were also important commodities the Vietnamese government purchased through Chinese merchants. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the Nguyễn Dynasty minted brass and zinc cash as national currency; therefore, a stable flow of currency was dependent largely on securing sources of copper and zinc.<sup>29)</sup> Although northern Vietnam was itself endowed with rich mineral resources,<sup>30)</sup> the domestic output of copper and zinc was insufficient to permit minting on a large scale. To supplement the domestic supply, the government

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↘ Chinese traditions. Following its predecessor, the Nguyễn Dynasty established exclusive communes for Minh Hương Chinese (*Minh Hương xã* 明香社) and distinguished them from recently arrived Chinese residents in Vietnam. Newly arrived Chinese were called “Qing Chinese” (Thanh Nhân 清人) and were administered by guilds/communities (*bang* 幫) according to their original homelands. For the Nguyễn policy toward ethnic Chinese, see Fujiwara (1986, 257–282) and Choi (2004, 38–41).

24) *DNTLCB* I, Vol. 40, 14b.

25) *DNTLCB* I, Vol. 48, 19b–20a.

26) *DNTLCB* II, Vol. 79, 2b.

27) CBTN, TĐ, Vol. 62, 84a–87a, Memorial from the Ministry of Finance dated 21/4/TĐ10.

28) *DNTLCB* III, Vol. 64, 12b–13a.

29) On the use of cash coins in the Nguyễn monetary regime, see Fujiwara (1986, 303–324) and Thierry (1999).

30) In the eighteenth century, the Tụ Long 聚隆 copper mine in Tuyên Quang boasted a large output and contributed heavily to the copper cash production by the Lê Trịnh government. The Tụ Long copper mine continued to operate well into the nineteenth century, but its output stagnated and it could no longer match the government's demand for minting. For the exploitation of the Tụ Long copper mine between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Okada (2011).

obtained copper and zinc imports through Chinese merchants. To aid the merchants in their task, the government fund frequently gave them an advance. Between 1842 and 1844, the government funded Chinese merchants residing in Hà Nội to import copper and zinc from China. Using these funds, the Chinese merchants successfully procured 113,552 *cân*<sup>31)</sup> of zinc and 8,381 *cân* of copper, the equivalent value of 34,247 strings of cash.<sup>32)</sup> In another case, Guangzhou and Fujian merchants in Hàng Buồm received money from the Vietnamese government in 1851 to buy copper and zinc in China and consequently obtained about 55,872 *cân* of copper and 778,327 *cân* of zinc, equivalent to 283,783.4 strings of cash.<sup>33)</sup> As for the provenance of Chinese copper and zinc, Nguyễn archival sources relating to Chinese tax farmers note that merchants procured copper and zinc for the Vietnamese government in the mining areas of Yunnan, such as Mengzi and Huize (Taga 2022, 45).

The Huế court also asked Chinese merchants calling at Vietnamese ports to procure the commodities it needed. To regularize such undertakings, a series of stipulations were issued in 1848. As will be mentioned later, this year saw the suspension of the purchase of foreign products by government ships. It would seem that the Huế court was attempting to obtain what it needed by reinforcing procurements made via Chinese merchants. Under the 1848 stipulations, every January or February in the lunar calendar, the Ministry of Finance sent inquiries to Qing trading vessels visiting Vietnam asking if they would find it acceptable to receive government money and procure Chinese products with it when they returned to their home country. Merchants who accepted this offer were given amounts varying from 3,000 to 20,000 strings of cash as a government advance, on the condition that a guarantee from a reliable Chinese merchant settled in Vietnam was obtained. After receiving the government advance, the Chinese merchants procured the goods in their home country and delivered them on their next trip to Vietnam. If the goods ordered were successfully delivered, the merchants could be granted a reduction in harbor dues. When merchants failed in their undertaking, those who provided the guarantee had to pay compensation.<sup>34)</sup>

The second method by which foreign products could be obtained was procurement by officials specially dispatched overseas. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Nguyễn court periodically sent officials to both Guangzhou and Southeast Asian regions under the rule of Western countries, including Singapore, Batavia, and Luzon (Chen

31) *Cân* 斤 was a unit of weight in traditional Vietnam. In the nineteenth century, 1 *cân* equaled 0.6 kg and consisted of 16 *lượng* 兩.

32) *KĐĐNHĐSL*, Vol. 53, 14b–15a. In early modern Vietnam, one string of cash consisted of 600 separate coins.

33) CBTN, TĐ, Vol. 36, 25a–b, Memorial from the Ministry of Finance dated 10/11/TĐ4.

34) *KĐĐNHĐSL*, Vol. 64, 9a–10b.

1990). The Nguyễn official records generally noted these expeditions as “overseas missions” (*ngoại dương công vụ* 外洋公務 or *hải ngoại công vụ* 海外公務). More specifically, expeditions to Guangzhou were called “eastern-going missions” (*như đông công vụ* 如東公務), while those to Southeast Asia or farther west were “western-going missions” (*như tây công vụ* 如西公務).

The Nguyễn authorities emphasized that the principal purpose of these overseas missions was to collect information and hone navigation skills. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that the ships dispatched were engaged in commercial activities in overseas markets. In 1838, for the official missions to Singapore and Batavia, the articles to be traded in the markets at their destinations were stipulated: zinc, lead, rifles, and woolen and other fabrics.<sup>35)</sup> Western fabrics were a prominent commodity purchased by the Nguyễn Dynasty when overseas missions gave it the opportunity to do so. In the *KĐĐNHĐSL*, there are many entries recording Western fabrics bought and delivered by “dispatched officials” (*phái viên* 派員).<sup>36)</sup> This expression reveals that these fabrics were purchased by Vietnamese officials while engaged in overseas missions. The ample supply accumulated by these overseas missions allowed the Nguyễn emperors to distribute Western fabrics lavishly at court ceremonies and to dress their soldiers in uniforms made of Western cloth (Taga 2020, 100–101).

The activities by Vietnamese government vessels attracted the attention of contemporary Westerners too. Based on the description by the French merchant Isidore Hedde in 1844, Wong Lin Ken described the state-run trade of the Nguyễn court with Singapore as follows:

[T]he Cochin-Chinese King bought the produce of his country from his subjects at arbitrary prices, and sent them to Canton, Batavia and Singapore in five square-rigged vessels and steamers. To Singapore he sent silk from Canton and Cochin-China, green tea, nankeens, cinnamon, rhinoceros horns, rice, sugar, salt, ivory, buffaloes' skins, precious wood and treasure, in return for which he took camlets and common long ells to clothe his army, tin, opium, fire-arms and some Indian goods. (Wong 1960, 156)

The above description well illustrates the highly commercial nature of the Nguyễn court's overseas missions. As for the goods exported by government vessels, they included not only Vietnamese products most likely bought from local producers, but also Chinese goods from Canton (Guangzhou). This indicates a possibility that the Vietnamese government reexported Chinese products it had purchased in Guangzhou markets to Singapore.

35) *DNTLCB* II, Vol. 196, 11a–13b.

36) *KĐĐNHĐSL*, Vol. 65, 7b–10a.

The policy of overseas missions was pursued most energetically by the court during the Minh Mạng and Thiệu Trị periods, from the 1820s to the early 1840s. However, no sooner had the fourth emperor, Tự Đức, ascended the throne than the necessity for these missions was questioned by officials. Trương Quốc Dụng 張國用, who emerged as an influential figure at the late Thiệu Trị court, presented a secret proposal comprising five articles to the newly enthroned emperor. In the first article, Trương set forth the significance of “saving expenditure” (*tết tài dụng* 節財用) and advised the emperor henceforth to cease dispatching overseas missions and the government purchases associated with them.<sup>37)</sup> Consequently, an ordinance that decreed the suspension of overseas missions was promulgated no later than around May of 1848.<sup>38)</sup>

In fact, the cessation of overseas missions did not just mean stopping government purchases in overseas markets. As will be explained in the next section, ships departing for overseas missions were usually loaded with local Vietnamese products to be sold abroad. Since the bulk of these products had been collected through the government purchase system, the stoppage of overseas missions inevitably led to a diminished volume of domestic purchases hitherto devised for this enterprise. After the overseas missions were suspended, the Nguyễn court depended more heavily on Chinese merchants to procure foreign goods. More than ten years had passed since the suspension of overseas missions when Emperor Tự Đức observed:

Purchasing on the occasion of eastern- and western-going missions has now ceased for a long time. The requisite goods are invariably asked of Chinese merchants. As a result, shrewd merchants have capitalized on this situation to pursue their own profit by withholding commodities and allowing the prices to appreciate. Consequently, the cost (of the foreign goods purchased) has been excessively high.<sup>39)</sup>

Following this observation, Emperor Tự Đức ordered the Ministry of Finance that among the goods required, those which could be substituted by domestic ones should be listed in the report, and that for regular requirements, domestic goods should be relied on and the use of Chinese or Western goods suspended.<sup>40)</sup> It was not until 1875 that the Huế court took the decision to resume sending government ships to trade in overseas markets.<sup>41)</sup>

37) *DNTLCB* IV, Vol. 1, 32a–b.

38) *DNTLCB* IV, Vol. 2, 20b.

39) *DNTLCB* IV, Vol. 21, 30a.

40) *DNTLCB* IV, Vol. 21, 30a.

41) *DNTLCB* IV, Vol. 53, 56a–b.

## II Multiple Functions of the Government Purchase System

In addition to procuring products necessary to the state, the government purchase system assumed several functions in the fiscal administration of the Nguyễn Dynasty. This section will examine the multiple functions of the government purchase system from the following aspects: 1) as a means of distributing money to the market; 2) as a means of famine relief; and 3) as a means of collecting export products.

### II-1 *The Government Purchase System as a Means of Distributing Money*

It is quite interesting that in the *ĐNTLCB*, Nguyễn emperors and officials often articulated the importance of government purchase as a means of distributing and circulating money. In 1835, when rewarding officials for buying products advantageously in northern Vietnam, Emperor Minh Mạng pointed out that the government purchase system was originally designed to allow currency to circulate among the population.<sup>42)</sup> In 1844, officials at the imperial court talked about the government buying goods in order to circulate cash and fulfill state demands.<sup>43)</sup> Why did both emperors and their officials have to emphasize the significance of distributing money through the government purchase system? To answer this question, it is necessary to explain how currency circulated in the Nguyễn fiscal administration.

As mentioned above, the Nguyễn Dynasty issued brass and zinc cash as legal tender. This cash played an essential role not only in private commerce but also in the fiscal administration. Under the Nguyễn fiscal regime, tax payment in cash was quite prevalent. First of all, able-bodied adults were liable to pay a poll tax levied in zinc cash, whose annual amount per capita varied from 450 to 1,080 cash according to prescribed categories. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the number of able-bodied adults registered on the tax rolls grew rapidly, from 620,246 in 1820 to 1,024,388 in 1847 (Shimao 2001, 30). Supposing that the average annual amount of poll tax was 765 cash per capita, the total amount of zinc cash collected by the government can be estimated to have been around 474,488,190 in 1820 and 783,656,820 in 1847. In addition to the poll tax, huge amounts of zinc cash were collected through the inland customs system established on the main traffic arteries. Whereas millions in zinc cash were annually siphoned off from the private sector via tax collection, the ways to redistribute the cash collected were fairly limited. The government released stockpiled cash as stipends or expenses to cover public works, but this amount was much smaller than the amount collected as tax. There-

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42) *ĐNTLCB* II, Vol. 142, 17b.

43) *ĐNTLCB* III, Vol. 45, 18a.

fore, zinc cash stockpiled, lying idle in public coffers while the private sector suffered a shortage of money in circulation.

To cope with this discrepancy, the court began to rely on the government purchase system in the 1830s. In the eyes of policy makers, the government purchase system seemed to be an efficient method of redistributing stockpiled cash while procuring products necessary to the state. In 1833, hearing that the supply of ready cash in circulation was inadequate in the provinces of Hà Tĩnh, Nghệ An, and Thanh Hóa, Emperor Minh Mạng issued a royal ordinance to ensure that the provincial authorities purchased products in keeping with the fluctuations in market price.<sup>44)</sup> By doing so, he apparently aimed at augmenting the money supply in regions where the population suffered from a scarcity of cash coins. The next year, discussing the problem of the government purchase system with the Ministry of Finance, Emperor Minh Mạng commented:

Today the population is suffering from a shortage of circulating cash (*tiền hoang* 錢荒). The only remedy for this emergency lies in the government purchase system. If purchasing is done at a high price, the population will benefit from it and cash can be dispersed into a wide circulation.<sup>45)</sup>

It was in the Red River Delta and its adjacent areas that the government purchase system was expected to alleviate the stagnated monetary flow most effectively. In 1838, the cash remaining in the provincial coffers of Sơn Tây was so abundant that 300,000 strings of cash were transported to Hà Nội to purchase goods.<sup>46)</sup> In the same year, the Ministry of Finance sent a memorial to Emperor Minh Mạng arguing for the introduction of a formal financial policy. The memorial began with a reference to the axiom that the value of currency lay in its circulation; therefore, ever since antiquity, those who aspired to good rule dispersed accumulated money and goods and exchanged these with each other, guided by a fiscal administration or trade promotion. The ensuing report said that provinces in the Red River Delta region, such as Nam Định, Sơn Tây, Bắc Ninh, and Hải Dương, had amassed 200,000 to 500,000 strings of zinc cash each, because tax revenues in cash invariably surpassed expenditures. Conversely, in these provinces the number of strings of cash circulating among the population was not abundant. To narrow this gap, the Ministry of Finance proposed expanding the government purchase system to disperse stockpiled cash into the market. To the end of the memorial was attached a list of products to be purchased in the provinces.<sup>47)</sup> After this proposition had been approved, the government purchase system was assiduously implemented in Nam Định, Sơn Tây,

44) *DNTLCB* II, Vol. 101, 23b–24a.

45) *DNTLCB* II, Vol. 136, 22a–b.

46) *DNTLCB* II, Vol. 189, 3b.

47) *CBTN*, MM, Vol. 67, 18a–20b, Memorial from the Ministry of Finance dated 2/3/MM19.

Bắc Ninh, and Hải Dương in addition to two mountain provinces, Hưng Hóa and Tuyên Quang. The items purchased included metals, textiles, hemp, lac, deer horn, rhinoceros horn, charcoal, and lacquer.<sup>48)</sup> Although we can find no documents referring to how effective this policy was at lubricating monetary flows, there is little doubt that considerable amounts of cash coins were disbursed into the market through government purchases during this period.

Among the products available in northern Vietnam, silver and gold were the most highly sought after. In 1835, aware of the ample cash reserves in Hà Nội, Emperor Minh Mạng gave instructions to buy 2,000 taels of gold and 20,000 taels of silver in order to disperse the accumulated cash.<sup>49)</sup> Gold was again extensively bought in the northern region in 1839, spending the surplus cash reserved in provincial coffers. Speaking about the preference for purchasing gold, Emperor Minh Mạng explained that gold was a valuable, lightweight commodity, hence the high price it fetched could enrich the population, and it would also reduce the burden of transportation.<sup>50)</sup>

## II-2 *The Government Purchase System as a Means of Famine Relief*

As payment for products purchased, the Nguyễn court frequently dispensed not only money but also rice. The disbursement of rice through the government purchase system eased seasonal fluctuations in the rice price and secured food supply in times of poor harvest or natural disaster. Therefore, it would be true to say that the government purchase system functioned as a form of famine relief.

In the Nguyễn official records, references to rice distribution as a form of payment for purchases made under the government system first emerged in the Minh Mạng period. When the price of rice in Huế rose to 900–960 cash per *phuong*<sup>51)</sup> in 1826, Emperor Minh Mạng ordered the magistrates to let people sell their commodities such as timber, firewood, and rattan rope to the government. In exchange for these products, the government handed out tickets that could be exchanged for rice at the state granary.<sup>52)</sup> In the same year, the central provinces of Quảng Nam, Quảng Ngãi, Bình Định, Phú Yên, and Bình Hòa also witnessed a rise in the rice price during the pre-harvest season. This time a royal ordinance was issued to purchase 400,000 *cân* of white sugar, 150,000 *cân* of crude honey, as well as 15,000 *cân* of cinnamon and cardamom, paid for with government rice. To immediately increase the food supply, the rice was to be paid for in advance

48) *ĐNTLCB* II, Vol. 190, 6b. See also CBTN, MM, Vol. 70, 73a–74b, Memorial from the acting governor-general of Ninh Thái, Tôn Thất Bặc dated 9/4/MM19.

49) *ĐNTLCB* II, Vol. 154, 26a–b.

50) *ĐNTLCB* II, Vol. 202, 18b–19a.

51) In nineteenth-century Vietnam, one *phuong* 方 equaled roughly 38 liters.

52) *KĐĐNHĐSL*, Vol. 64, 1a–b; *ĐNTLCB* II, Vol. 38, 18a.



at a moderate price.<sup>53)</sup> The Bình Định region also suffered high rice prices the following year, so Lê Văn Lại 黎文禮 and Nguyễn Chí Lý 阮至理 were dispatched there to cooperate with the local authorities in the disbursement of granary rice. After the two officials had left Huế, Emperor Minh Mạng said to the Ministry of Finance:

Referring to a famine relief policy, its essence lies in broad coordination. The government purchases goods and pays for them with grain. This is also one of the vital points by which to enrich the state and benefit the population.<sup>54)</sup>

In relation to the above comment, Emperor Minh Mạng had Lê Văn Lại and other officials seek out local products that could be useful to the state and purchase them with government grain.<sup>55)</sup>

In nineteenth-century Vietnam, the price of rice was especially volatile in the central region, including the imperial capital of Huế. This was mainly because the region's geographic conditions meant it was not possible to set up enough rice fields locally to generate an ample food supply. In the central region, the price of rice tended to appreciate from October or November to the January or February of the next year in the lunar calendar. Sino-Vietnamese sources often refer to these months as the “time of the green-yellow gap” (*thanh hoàng bất tiếp chi thì* 青黃不接之時), which means “the months when the new crop is yet to come and the old crop was practically exhausted” (Hsiao 1960, 152). During green-yellow gap months, the population in the central region invariably lived with the threat of price increases hanging over its head. It has been reported that in Quảng Nam Province, every October and November the price of rice doubled compared to other months.<sup>56)</sup> So, it was quite natural that scarcity of the local rice supply meant that the central region became more and more dependent on rice imported from the fertile southern lands. In particular, the rice shipped from Gia Định to the central region was referred to as “southern rice” (*nam mễ* 南米).

In contrast to its poor rice production, central Vietnam was rich in other valuable natural products such as sugar and cinnamon. This enabled the Nguyễn authorities to combine the procurement of valuable products with the stabilization of food supply by resorting to the government purchase system. As will be mentioned in Section III, the government established annual purchase quotas for sugar and cinnamon in Quảng Nam and Quảng Ngãi Provinces, and in line with this quota, the government rice (or cash) for the purchase was paid in advance. The disbursement of government rice through the

53) *KĐDNHĐSL*, Vol. 64, 2a; *ĐNTLCB* II, Vol. 42, 6b.

54) *ĐNTLCB* II, Vol. 47, 17b–18a.

55) *ĐNTLCB* II, Vol. 47, 17b–18a.

56) *CBTN*, TT, Vol. 9, 198a–199b, Imperial edict dated 6/9/TT1.



product purchase system was also correlated with the transport of southern rice. This point was made clear by the government purchase conducted in 1842:

Quảng Nam and Quảng Ngãi witnessed an appreciation in the price of rice. (Emperor Thiệu Trị) said that: Two provinces lie in the region of the imperial capital. Last year, the food supply among the population in Quảng Ngãi was quite unfavorable. It had already been discussed, and orders had been given to release government rice at a reduced price. Moreover, the government funds for sugar and cinnamon were disbursed in advance to buy (sugar and cinnamon) and pay their price with grain (instead of cash). In Quảng Nam Province, too, the disbursing of the government fund for sugar and cinnamon in advance was permitted so that the grain could circulate, thereby augmenting the food supply among the population. Now that the situation seems perilous and the green-yellow gap months are approaching, we should ensure that the population does not go short of food. . . . Subsequently, an official from Quảng Nam Province named Phạm Duy Trinh 范惟真 sent a memorial saying: “Now that the merchant ships loaded with southern rice have arrived to sell their cargo, the food supply among the population is no longer in jeopardy. Besides this, the government funds (for sugar and cinnamon) have already been disbursed, so the population can rely on them.” However, in Quảng Ngãi Province the rice price remains high. The provincial official Nguyễn Đức Hộ 阮德護 requested that (the government) buy up sugar and soybean oil, so that the producers could receive the government funds in advance, allowing the grain to circulate and increase the food supply. This request was granted.<sup>57)</sup>

Other than the provinces of Quảng Nam, Quảng Ngãi, and Bình Định, government purchase directed toward famine relief was pursued also in the Thanh Hóa and Nghệ An regions, where arable land was relatively scarce in proportion to the population; these regions were frequently hit by natural disasters such as typhoons and floods. When the price of rice in the Thanh Hóa and Nghệ An areas rose sharply in 1830, instructions were immediately sent to the local authorities that if anyone could sell ironwood to the state, its price would be paid with rice instead of cash.<sup>58)</sup> Ironwood from Nghệ An was again bought by the government in 1835 for the purpose of disbursing government grain.<sup>59)</sup> When Thanh Hoá Province suffered serious damage as a result of successive typhoons, merchants and producers were permitted to receive grain in advance in exchange for timber.<sup>60)</sup>

Unfortunately, from the extant sources it is very difficult to tell to what extent rice disbursement through the government purchase system was effective as famine relief. Nevertheless, the cases cited above shed light on the fact that the Nguyễn government purchase system was intended not purely to fill state coffers, but also to assure that the population could survive when times were hard. This deep consideration for peasant

57) *DNTLCB* III, Vol. 15, 12b–13a.

58) *DNTLCB* II, Vol. 64, 32a.

59) *DNTLCB* II, Vol. 154, 26b.

60) *DNTLCB* II, Vol. 219, 26b–27a.

welfare had much in common with the economic policies of Chinese imperial governments, which Wong (1997) has emphasized in contrast with premodern Europe.

### II-3 *Government Purchase as a Means of Collecting Export Products*

In addition to the above two functions, the Nguyễn Dynasty pursued another goal through the government purchase system: collecting export products for the state-run trade. As discussed in Section I, the Nguyễn Dynasty periodically sent government vessels to surrounding countries. These voyages were designated as overseas missions. Their ostensible purpose was to gather information and conduct navigation drills, but the real reason was to pursue state-run trade. Government vessels dispatched on overseas missions were loaded with local products for international markets: sugar produced in the central region supplemented by a variety of marine and forest products.<sup>61)</sup> The Nguyễn court could rely on the taxes levied on these products as one method to collect export items, but the revenue thus accrued was not necessarily enough to guarantee sufficient cargoes for shipping. In its search for a more effective way to collect export products, the Nguyễn court turned to the government purchase system.

In this respect, the description in the *KĐĐNHĐSL* is quite revealing. Between the Gia Long and Thiệu Trị periods, the Vietnamese government frequently sent state vessels to trade with Guangzhou. However, with the enthronement of Emperor Tự Đức, this dispatch of state vessels was abolished in 1848. Concomitant with this decision was the stipulation that the government purchase system was to be partly revised as follows:

Concerning products for which a purchase order has hitherto been annually sent (to the provinces) every winter, the Ministry of Finance has sent notices to southern regions as well as the other provinces beforehand to purchase and deliver items such as betel nuts, pepper, cardamom, dried shrimp, dried eels, tobacco leaves, lotus seeds, sea cucumbers, and shark fins, to ensure that these would be ready and waiting for export on the occasion of voyages to Guangzhou. Now that the missions to Guangzhou have been suspended, the need for these products is not as extensive (as it was before). With the exception of occasional purchases for ordinary needs, those for export are to be suspended forever.<sup>62)</sup>

This description clarifies that before 1848, the government regularly bought products—including betel nuts, pepper, cardamom, dried shrimp, dried eels, tobacco leaves, lotus seeds, sea cucumbers, and shark fins—as export cargoes for the Guangzhou market. A close reading of the purchase records in the *KĐĐNHĐSL* proves that the bulk of these products originated from central and southern Vietnam.<sup>63)</sup> In short, the government

61) We take a closer look at the purchase of sugar in Section III.

62) *KĐĐNHĐSL*, Vol. 64, 8b–9a.

63) *KĐĐNHĐSL*, Vols. 65, 66.

**Table 2** Export Products for the 1829 Mission to Guangzhou

Product	Quantity
Edible bird's nests	50 <i>cân</i>
Nutmeg	651 <i>cân</i> 5 <i>lượng</i>
Cardamom (砂仁菓 and 砂仁米)	3,623 <i>cân</i>
Cinnamon	7,694 <i>cân</i>
Silver	1,000 <i>lượng</i>
Dried squid (乾魷魚)	2,442 <i>cân</i> 8 <i>lượng</i>
Dried anchovies (乾鰱魚)	5,172 <i>cân</i>
Dried shrimp (乾蝦米)	4,500 <i>cân</i>
Ironwood (鐵林木)	119 pieces
White sugar	50,000 <i>cân</i>
Zinc	252,600 <i>cân</i>

Source: CBTN, MM, Vol. 29, 150a–b, Imperial edict dated 21/6/MM10.

purchase system and state-run trade were inextricably bound up in the Nguyễn fiscal regime.

Regarding the state-run trade for Guangzhou and its export cargoes, more detailed information can be found in the CBTN. The products loaded as ship cargoes for Guangzhou in 1829 are shown in Table 2. Although there is no specific reference in the document concerning the way these products were procured, it is very likely that they were collected through the government purchase system.

Another document in the CBTN of the Thiệu Trị era casts even more light on the government purchase system for export.<sup>64)</sup> According to this document, written on the occasion of the dispatch of a government vessel named the *Linh Phụng* 靈鳳 to Guangzhou as part of overseas missions in 1845,<sup>65)</sup> the Ministry of Finance proposed a plan to purchase local products to the value of 500,000 *cân* in the provinces to add to the sugar produced in Quảng Nam (400,000 *cân*) and Quảng Ngãi (300,000 *cân*). Following this plan, the provincial authorities had already bought 263,000 *cân* of local products and were continuing their purchases. Sugar purchases were made also in Quảng Nam and Quảng Ngãi: 320,000 *cân* and 230,000 *cân* respectively. While the *Linh Phụng* was preparing to depart, three Qing merchants named Ngô Hội Hưng 吳會興, Lưu Thuận

64) CBTN, TT, Vol. 30, 359a–362b, Report (*phiên* 片) from the Ministry of Finance dated 30/4/TT5.

65) The corresponding entry in the *ĐNTLCB* reads that this year the court sent the vessel the *Linh Phụng* to Guangzhou for the purpose of repatriating Qing pirates arrested by the authorities in Thanh Hóa Province. See *ĐNTLCB* III, Vol. 48, 5a.

**Table 3-1** Contents of Export Cargo on the *Linh Phụng*

Product	Quantity
Edible bird's nests	138 <i>cân</i> 15 <i>lượng</i>
Ivory	1,000 <i>cân</i>
Cardamom (砂仁葉 and 砂仁米)	1,453 <i>cân</i>
Cinnamon	15,000 <i>cân</i>
Lotus seeds	4,375 <i>cân</i>
Pepper	7,799 <i>cân</i>
Sea cucumbers	2,037 <i>cân</i>
Dried shrimp	10,000 <i>cân</i>
Dried anchovies	30,000 <i>cân</i>
Betel nuts	50,000 <i>cân</i>
Fish maws (魚肚)	142 <i>cân</i>
Shark fins (魚翅)	225 <i>cân</i>
Timber (烏木)	40,500 <i>cân</i>
Sugar	300,000 <i>cân</i>

Source: CBTN, TT, Vol. 30, 359a–362b, Report (*phiên* 片) from the Ministry of Finance dated 30/4/TT5.

**Table 3-2** Contents of Export Cargoes on the Vessels of Qing Merchants

Product	Quantity ( <i>cân</i> )
Dried anchovies	42,448
Dried shrimp	1,677
Betel nuts	100,746
Pepper	2,000
Sugar	400,000

Source: CBTN, TT, Vol. 30, 359a–362b, Report (*phiên* 片) from the Ministry of Finance dated 30/4/TT5.

Thịnh 劉順盛, and Đặng Hợp Long 鄧合隆 notified the local authorities in Thừa Thiên and Quảng Nam of their willingness to export government cargoes on behalf of the Huế court. The volumes of cargo with which each of the three merchants wanted to load their ships were 400,000 *cân*, 300,000 *cân*, and 200,000 *cân*, respectively. In the document, the Ministry of Finance noted the contents of cargoes on the *Linh Phụng* and the Qing merchants' ships (Tables 3-1 and 3-2). Most of the products that made up these cargoes had been obtained via the government purchase system, with a limited amount drawn from tax revenue and reserves in the metropolitan depots.

**Table 3-3** Additional Products for the Qing Merchants' Vessels to Be Supplied by Ongoing Purchases in Provinces

Product	Purchase Amount ( <i>cân</i> )
Dried anchovies	47,552
Dried shrimp	48,323
Betel nuts	49,254
Pepper	10,201
Cardamom	18,896
Tobacco leaves	10,000
Nutmeg	500
Dried squid	50,000
Rice-paper plant pith (通大海菜)	10,000
Total	244,726

Source: CBTN, TT, Vol. 30, 359a–362b, Report (*phiên* 片) from the Ministry of Finance dated 30/4/TT5.

With regard to the cargoes of the Qing merchants' ships, besides the items listed in Table 3-2, the court prepared additional products to make full use of the cargo capacity. These additional products were supposed to have been acquired by ongoing purchases undertaken by provincial authorities (Table 3-3).

The numerical data preserved in the CBTN vividly testify to the enormous scale of the trade sponsored by the Nguyễn court, as well as the significant role played by the government purchase system in assembling export products.<sup>66)</sup>

Having experienced its heyday in the Minh Mạng and Thiệu Trị eras, the government purchase system—whose purpose was the collection of export products—underwent a sharp decline during the reign of Tự Đức, after the decision to suspend overseas missions in 1848. Soon after this decision was made, a senior official at the Ministry of Finance, Nguyễn Cửu Trường 阮久長, proposed that the purchase of products for overseas missions be stopped and thereafter the government purchase system be reduced to items in general use such as timber, stone, and firewood.<sup>67)</sup> A similar proposition was made not long afterward by another official, Nguyễn Văn Chân 阮文振, and Emperor Tự Đức acquiesced to it.<sup>68)</sup>

66) Drawing on a Thiệu Trị era document preserved in the CBTN, Okada also clarifies the breakdown of the export cargo of state-run trade for the Guangzhou market in which both cinnamon and sugar figure prominently (Okada 2021, 89).

67) *ĐNTLCB* IV, Vol. 2, 20b.

68) *ĐNTLCB* IV, Vol. 2, 24b–25a.

### III Sugar in the Government Purchase System of the Nguyễn Dynasty

#### III-1 *Vietnamese Sugar as an Export Commodity*

Among the products procured through the Nguyễn government purchase system, sugar stands out because of the huge scale of its purchase and its concomitant significance as an export commodity. Historically, Vietnamese sugar production began to extend from the central to the southern region as early as the seventeenth century. As previous studies have pointed out, sugar was a prominent export product for the Nguyễn lords (1558–1777), the predecessors to the Nguyễn Dynasty. In the seventeenth-century heyday of international commerce, large quantities of Quảng Nam black sugar were exported to the Japanese market; and even in the mid-eighteenth century, more than forty barrels of white sugar were shipped annually from Hội An to the Chinese market (Li 1998, 80–81). In fact, sugar also contributed to the founding of the Nguyễn Dynasty. In the course of his struggle against the Tây Sơn army, Nguyễn Phúc Ánh—the founder of the Nguyễn Dynasty and later Emperor Gia Long—tapped into the sugar trade to obtain advanced Western weapons.<sup>69)</sup> In 1789, he ordered the Trấn Biên protectorate (corresponding to Biên Hòa Province) to purchase 10,000 *cân* (six tons) of sugar annually to exchange for Western weapons. In this instance, ten strings of cash per 100 *cân* of sugar were paid in advance.<sup>70)</sup> Sugar was also bought in the Trấn Biên protectorate in 1795, driven by the exigent need to procure weapons.<sup>71)</sup>

The position of sugar as a significant export commodity did not seem to waver even after the Nguyễn Dynasty was established. In 1820, satisfied with the result of the sugar purchases in the Quảng Nam and Quảng Ngãi regions, Emperor Minh Mạng said:

With reference to sugar, our people can neither satisfy hunger nor keep from the cold with it. However, Westerners have a preference for it. In the future, we should sell a lot of sugar in exchange for Western commodities. Commodities like rice, silk, and cloth are valuable to our people, so (their export) is unthinkable.<sup>72)</sup>

For the Vietnamese rulers, sugar was an ideal product for export not only because it had a high commercial value on the international market, but also because its export was not detrimental to the subsistence of the domestic population. Sugar export in early-nineteenth-century Vietnam is well documented in the CBTN. As Emperor Minh Mạng's

69) For the external trade of southern Vietnam during the reign of Nguyễn Phúc Ánh, see the monumental work by Pierre-Yves Manguin (1984).

70) *ĐNTLCB* I, Vol. 4, 25b.

71) *ĐNTLCB* I, Vol. 8, 29a–b.

72) *ĐNTLCB* II, Vol. 4, 8b.

statement reveals, sugar was a highly sought after product by Western merchants visiting Vietnam. The Nguyễn court confined its trade with European countries to the port of Đà Nẵng, where a special warehouse was constructed to store sugar from the Quảng Nam and Quảng Ngãi regions. In 1830, 450,000 *cân* (270 tons) of sugar was sold to a French (Phú lãng sa 富浪沙) merchant at a price of 6.5 dollars per 100 *cân* (60 kg).<sup>73)</sup> In 1834, having obtained information about the plentiful sugar available in Vietnam en route to trading in Batavia, a French ship called at Cần Thơ, a port in An Giang Province, to request permission to purchase sugar. This request was declined by Vietnamese authorities. The reason given was that trade with Western countries was limited to the port of Đà Nẵng and that An Giang Province did not produce sugar.<sup>74)</sup> The French were not the only Western merchants to seek Vietnamese sugar. The CBTN recorded that in 1840, 336,900 *cân* (about 202 tons) of sugar from Quảng Nam and Quảng Ngãi were sold to an English ship (Anh cốt lờ 曠咕喇).<sup>75)</sup>

It is no surprise that sugar constituted the largest export commodity in the state-run trade. The large quantities of sugar carried as cargo on government vessels dispatched on overseas missions has already been alluded to in the preceding section.<sup>76)</sup> Documents preserved in the CBTN afford yet more examples of sugar exported via government vessels. When the Vietnamese government dispatched five vessels to Singapore and Batavia in 1838 as part of its overseas missions, a huge quantity of sugar was loaded for each destination (Table 4): the total amount of sugar loaded onto the five vessels was 1,315,400 *cân* (about 789 tons). The fact that sugar played an important role in the trade between Vietnam and Singapore can also be confirmed by British statistical records. Drawing on the *Tabular Statements of the Commerce and Shipping of Prince of Wales Island, Singapore and Malacca*, Li (1995, 209) notes that sugar was the principal Vietnamese import item to Singapore in the early nineteenth century and its value reached 174,914 Spanish dollars in 1845. It is highly possible that a large part of this sugar was traded by government vessels of the Nguyễn Dynasty.

Vietnamese sugar was also exported to the Guangzhou market by Chinese merchants. The preceding section mentions the three Chinese merchants Ngô Hội Hưng, Lưu Thuận Thịnh, and Đặng Hợp Long, who requested the government for a cargo to export in 1845, including 400,000 *cân* of sugar (Table 3-2). The following year, the Huế court again consigned export products for the Guangzhou market to the same three

73) CBTN, MM, Vol. 42, 182a–183b, Memorial from Nguyễn Văn Trọng dated 15/5/MM11.

74) CBTN, MM, Vol. 52, 249a–251b, Memorial from the governor of Gia, Định, Hà Duy Phiên dated 29/2/MM15.

75) CBTN, MM, Vol. 80, 219a–220b, Memorial from the Ministry of Finance dated 15/11/MM21.

76) See Tables 2, 3-1.

**Table 4** Amount of Sugar Loaded onto Official Vessels Heading for Singapore and Batavia in 1838

Name of Vessel	Destination	Amount of Sugar Loaded ( <i>cân</i> )
<i>An Dương</i> 安洋	Singapore	100,000
<i>Thụy Long</i> 瑞龍	Batavia	396,000
<i>Phán Bằng</i> 奮鵬	Batavia	350,000
<i>Tiên Sĩ</i> 僊螭	Singapore	220,000
<i>Linh Phụng</i> 靈鳳	Singapore	249,400
Total		1,315,400

Source: CBTN, MM, Vol. 64, 106a–107b, Memorials from Vương Hữu Quang, the acting provincial treasurer of Quảng Ngãi, and three other officials dated 22/2/MM19. The destination of each vessel is supplemented based on its entry in *DNTLCB* II, Vol. 196, 11a–b.

Chinese merchants. This time, of the total amount of goods consigned, weighing 872,535 *cân*, sugar accounted for 600,000 *cân* (360 tons).<sup>77)</sup>

### III-2 Government Purchase of Sugar in Central Vietnam

Almost all of the sugar the Nguyễn court exported to international markets came from two provinces, Quảng Nam and Quảng Ngãi, where units had been set up for the production of sugar and cinnamon. To ensure the procurement of these two products, the court earmarked government funds known as the “sugar fund” (*đường bản* 糖本) and “cinnamon fund” (*quế bản* 桂本). The government used these funds periodically to buy sugar and cinnamon with zinc cash, silver, and rice.

Judging from the extant records, the government purchase of sugar in the Quảng Nam and Quảng Ngãi regions operated on the largest scale from the Minh Mạng to the Thiệu Trị period. For example, in 1835 two officials were dispatched to Quảng Nam and Quảng Ngãi to purchase 700,000 *cân* and 800,000 *cân* of sugar, respectively.<sup>78)</sup> The next year, Emperor Minh Mạng set an annual sugar purchase quota of 1,100,000 *cân* (660 tons) for Quảng Ngãi and 900,000 *cân* (540 tons) for Quảng Nam.<sup>79)</sup> Henceforth, this number was used as a target for sugar purchases until the end of the Thiệu Trị era.<sup>80)</sup> Since most of the sugar was destined for export, the cessation of overseas missions in 1848 inevitably affected the government sugar purchase in Quảng Nam and Quảng Ngãi. In the same year in which the overseas missions were suspended, it was decided that

77) CBTN, TT, Vol. 34, 230a–234b, Report from the Ministry of Finance dated 29/5/TT6.

78) *DNTLCB* II, Vol. 160, 15a.

79) *DNTLCB* II, Vol. 174, 3b–4a.

80) If the government sugar stockpile grew too large or sugar producers suffered a crop failure, the amount to be purchased was temporarily lowered. For example, see CBTN, MM, Vol. 79, 140a–b, Imperial edict dated 26/10/MM21; and CBTN, TT, Vol. 33, 289a–b, Imperial edict dated 15/10/TT6.



the annual purchase quota of sugar and cinnamon in Quảng Nam and Quảng Ngãi Provinces would be abolished and thereafter products would be bought if there was a request from producers.<sup>81)</sup>

In principle, sugar producers were not allowed to trade directly with Chinese merchants. Such trade was permitted as an imperial beneficence only when a surplus remained after the government purchase.<sup>82)</sup> Despite this rule, sometimes producers did sell sugar illicitly to Chinese merchants, to the detriment of the government purchase quota. In 1840, although the government purchase quota had not yet been met, a sugar producer in Quảng Nam sold 140,000 *cân* of sugar to a Chinese merchant.<sup>83)</sup>

Initially, the government paid producers the price of sugar with cash. In a purchase conducted in 1821, first-grade sugar was worth 12 strings of cash, second-grade was 11 strings of cash, and third-grade was 10.5 strings of cash per 100 *cân*.<sup>84)</sup> Subsequently, in Quảng Nam and Quảng Ngãi Provinces, payment in rice prevailed over cash payments. This practice presumably commenced around 1822. That year, sugar producers in Quảng Ngãi requested payment for sugar in rice instead of cash, because the price of rice had appreciated. Local officials conveyed this request to Emperor Minh Mạng and voiced their opinion as follows:

The appreciation of the market price of rice has been caused by the rich who stockpile (rice) expecting an additional increase in price. Now, if the government rice is distributed among the population, the rich who stockpile rice will lose a way to make a profit and the price will stabilize.<sup>85)</sup>

Agreeing with this, Emperor Minh Mạng ordered that 15,000 *hộc* of grain be distributed to producers as payment.

As mentioned earlier, in Central Vietnam—encompassing the sugar-producing areas of Quảng Nam and Quảng Ngãi—opportunities for rice production were relatively limited. To prevent the price of rice from appreciating too much, the government disbursed rice to pay for sugar during the green-yellow gap months when food supply was at its most stretched. According to the description in the *KĐĐNHĐSL*, before the Tự Đức period the price of sugar was conventionally paid in advance every November in the lunar calendar in the form of either rice or cash, requiring producers to deliver their produce by the next March or April.<sup>86)</sup> In its purchase of sugar, the court pursued two simultaneous

81) *KĐĐNHĐSL*, Vol. 64, 8a–b.

82) *ĐNTLCB* II, Vol. 117, 20a–b.

83) *CBTN*, MM, Vol. 81, 117a–118b, Imperial edict dated 23/11/MM21.

84) *KĐĐNHĐSL*, Vol. 66, 1a.

85) *ĐNTLCB* II, Vol. 17, 4a.

86) *KĐĐNHĐSL*, Vol. 64, 8a–b. This point can be corroborated by the records in *ĐNTLCB* and *CBTN*.

goals: securing food supply during the green-yellow gap months and procuring the most important export product for the state-run trade. Based on this article, it is feasible to say that sugar purchase is the most typical example to illuminate the multiple functions assumed by the Nguyễn government purchase system.

## Conclusion

In Vietnamese history, the government purchase system began to take on a substantial role only with the advent of the Nguyễn Dynasty. Arguably this system expanded most between the Minh Mạng and Thiệu Trị periods, then shrank somewhat from the beginning of the Tự Đức era, coinciding with the cessation of overseas missions. Based on the results obtained from this study, the economic rationale underlying the government purchase system was revealed in four ways.

First, in the fiscal administration of the Nguyễn Dynasty, the government purchase system worked smoothly in conjunction with tax collection as a means to acquire the economic resources necessary to maintain the state apparatus on a nationwide scale. Without the government purchase system and the products obtained through it, the Nguyễn Dynasty would not have been in a position to pursue its policy of state integration centered on Huế in Central Vietnam, where economic resources were relatively limited. Furthermore, the Huế court successfully purchased foreign goods by tapping into Chinese trade networks that stretched to Guangzhou and Fujian on the maritime route and Yunnan on the inland route.

Second, the government purchase system was essential to the collection of export products for the state-run trade. The collection of commodities through the government purchase system, such as sugar and various maritime and mountain products, made it possible for the Nguyễn court to participate in the burgeoning maritime trade in Asian markets in the early nineteenth century. The government purchase system, in tandem with the state-run trade, remained significant until 1848, when overseas trading missions were suspended.

Third, the government purchase system was effectively used to increase the money supply in the economy. When the population was suffering from a shortage of circulating money, the Nguyễn authorities could disburse stockpiled zinc cash through the government purchase system. Given the extensive scale of purchases recorded, it is probable that the cash released contributed greatly to improving the money supply and lubricating market transactions.

Finally, the Nguyễn Dynasty counted on the government purchase system to protect

the livelihood of the population. The emperors of the Nguyễn Dynasty thought of the system as a useful means to bestow famine relief and frequently distributed rice as payment for products. This was especially true of the central region, where the rice supply was quite volatile as a consequence of the limited amount of arable land and its subsequent heavy dependence on imported rice from the southern area.

As was the case in imperial China, as discussed by Wong (1997), a keen interest in the stability of the agrarian population guided the fiscal policies of nineteenth-century Vietnam. In addition, a salient feature of the Nguyễn government purchase system was its close connection to international commerce. This leads us to consider two different facets of the Nguyễn Dynasty: an agrarian empire having long-standing traditions in the northern region; and the Nguyễn lords' regime in the South, a different type of polity with a heavy reliance on international commerce.<sup>87)</sup> To the Nguyễn Dynasty, peasant welfare and foreign trade were intimately intertwined. Relying on the government purchase system, Nguyễn rulers in the early nineteenth century successfully created a fiscal connection between the agrarian sector and foreign trade, drawing the regions of Vietnam into a single economy.

In this paper, I have discussed the problem of the government purchase system, drawing on materials written by historians of the Huế court. On the one hand, these materials offer detailed accounts of the institutional aspects of the government purchase system, supplemented by the expectations entertained by emperors or mandarins about working this system. On the other hand, the numerical data contained in these materials are quite sporadic—a shortcoming which makes it difficult to evaluate the significance and effectiveness of the government purchase system in a measurable way. Regardless, this study of the government purchase system has shown that the economic policy of the Nguyễn Dynasty had its own rationale that can be fully understood only if the historical and environmental conditions of the nineteenth-century Vietnamese state are properly taken into account.

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87) Citing the contemporary description of the Nguyễn court's important role in foreign trade, Li also pointed out that "this policy was foreign to northern Vietnamese regime, the Le, but nothing new to the experiences of the southern Vietnamese regime, the Nguyen" (Li 1995, 212).

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# Creation of the State Forest System and Its Hostility to Local People in Colonial Java, Indonesia

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Indonesia has a vast area of state forests (*kawasan hutan*) covering 65 percent of the country's land surface. State forests provide timber and enable the protection and conservation of forests. They also provide a living environment for local people, which comes with many problems, including overlapping land rights, illegal logging, and serious environmental degradation. This study looks into the origin of the state forest system during the colonial era, paying particular attention to the establishment of the Forest Service. Faced with deforestation at the end of the eighteenth century and the middle of the nineteenth, a forest administration system was established in the name of forest protection and conservation, to implement a bureaucratic system of administration based on wage labor. Finally, the Forest Service was set up. The Forest Service supplied timber for the government's infrastructure development, such as state railway construction, and supplied timber and firewood for local people. The Forest Service's revenue covered its expenditure and even created a budget surplus that contributed to state revenue. The system was quite unsympathetic to local people—for example, slash-and-burn practices were prohibited, and defiant locals were punished—and the government never attempted to involve local people in the implementation of the forest conservation program. The government attempted to stabilize the system in part by issuing permits allowing certain activities. However, the permit system barely functioned, and almost nobody

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tried to get permits. The number of forest offenses such as stealing trees increased until the end of the 1930s. The fundamental problem was that local people regarded their use of the forest—such as for cutting trees and gathering fallen trees, leaves, and branches—as their customary right; the colonial government, on the other hand, denied them this right, confining it within the permit and police system.

**Keywords:** state forest, Forest Service, forest police, forest offenses, customary rights

## Introduction

In developing countries, conditions pertaining to forest tenure tend to be contested, overlapping, and insecure (White and Martin 2002; RRI 2008; Sunderlin *et al.* 2008). These challenging conditions are aftereffects of the state appropriation of forests centuries ago (RRI 2012), which led to a loss of local control over forest use and management decisions (Ellsworth and White 2004; Sunderlin *et al.* 2014).

Indonesia is no exception to this general trend in many developing countries. Around 65 percent of Indonesia's land surface is government-designated forest area (*kawasan hutan*), and forty million people live within it. Many of them cannot secure their land rights, and the overlapping of land rights is a constant source of land conflicts (Fauzi 2017). The domination and expansion of the plantation and timber industry continue, and the customary rights of local people are ignored (Ismatul *et al.* 2018). A recent study of peatland fires and degradation shows that the issue has reached such a pass partly because the majority of peatlands in Indonesia are located within the state forests and these are too vast for the state to manage (Mizuno *et al.* 2021).

Agrarian reform began after President Soeharto stepped down, and it was officially approved by the People's Consultative Assembly (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat) in 2001. The government also initiated its own agrarian reform program called Tanah Objek Reforma Agraria (Agrarian Reform Targeted Land). Despite these efforts, the agrarian issues that trouble state forests remain largely unresolved (Endriatmo and Eko 2018, 3–16), although the Constitutional Supreme Court (Mahkamah Konstitusi) did hand down a judgment recognizing the legal basis of customary law in the state forests (Fauzi 2018). In 2019 the government issued a new regulation placing customary forest (*hutan adat*) and private forest (*hutan hak*) on the same level as state forest, and stating that those statuses would be granted based on applications submitted by customary communities and private bodies and ratified by the government. However, only a small number of

cases have been settled judicially so far.<sup>1)</sup>

The official establishment of state forests and the issue of land rights within their boundaries commenced during the colonial era. Forest issues, especially in the context of the founding of the Forest Service and the system's legal basis, have been widely studied. Research projects on the historical evolution of forestry include teak forests in Java by Nancy Lee Peluso (1992) and Indonesia by Peter Boomgaard (2005), with particular emphasis on forests and forestry policy in Indonesia undertaken by the Departemen Kehutanan (1986a; 1986b). These studies discuss the formation of the Forest Service (*het Boschwezen*) system from various viewpoints. Peluso and Peter Vandergeest also conducted studies on the development of forestry education in Southeast Asia (Vandergeest and Peluso 2006a; 2006b) and carried out a comparative study on the development of land and forestry policies in Java, Indonesian Borneo, Thailand, and Malaysia. The Indonesian Forest Service was shown to be superior in its number of staff members (Peluso and Vandergeest 2001). There has also been abundant research on the causes of forest loss, including investigations into forest conversion into agricultural land for oil palm cultivation (Cramb and McCarthy 2016), illegal logging (Dudley 2002), smuggling (Obidzinski *et al.* 2007), and forest fires (Applegate *et al.* 2002). John McCarthy highlighted illegal logging as well as illegal mining as persistent problems in Indonesia. He discussed the governance point of view, showing the necessity of combining localized modes of participation and accountability with the capacity of a central state to carry out the required degree of monitoring, supervision, and sanctioning to counteract the power of unaccountable local elites (McCarthy 2011).

While these studies on the history of forestry in Indonesia are valuable, none of them presents a clear idea of the state of forest land-tenure issues. In contrast, Eko Cahyono *et al.* (2018) discuss studies of contemporary issues in state forests from the land rights perspective, examining land conflicts and relationships to customary laws, but there is scant mention of the colonial-era system. They also miss a discussion of historical development looking at the formation of the system, colonial-era relations with local populations, and the origins of current issues.

This study focuses on the formation of state forests and the origins of problems from the eighteenth century until today, paying considerable attention to the legal basis of state forest in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This study pays attention to the

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1) Peraturan Menteri LHK RI Nomor P.21/MENLHK/SETJEN/KUM.1/4/2019 Tentang Hutan Adat dan Hutan Hak. As of June 2020, 66 units of customary forest (*hutan adat*) were designated by local governments, amounting to 44,160 ha in 13 provinces and 25 districts (Yuli *et al.* 2020, 23). This area was 0.04 percent of the total state forest area, inland water, coastal, and marine ecosystem (Badan Pusat Statistik 2022, 324).

role of the state forest and Forest Service in economic infrastructure by supplying timber for railways, dikes, or firewood and by supplying revenue to fund the Forest Service and contribute to the state budget. Previous studies have also been consulted, allowing for a wider picture of the legal basis. This study also focuses on the relationship between forest policies and local people in order to understand the origins of contemporary issues in state forests: illegal logging, smuggling, overlapping land rights, and serious environmental degradation.

The extent of local people's collaboration with or acceptance of the state forest system is crucial in understanding the issues. Many physical tasks in forestry, from planting trees and caring for them, cutting them down, and hauling out the timber, are carried out by people from the surrounding area. If local people are hostile, sound management of the forest is impossible—they can easily engage in acts of sabotage, such as setting fires. On the other hand, if local people actively participate in forest conservation and reforestation, government programs will be successful and harmonious relations between the people and the state can be attained.

The relationship between the state Forest Service and local people during the colonial era has been discussed by Peluso, especially in the context of the Saminism Movement (Peluso 1992, 69–72). However, it is important to remember the exceptional circumstances that gave rise to the movement: the staunch refusal of the people to pay taxes as they were at odds with the rest of the colony, and, furthermore, the specificity of their actions within Central Java. Peluso also discusses timber theft, explaining how the forest police investigated the teakwood used by local people to build houses and accused them of having stolen the timber (Peluso 1992, 73). Despite the fascination with Saminism, it was unquestionably circumscribed within a small area; and therefore it is also essential to acknowledge the actions of those living in Java more generally. Based on these considerations, this study asks the following key questions: How did the idea of state forests emerge? What role did state forests play in the exploitation and conservation of forests as well as reforestation? What was the role of state forests in the economy of the Netherlands East Indies, including infrastructure development? Which policies affecting local people were implemented by the colonial government, and how did local people respond to these policies? How successful was the system in collaborating with or controlling local people so that harmonious relationships could be created? Finally, what were the reasons behind the successes and failures of the system? This paper will attempt to answer these questions.

## I The “Forest” in Indonesia

Rural people in Cianjur District claim that the Indonesian word *hutan* (forest) refers solely to state forest, that is, *kawasan hutan*. When the author asked the same people how they referred to the forest area under their ownership, they replied that those lands were called *talun* or *pasir* in the local Sundanese language. *Talun* refers to productive fallow land that resembles a forest area during the fallow period, while *pasir* is the word for dry land located on the slopes of a hill or mountain on which various trees and plants grow (Mizuno and Siti 2016).

Pertinently, official government data on forest areas are always confined to the area of state forest. Forest areas are recorded yearly in the *Statistical Yearbook of Indonesia*, published by Central Bureau of Statistics (Badan Pusat Statistik).

According to the yearbook, the forest area in Java was 2.99 million ha in 1963, 2.891 million ha in 1973, 3.025 million ha in 1998, and 3.055 million ha in 2004.<sup>2)</sup> These data are consistent with those collected during the colonial period. Forest areas in Java amounted to 2.464 million ha in 1930 and 2.72 million ha in 1937.<sup>3)</sup>

It seems irrefutable that the current forest policies and the overall forestry system are a legacy from the colonial era. The Dutch East India Company besieged Batavia (present-day Jakarta) in 1619 and from this base slowly expanded its control. The Company needed timber, especially teak, for bridges and palisades as well as other infrastructure. The timber was supplied through the imposition of the compulsory delivery system under whose terms the head of the local regency gave orders for the procurement of timber felled and delivered by *corvée* labor (*blandong*). This was called the *blandong* system (*blandong stelsel*) or the compulsory timber delivery quota system (*houtcontingent*) (Paulus 1917, 386). Deforestation proceeded apace in West Java, Semarang, Central Java, Pemalang, and the Demak area. The deforestation crisis that began under the aegis of the Dutch East India Company reached such proportions that it required a major reform of the system at the end of the eighteenth century (Boomgaard 2010, 53–57).

Herman Willem Daendels, who had been the governor-general in Batavia since 1808, attempted administrative reforms that included the appointment of a special administrator for forest management directly attached to the office of the governor-general, a rotation system of tree felling and planting between designated parcels, and the payment of wages to those who had performed the *blandong*. One of the most important reforms was the declaration of land designated as state domain; this extended to all forests, as

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2) Badan Pusat Statistik (various years)

3) Dienst van het Boschwezen (various years).

Daendels maintained that forests should be used in the service of the state (Schuitemaker 1950, 38–39). At the beginning of the nineteenth century, a forest commission concluded that the areas of forest located in government-controlled territory were state owned. The forests were to be planted with trees that served a useful function and to be properly cared for in order to yield the best profit (Boomgaard 2010, 57). A charter was drafted in 1804, during the transition from the Dutch East India Company to the Dutch East Indies administration. Under it, the Bataafse Republiek (Batavian Republic) stipulated that all forests in Java would become the property of the state (Soepardi 1974, 20).

The English interregnum government (1811–16) discontinued this reformed system because it deemed it too expensive. After the colony was returned to the Dutch, the system was reintroduced but on a smaller scale in Rembang (Central Java), while the old compulsory delivery system was retained in the rest of the area where it had been introduced by Daendels. However, the idea that all forests were state domains was maintained. In 1830, the constitution stipulated that any forests containing teak (not sold or conceded to any particular person) throughout Java and Madoera (hereafter referred to as “Java”) were officially state property under Article 79.<sup>4)</sup> This article also stated that nobody could fell these trees unless a permit had been obtained from the government through official channels. This stipulation was repeated in 1836.<sup>5)</sup> The constitution of 1854, known as the Government Regulation (*Regeringsreglement*<sup>6)</sup>), stipulated that the governor-general had to pay particular attention to teak forests and ensure that the state’s property rights were upheld. These rights were not to be sold or conceded to any private individual (Article 61).

The stipulations on teak forests were extended to the forests referred to as *wildhoutbosschen* (wild timber forest) in 1864, with a wider implementation of regulations relating to tree-cutting permits.<sup>7)</sup> E. H. Brascamp (1922, 1095–1096) noted that the forests in Java were part of the state domain, as long as no exceptional rights could be claimed in particular instances. This remained the case until 1864. Around 1860, there was a discussion on how forest policy should be reformed after the serious deforestation under the *cultuurstelsel* (Cultivation System) introduced in 1830 and the abandonment of the forced labor-dependent forest exploitation system (*blandong*) (Mizuno and

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4) *Beleid der Regering. Regeling op het beleid der Regering in Nederlandsch Indië* (Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië 1830, No. 10).

5) *Reglement op het beleid der Regering in Nederlandsch Indië* (Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië 1836, No. 48).

6) *Reglement op het beleid der Regering van Nederlandsch Indië* (Wet van Sept. 2, 1854 Nederlandsch staatsblad 1854-No. 129, Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië 1855-No. 2 jo 1).

7) *Voorschriften betreffende den aankap van andere dan djati-houtwerken in 's lands wildhoutbosschen op Java en Madoera* (Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië 1864, No. 90).

Retno 2016). A committee was formed in 1860, and experts from the Supreme Court and the Departments of Agriculture and Forest Policy drafted a comprehensive forest law in 1861. This suggested the notion of a community or village forest; however, a high-ranking official of the Supreme Court criticized the idea, saying that if a forest was viewed as the property of a village based purely on its proximity to the village, all forests would have to have been reconstituted as community or village forests. The ideas of a community forest and a private forest were rejected and erased from the draft, leaving “state forest” as the only recognized category, although some villages were thought to be able to have limited rights to the forest (Departemen Kehutanan 1986a, 71–79). Finally, the Timber Forest Act in Java and Madoera in 1865 reserved the designations of teak timber forests and wild timber forests as state land (*Van de djatihout-bosschen, welke de eigendom zijn van den lande* and *Van de wildhout-bosschen, welke de eigendom zijn van de lande*, respectively).<sup>8)</sup> To administer these forests, the Forest Service (het Boschwezen), a bureau responsible for overseeing forestry-related issues, was clearly defined its task and formation of staffs according to the purpose of the Act. The Regulation for the Management and Exploitation of the Forests in Java and Madoera in 1874 (*Reglement voor het beheer en de exploitatie der bosschen op Java en Madura*<sup>9)</sup>) specified state-owned teak forests (*van 's lands djatibosschen*) and state-owned wild forests (*van 's lands wildhoutbosschen*). Both regulations carefully stipulated the ways in which these forests could be exploited by contractors from private industries, who could dispose of the timber freely after paying a yearly lease tax or by supplying the timber to the government; payment was determined by the amount of timber cut, expressed with the timber volume of M<sup>3</sup>.<sup>10)</sup> Forests were owned by the state, and exploitation was first carried out by private contractors but later monopolized by the state (see below).

The Forest Service Regulations (*Boschwezen Reglementen*) of 1927 defined forests located on state land even more specifically.<sup>11)</sup> Article 2 stipulated that forests on state land (*van de bosschen van den lande*) could be defined as land belonging to the state (*het landsdomein*), in which no right of disposal could be attributed to a third party. The article gave five specific definitions: land covered with (1) naturally growing timber and

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8) *Hout-bosschen op Java en Madura, Voorschriften omtrent het beheer en de exploitatie* (Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië 1865, No. 96).

9) *Boschwezen. Reglement voor het beheer en de exploitatie der bosschen op Java en Madura* (Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië 1874, No. 110).

10) Article 6 of *Reglement voor het beheer en de exploitatie der bosschen op Java en Madura* (Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië 1874, No. 110).

11) Boschwezen. *Reglementen. Nieuwe Reglement voor het beheer der bosschen van den Lande op Java en Madoera (Boschordonnantie voor Java en Madoera 1927)* (Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië 1927, No. 221).

bamboo; (2) trees planted by the Forest Service (Dienst van het Boschwezen); (3) state roads and tree parks not established by the Forest Service, as long as these were administered by the authorities under orders from the Forest Service; (4) trees planted by the higher authorities; and (5) parks consisting of trees in which no trees were supplied or established by the Forest Service. These could also include land not covered by trees but surrounded by the above-mentioned types of land, as long as the land was not disposed of by the authorities or by agencies other than the Forest Service. Furthermore, Article 2 included land reserved by the authorities in the interests of conservation or forest expansion, as well as plots of land incorporated by the regulations on the borders of forests.

The regulations dealt only with forests on state land. The Forest Service Regulations (*Boschwezen Reglementen*) of 1932 were titled *Bepalingen met betrekking tot 's lands boschbeheer op Java en Madoera* (Provisions relating to the management of state forest in Java and Madoera). Therefore, as before, only forests on state land or state forests were recognized and covered by the regulations. This was based on the principle that all forests were state property, which had held since the beginning of the nineteenth century, especially following the conclusions drawn by the committee of 1860 mentioned above. People could make use of forests with the permission of the state or in some other limited way (see below).

As Peluso (1992) as well as Vandergeest and Peluso (2006a; 2006b) have emphasized, German scientific forest management was introduced to Java, but the forest that the government sought to regulate there was only officially designated state forest. On the other hand, in Japan, where the German scientific forest management system was also introduced, at the end of the nineteenth century there were various categories of forest, such as state forest, community forest, public forest, and private forest—like in other countries, as discussed below. Japan's Forest Act of 1907<sup>12)</sup> stipulated the formation of forest unions or forest cooperatives (森林組合 *shinrin kumiai*) that organized private foresters, in the manner of Germany's forest unions (*Waldgenossenschaften*) or forestry unions (*Waldbetriebs-genossenschaften*).<sup>13)</sup> Consequently, one of the characteristics of forestry in Java which diverged from the German template was that only state forests were recognized and managed by the government's Forest Service (private companies were involved as contractors); the categories of private forest, community forest, public forest, and forest unions (cooperatives) were not included.

12) 森林法 法律第43号明治40年 *Shinrin ho Horitsu dai 43 go Meiji 40 nen* (Forestry Act No. 43, 1907).

13) In Japan's private forests, forest unions were set up to organize private foresters based on the Forestry Act of 1905. The unions promoted the planning and implementation of afforestation, infrastructure building, and conservation (Handa 1990, 56–75).



After Indonesia's independence in 1945, the government continued to emphasize the idea of state forests. This concept had been laid down in the Forest Service Regulations of 1927 and was pretty much perpetuated by the *Undang-Undang Pokok Kehutanan* (Basic Forestry Act) in 1967—the first comprehensive law governing the Forest Service after independence. Article 5 of this law stipulates that “forest” is defined by the government as land on which whole trees may be found alongside a cluster of natural resources in natural environments, as well as natural environments that are designated as forest by the government (even if there is no forest there). The extent of the state forest area was designated by the minister of forestry.

Under the terms of the law, state forests (*hutan negara*) covered forest areas where no property rights existed. They consisted of protected forests (*hutan lindung*), forests that served as sites of production (*hutan produksi*), reserved natural forests (*hutan suaka alam*), and forests utilized for tourism (*hutan wisata*). Besides these categories, privately owned forests (*hutan hak*) were stipulated; however, the policy on this matter was implemented only to a limited degree, for instance, a forestation policy (*penghijauan*) for the area outside the state forest was differentiated from reforestation (*reboisasi*) in state forest (Departemen Kehutanan 1986b, 96–99).

It is significant that when researching areas of forest during this period, usually only government-designated forest areas are discussed, and no detailed data on privately owned forests are available.

In any discussion on the formation of state forests, the relationship between the land rights of local people and state land should be mentioned, albeit briefly. Article 62, Clause 6 of the 1854 *Regeringsreglement* (governing regulations), the constitution of the Netherlands East Indies, stipulated that land that indigenous people (*inlanders*) had cleared for their own use as community pasture or for other purposes belonged to the villages and could not be disposed of by the governor-general except for public benefit based on Article 133 (on expropriation) or by any other higher authorities for cultivation. These measures could be put in place only with the payment of proper compensation. Article 62, Clause 5 stipulated that any land concession granted by the governor-general would not violate local people's rights.

The 1870 Agrarian Law (*Agrarisch Besluit*)<sup>14</sup> stipulated that retaining Clauses 2 and 3 of the previous law (Article 62, Clauses 5 and 6 of the *Regeringsreglement*) meant that any area of land for which proof of property rights could not be provided would be considered state land (*domein van de staat*). This policy was called the declaration of state land (*domeinverklaring*).

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14) *Agrarische Aangelegenheden, Regeling daarvan* (Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië 1870, No. 118).



Therefore, all land in Java, excluding land to which property rights pertained and that only Europeans could hold, became state land.<sup>15)</sup> However, the local people's land rights to state land, including those based on communal customary law, could not be trampled on by the authorities, under the *Regeringsreglement* of 1856 and *Agrarisch Besluit* of 1870. Communal customary right was categorized as *beschikkingsrecht* (customary communal right of disposal or right of avail) by C. van Vollenhoven; it encompassed the right of disposal of land with all due respect for customary restrictions (Vollenhoven 1932, 8–9).

According to Vollenhoven's interpretation, when the *Regeringsreglement* of 1854 and *Agrarisch Besluit* of 1870 became law, land belonging to villages was interpreted as the overall surrounding area of the village, including forests, pastures, returned wasteland (land unused by villagers who had left the village), settlement areas, cultivated land, and so on. The right to clearance of wasteland was also included. A proposed amendment submitted by a member of parliament to limit the right of avail (*beschikkingsrecht*) of the village—or, in other words, to limit the land belonging to the village to only the actual settlement area, cultivated land, and pastureland—was rejected. Despite these discussions during the process of legislation, Dutch administrators in Indonesia tended toward a narrow interpretation by excluding forest, uncleared land, and even pastureland (Vollenhoven 1932, 65–82). This was also upheld on the level of legislation. The Clearing-Land Ordinance (*Ontginning Ordinantie*) of 1874<sup>16)</sup> and Agricultural Matters (*Agrarische Aangelegenheden*) of 1896<sup>17)</sup> stipulated that land belonging to the village was land that had been cleared and was still used by local people, settlement areas, roads, and so on. The clearing of state land other than community pastureland or land for other reasons belonging to the village by local people required a permit from the administrators.

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15) With *Agrarisch Besluit* in 1870, state land was declared (*domeinverklaring*) in Java and Madoera, except for the princely states of Java (*vorstenlanden*). In the case of government-controlled land (*gouvernementsland*, or *rechtstreeksch gebied*) outside of Java and Madoera, state land was declared in Sumatra in 1874, in Menado in 1877, and in South and East Borneo Residency (*Zuider- en Oosterafdeling van Borneo*) in 1888 (Paulus 1917). This declaration of state land was not applied to indigenous autonomous areas or indirectly controlled areas (*gebied onder inlandsch zelfbestuur of indirect gebied*) (Stibbe and Uhlenbeck 1921). The government of the Netherlands East Indies attempted to declare state land in indigenous autonomous areas and indirectly controlled areas outside of Java and Madoera from the 1920s; however, the attempts failed in the 1930s (Departemen Kehutanan 1986a, 84–88).

16) *Agrarische Aangelegenheden, Regelen omtrent het regt der inlanders om gronden, niet als gemeene weide of uit eenige anderen hoofde tot de dorpen behoorende, te ontginnen* (Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië 1874, No. 79). It was stipulated that local people were prohibited from developing the wilderness without official permission.

17) *Agrarische Aangelegenheden, Herziening der regelen omtrent der Inlandsche grond-ontginningen op Java en Madoera* (Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië 1896, No. 44).

Clearing land without a permit was punishable with a fine of public labor without pay for one to four weeks. These stipulations were interpreted as bans on shifting cultivation and deforestation (*roofbouw en ontwouding*) by the local people (Bezemer 1921, 394).

The *Undang-Undang Pokok Agraria* (Basic Agrarian Act) of 1960 recognized the claims of customary law and stipulated that property rights were to be based on customary rights. The Act assumed that Indonesia as a whole was a customary body, so the state had the supreme right to control the entire country (*hak menguasai dari negara*)—in the same way that the village had the right to control land belonging to the village. People's rights were recognized. However, land for which particular rights such as *hak ulayat* (customary communal rights) could not be proven would eventually fall under the direct control of the state (*tanah yang langsung dikuasai dari negara*). The upshot was that vast tracts of land ended up falling into the hands of the state, even after 1960.

The colonial government implemented other forest policies, especially after 1860. The Forest Service made efforts to expand the forest by establishing state forest boundaries through surveying and mapping, building fences, and expelling people. It prohibited grazing, forest clearing, swidden agriculture, wood collection, and grass cutting by local people. In the 1870s, private companies began to get involved in forest management as contractors. However, after the 1900s full state control and wider exploitation of the forest were established—not only for the purpose of conservation but also to meet the growing demand for timber (Eyken 1909; Stibbe *et al.* 1919; Peluso 1992; Vandergeest and Peluso 2006a; 2006b; Mizuno and Retno 2016).

The Forest Service succeeded in expanding the forest area from 1.71 million ha in 1913 to 2.72 million ha in 1938. Policies that were hostile toward local people—for instance, the prohibition of slash-and-burn, grazing, the gathering of firewood and weeds, and charcoal burning—were contested by the local population, who resorted to setting fire to forest areas in protest both during the colonial era (Jelen 1928) and after independence in 1945 through solidarity actions uniting trade unions and farmers organized by the leftist movement (Peluso 1992, 105–121).

The Forest Service was taken over in Java by the State Forestry Company, known by the acronym Perhutani, throughout the 1950s and 1970s (Departemen Kehutanan 1986b).

Considering the history of forest policy in Indonesia, it is quite natural for people to think that *hutan* referred—and still refers—solely to state land and government forestry. During the Indonesian financial crisis in 1998, government forests—not private property (private forests)—were looted. In Cianjur District, where looting in the state forest area was rampant from 1998 to 2001, private land was left unscathed because people were personally acquainted with the owners of each plot of land and refused to destroy trees

owned by fellow villagers or people in neighboring villages. Local people believed that looting in the state forest had been organized by staff members of the State Forestry Company<sup>18)</sup> (Mizuno 2016, 173).<sup>19)</sup>

## II Establishment of the Forest Service

It was Governor-General of the Netherlands East Indies Daendels who introduced a new bureaucratic system at the beginning of the nineteenth century to replace the compulsory delivery (*blandong*) system mediated by the regents, local heads of the regencies. Daendels' purpose was to abolish the compulsory delivery system, which relied on corvée labor (*houtcontingenten en herendiensten*), and relieve the regents of their authority by establishing Forest Service districts (*boschdistricten*). Forest administration was placed under the aegis of an inspector-general (*inspecteur-generaal*) and his staff in Semarang, while the management of each forest district was entrusted to forest managers (*houtvesters*) and forest rangers (*boschgangers*) who organized the workers. The *blandong* workers continued to be used under the new system, but now, besides being exempted from other corvée labor (*herendienst*), they were allocated rice fields and paid wages for their work in the forest (Paulus 1917, 386). Daendels did his best to introduce reforms, but his work was not continued under the various governments that followed him; and the corvée system was exploited to the full under Johannes van den Bosch's Cultivation System after 1830.

Amidst growing criticism of the corvée system in forests under the guise of *blandong*, the system was abolished in 1865. The rearrangement of the Forest Service in 1865 marked a partial revival of the bureaucratic forest administrative system. After the abolition of the Directie van Cultures, the new and improved Forest Service (het Boschwezen) was brought under the Department of Home Affairs (Departement van Binnenlandsch Bestuur) in 1866. One of the changes it introduced was the making of forest maps. In 1871, 1:10,000- or 1:25,000-scale forest maps were made for each residency. In the 1880s the map resolution was improved to 1:5,000. Furthermore, after 1865, strenuous efforts were made to incorporate the activities of private companies that either logged and sold timber after paying the government a certain fee or were contracted to supply timber to the government. In Rembang—one regency that contained

18) One villager claimed that the looting was organized by *mantris*, or field-level forest officers. Authors' interviews with villagers at Kemang Village, Bojongpicung Subdistrict, Cianjur District, 1999–2002.

19) Authors' interviews with villagers at Kemang Village, Bojongpicung Subdistrict, Cianjur District, 2001–2.

expansive teak forests—open bidding that included private companies was conducted, leading to the signing of development contracts with companies. Forest development based on contracts with private companies increased during the liberal economic period, which commenced in the 1870s when the private companies that dislodged the government-managed Cultivation System from 1830 to 1865 took over the principal role in export-oriented agricultural production (Eyken 1909, 8–10, 31–45).

The task of the Forest Service was to extract maximum direct and indirect benefits from the forests, which were divided into two types: a forest could be designated a production forest (*gebruiksbosschen*) or a conservation forest (*klimaathoutbosschen*), based on environmental considerations. Many of the production forests consisted of teak forests from which timber mass was extracted. Conservation forests were comparable to protected forests (*Schutzwaldungen*) in Germany, which were thought to influence the climate; these wild timber forests were intended for conservation (*in stand gehouden*), taking into account both the climate and hydrological and sanitary conditions. Most wild timber forests (*wildhoutbosschen*) were conservation forests intended to prevent erosion and degradation. Only parts of wild timber forests were economically profitable; on the other hand, production forests were intended to yield as much profit as possible for both timber use and the state budget, including the export of teak. High-quality teak timber from Java was preferred by many countries—especially in Europe—for construction purposes, including shipbuilding, dikes, and military equipment (Eyken 1909, 10–12, 21–35).

By the end of the 1890s, however, amidst growing suspicions that the activities of private companies during the liberal economic period had resulted in the impoverishment of the population in general, development contracts made with these companies came under fire, with critics claiming that profits that should rightly have gone to the state were being diverted to private companies. Moreover, many contemporary management analyses indicated that state-directed development (*staats-exploitatie*) was more efficient in terms of sustainability and cost-benefit analysis. Private companies left behind nothing when they cut down trees: newly growing sprouts were killed, and young potentially high-value trees were also felled. Many useful parts of trees, such as their edges, were left behind after the trunks were transported. The state apparently had more competent personnel than did private companies and also saved on cost (Eyken 1909, 31–45).

The Forest Regulation (*Boschreglment*) in 1905<sup>20</sup> opened the door to forest exploitation by the government of all state forests, replacing the exploitation by private companies (Eyken 1909, 35). In 1914 the system of private company contracts in Java was abolished,

20) *Boschwezen. Reglementen. Wijziging en aanvulling van het Reglement voor het beheer der bosschen van den Lande op Java en Madoera* (Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië 1905, No. 40).

marking a shift from private toward state-directed development, that is, forest maintenance, management, and development by the forestry agency. The Forest Service was later placed under the Ministry of Agriculture (later called the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry, and Trade).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, deforestation had become so severe it was leading to serious forest fires in 1905,<sup>21)</sup> among other alarming events. Around 1914, Java had 680,000 ha of teak forests and 1 million ha of other forests: a total forest area of 1.68 million ha. This area represented only 13 percent of the total land area of Java—far below the corresponding shares of Germany (26 percent) and Russia (37 percent) (Paulus 1917, 25).

Thereafter, the government undertook sustained efforts to increase the forest area in Java. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Forest Service began to publish an annual report that not only reported separately on the areas of teak and other forests (*wildhoutboschen*) managed by the state but also noted their respective boundary changes. The areas of these forests were gradually increased year on year by assigning new areas to be placed under the control of the Forest Service (both teak and other forests), changing the status of certain forests from other forest to teak forest, or by producing more accurate data through surveys and accurate mapping.<sup>22)</sup> The reports also began to include data on the amount of timber supplied, volume of firewood sales, and revenue from sales on state forests, as well as the costs of and progress in the construction and repair of forest roads and bridges. They also furnished information about promoting the selection and planting of disease- and pest-resistant tree species, restrictions on the excessive growth of cogon grass (*Imperata cylindrica*), and construction of lodging houses for Dutch and Indonesian staff.<sup>23)</sup>

The Forest Service contributed a great deal to the economic infrastructure of the Netherlands East Indies. It invested in the construction of roads, railways, bridges, and fire protection belts. It also supplied timber for construction by the government, companies, and local people along with firewood for companies and local people. For example, it supplied 13,436 M<sup>3</sup> of timber for sleepers, bridge girders, and switchboards for state railway construction in 1906. For private railway construction by the Semarang-Joana and Semarang-Cheribon Steam Tramway Company (De Samarang-Joana en Samarang-Cheribon Stoomtram Maatschappij), the Forest Service supplied 5864 M<sup>3</sup> of timber. Total

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21) Dienst van het Boschwezen (1906, 1–4).

22) Each year's report of the Forest Service, *Verslag van den dienst van het boschwezen in Nederlandsch-Indië*, reported changes in the area in both teak forests and other forests, along with detailed reasons for these changes.

23) Dienst van het Boschwezen (various years).

exports were 64,914 M<sup>3</sup>, mainly to Europe and Transvaal, and supply for domestic use was 153,000 M<sup>3</sup> (Eyken 1909, 40). The Forest Service made use of production forests, especially teak forests, to secure its own budget; it also created a net benefit to contribute to the state budget. For example, in 1905 it generated revenue amounting to 3.21 million guilders, mainly from taxes on private companies that contracted with the Forest Service. This revenue was sufficient to cover the expenditure of the Forest Service, including salary, forestation, and expenses to build roads, bridges, and houses amounting to 1.78 million guilders.<sup>24</sup> Expenditures by the Forest Service made up only 55.5 percent of revenue, which created a big net budget surplus (*batig saldi*): 1.44 million guilders. This net profit contributed significantly to the state budget: 146.76 million guilders in 1905.<sup>25</sup>

This policy—of revenue from the Forest Service covering its expenditure, and moreover creating a net surplus for the state budget—continued. In 1927 the Forest Service generated revenue amounting to 21.09 million guilders, mainly by selling teak and other timber, firewood, and charcoal to consumers; on the other hand, its expenditure was 13.97 million guilders. By this time the expenditure was 66.2 percent of the Forest Service revenue, so the Forest Service covered its entire expenditure and created a net budget surplus of 7.12 million guilders<sup>26</sup> for the state budget; the latter had revenues amounting to 701.9 million guilders and expenditure of 764.62 million guilders in 1927.<sup>27</sup>

For the Forest Service, which had made all efforts to extract benefits mainly from production forests, to conserve the forest by preventing erosion and degradation, and to enlarge the forest area, the main enemies were illegal logging, clearing, and grazing by local people.

In its annual reports, the Forest Service explained that since 1900 it had had to demarcate boundaries and had resorted to driving stakes into the ground to prevent “damaging and illegal development” by local people as well as to counter the persistence of large-scale illegal logging. In addition, the reports explained that lodgings had been built for the Indonesian staff (referred to as indigenous or native staff—*het Inlandsche personeel*) to protect them from malicious revenge by local residents and allow them to carry out their duties.<sup>28</sup>

Forest protection was also an important goal; the reason given for this, besides illegal logging and forests fires, was the prevention of destructive attacks as a consequence of “unreasonable shifting swidden agriculture” (Beverluis 1937, 21) and “looting

24) Ministerie van Koloniën (1905b, 4).

25) Ministerie van Koloniën (1905a, 206).

26) Ministerie van Koloniën (1928a, 192–193). Ministerie van Koloniën (1928b, 2–3).

27) Ministerie van Koloniën (1927, 143).

28) Dienst van het Boschwezen (1902a, 1–4).



agriculture [*roofbouw*]” (Vollenhoven 1932, 24). This reflects the belief that swidden agriculture, which had already been prohibited by the 1874 Act, was a major contributor to deforestation. Efforts to conserve forests continued to expand with an eye to limiting damage by flood control, preventing erosion on mountain slopes, and creating forest stands to protect against the rapid spread of mountain fires and the like. In these cases, it was not the teak forests but wild timber forests that became important targets of maintenance, management, and expansion (Eyken 1909, 10–30).

A. J. H. Eyken (1909) noted that in addition to forest fires, overgrazing on fresh sprouts and saplings by animals, the collection of firewood and other forest products by local people, and the cutting of grass within forest boundaries by local people also contributed to deforestation. He argued that village leaders and police officers had to work together to supervise forest maintenance and management. He advocated that local people be prohibited from entering within the boundaries of state forests as well as carrying logging tools, making fires, carrying torches, and bringing cattle to graze within 100 meters of the forest boundaries. Cutting grass for cattle seriously damaged fresh sprouts and prevented reforestation. Eyken acknowledged that prohibitions against grazing, collecting firewood, cutting grass, and clearing land in the forest might give rise to conflict; however, he believed that public benefits should outweigh benefits to the local community. He showed a successful case of reforestation with the setting up of wire fencing on the slope of a mountain: trees within the fence were protected from damage by local people and grew well (Eyken 1909, 16–18).

Here the Forest Service’s strategy for reforestation and forest conservation is clear: expelling local people, and prohibiting them from entering and approaching the forest. But in actuality, there were alternatives. As mentioned above, in the discussion of the area belonging to the village according to *Regeringreglement* 1854, village areas included forests, pastures, reclaimed wasteland, settlement areas, cultivated areas, and so on. But forests, uncleared land, and pastureland were excluded from the village area by colonial bureaucrats. So actually, there were village forests near the settlements. For example, the survey of village autonomy in 1926 (*het Eindverslag over het Desa = Autonomie Onderzoek*) found that people had nearby village forestland (*desa-boschgronden*) earmarked not only for the expansion of agricultural (swidden) lands but also for future timber needs for housing and village projects, or cattle grazing (Laceulle 1929a, 24). In Malang there was open land (*woeste grond*) surrounded by agricultural land, and people were conscious of their communal customary rights of disposal or right of avail (*beschikkingsrecht*), which satisfied their need to have such a pattern of land use (Laceulle 1929b, 503).

If we compare with Japan again, communal forests (入会地 *iriaichi*) there have a long history; they satisfy the needs of local people—such as for firewood, water, and

fertilizer—and are managed by local people. Communal forests in Japan were formed through the initiative of local people confronting the higher powers from medieval times, or around the seventeenth century; and in many cases people paid taxes to the authorities (Furushima 1955; 2000). Around the end of the nineteenth century, when the Bureau of Forest was established and state forests were formed following the ideas of German scientific forestry, parts of the community forests were integrated into state forests because the government wanted to expand the state forests (Handa 1990, 57–66); but many of them were integrated into public forests that were managed by administrative villages (consisting of some traditional hamlets). Many communal forests were managed by hamlets, so public forests were combinations of community forests. Upon the formation of public forests, particular attention was paid to each hamlet's interests, such as allocating places for weeding and pasturing. Each administrative village made a forest use plan that allocated the forest into three parts: production forest, conservation forest, and wild timber forest. The last one supplied firewood, charcoal, timber for housebuilding, and so on. Each household supplied labor for the conservation forest based on consensus at villagers' meetings (Okama 1994, 48–119). Some communal forests were registered as second-class private forests, and some were registered as private forests, to avoid integration into the state forest. Private foresters were organized into forest unions that were obliged to collectively make plans for exploitation, conservation, forestation, or infrastructure building. The activities of forest unions were controlled by the government, which gave them subsidies according to what they did (Handa 1990, 70–72, 181–190). It is clear that in the case of private and public forests in Japan, local people participated or were mobilized in the activities of exploitation, conservation, and forestation. Japan's Forest Act of 1906 specified state forests, public forests, and private forests in addition to forests owned by temples and shrines, and royal forests, as well as forest unions. In Japan in 1907, 25.9 percent of all forests were state forests, 2.7 percent were royal forests, 16.9 percent were public forests, 0.5 percent were owned by temples or shrines, and 53.9 percent were private forests (Handa 1990, 312). On the other hand, in Germany around 1908, the area of royal forests was 1.8 percent of all forests, state forests were 31.9 percent, public forests were 16.1 percent, institution-held forests (such as cloisters, universities, and so on) were 1.5 percent, forest union-owned forests were 2.2 percent, and private forests were 46.5 percent (Ham 1908, 118).<sup>29)</sup> Around the same time, the idea of forest unions was diffused to many other countries, such as Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Australia (Ham 1908, 115–132; Handa 1990, 185).

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29) In Austria around 1908, royal and state forests accounted for 6.5 percent of all forests, church and other institution-owned forests made up 7.1 percent, public forests 14.9 percent, forest-union-owned forests 0.2 percent, and private forests 71.3 percent (Ham 1908, 124).



The Netherlands East Indies, which followed the ideas of German scientific forestry, had the opportunity to recognize community forests, private forests, and public forests, as mentioned above, along with forest unions; it also involved local people in the processes of exploitation, conservation, and reforestation. However, the colonial government formally recognized only state forests, and it managed the exploitation, conservation, and reforestation of state forests itself (partly private companies were occasionally involved in exploitation as contractors); it was hostile toward local people, based on the belief that they were always damaging the forest. Such hostility was not free from racial prejudice.<sup>30)</sup>

It was in this context that the Penalties and Police Regulations for the Forest Service (*Straf en politiereglement voor het boschwezen*) were enacted in 1875. The 1874 Regulations regarding the Management and Development of Forests in Java and Madoera (*Reglement voor het beheer en de exploitatie der bosschen op Java en Madoera*)—later the Colonial Ordinance (*Koloniale ordonnantie*) Regulations regarding Management of Forests on State's Domain in Java and Madoera (hereafter “Forest Regulations,” *Boschreglement*)—were issued in 1897. The 1875 Penalties and Police Regulations for the Forest Service<sup>31)</sup> laid down both forest offenses (*boschdelicten*) and the penalties they entailed, as well as the regulations for police control within the forest. They specified fitting punishments for crimes against and violations of the forest administration rules in Java and Madoera that were not covered by the general penal code. They declared forest thievery (*boschdiefstal*) a crime—that is, the felling of one or more trees (either felling an entire tree or cutting off its parts) in a forest without the legal right to do so, as well as the illegal removal of timber or felled trees or branches (Article 1). The Forest Regulations also stipulated classifications of forest damage and degradation (*boschbeschadiging*), such as the felling of trees or cutting of branches that would have a deleterious effect on the forests' value. Forest violations (*boschovertredingen*) also included pasturing or grazing cattle within the forest, burning part of a forest without proper permission, transporting timber without the appropriate documents, transporting whole trees or parts of trees before paying the requisite fees, clearing a forest without

30) Most discussions in the Forest Service were confined to bureaucrats of the Forest Service (het Boschwezen) and Ministry of Home Affairs (het Binnenlandsch Bestuur) in Java, and most of those bureaucrats were Dutch people. On the other hand, in Japan, besides bureaucrats from the Ministry of Home Affairs (内務省) and the Directorate of Forestry Villages, personnel from the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce (農商務省山村局) and the Imperial Association of Agriculturists (帝國農会 Teikokunokai, organization of prominent agriculturists) also took part in discussions (Okama 1994, 41–101).

31) *Regtswezen, Boschwezen, Aanwijzing der boschdelicten en der daarop vallende straffen, alsmede regeling van het politie toezigt op het boschwezen* (Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië 1875, No. 216).

permission, and so forth. The regulations also laid down the duties of the forest police—consisting of police (*mantri*) and forest guards (*bosch wachter*)<sup>32</sup>—who had to deal with such crimes and violations. The fines for each crime and violation were also stipulated. For instance, forest thievery was punishable by either a custodial sentence or forced labor without a leg iron for three months to one year, and a fine of 50 to 200 guilders.

By and large, the Forest Service was hostile to the local community. However, there were some policies that sought collaboration with local people; and local people were allowed some activities in the forest, under the watchful eye of the Forest Service.

Collaboration between local people and the Forest Service was realized primarily in the planting of a secondary crop (*palawijo*, such as dry rice, maize, cassava, sweet potatoes, vegetables) between rows of young teak trees. Pepper vines or jackfruit trees were also sometimes planted. This system was called *bosveldbouw-methode* or *tumpang Sari*. The Dutch agronomist Buurman van Vreeden launched a trial in Pekalongan and Tegal in 1856 (Soepardi 1952, 49–50), and the system was applied generally in Java from 1881 (Soepardi 1956, 121).

Three systems were used to plant teak trees. One was to have local people plant them in a straight row, with secondary crops in between. The harvests from these secondary crops were given to locals in lieu of wages. This system was called *tumpang Sari*, or contract-line planting (*contract-rijencultuur*). The second was to have local people plant teak trees in exchange for wages (wage labor-line planting or *kuli-rijencultuur*). The third was storage planting (*opslag-cultuur*), in which workers planted shoots from existing trees for a wage.

The *tumpang Sari* (intercropping) system became so popular that by 1924, 91 percent of teak was planted in this way (Soepardi 1952, 49–51). The system brought benefits to both the Forest Service and local people, and it continues to this day under the same name. For example, in 2002 in Cianjur District, the Perhutani (State Forestry Company) gave farmers the right to cultivate 0.25–0.5 ha per household in the state forest. The farmers were not paid but were told they could harvest the secondary crops—in return, they were obliged to plant and protect teak or other designated trees (Mizuno and Siti 2016, 72–73).<sup>33</sup>

32) Later classifications of *mantri* included: (1) head of *mantri* (*Hoofdmantri's*), (2) 1st class *mantri* police (*Mantri's politie 1ste klasse*), (3) 2nd class *mantri* police (*Mantri's politie 2de klasse*), (4) 3rd class *mantri* police (*Mantri's polities 3de klasse*), (5) forest guard (*Boschwachters*) (Dienst van het Boschwezen 1928, 30).

33) In the wake of Soeharto's resignation in 1998, farmers demanded their share of teak trees. They also began planting profitable banana plants as a secondary crop. But because banana plants were thought to be harmful to teak trees, the State Forestry Company (Perhutani) tried to prohibit their planting, which gave rise to conflicts (Mizuno 2016).

The Forest Service brought benefits to local people by creating employment. People could find work in forest-based industries such as teak cultivation, non-teak timber cultivation, thinning, and cutting and carrying out timber to the connecting road, among other tasks (Wilde 1911, 222–227). Carrying, transportation, and other jobs were paid a standard 10 guilders per M<sup>3</sup>. In 1908, 218,000 M<sup>3</sup> of timber were produced. Tasks of the Forest Service such as forest maintenance, the construction of roads, railways, warehouses, and houses, and so on created employment opportunities that paid 3 million guilders in wages every year (Eyken 1909, 44).

The crux of the matter was that although the system was beneficial to local people, it fell far short of covering locals' need for timber, firewood, pastureland, and non-timber products. Additionally, the forest surrounding the village was regarded as the territory of villagers, and villagers could get timber in their customary ways. To address this gap, the government created the "permit system." For example, the *Boschwezen Reglement* of 1875 stipulated that local people could cut and drag out timber for their personal use from the exempted trees listed in the attachment appended to the regulations, if they had the written permission of the district head and had paid a royalty to the state for trees less than 6 el in length (1 el was 69 cm), and so on—all, of course, under proper supervision.<sup>34</sup>

The regulations around 1900, as announced in *Staatsblad* 1901 No. 208<sup>35</sup> and 1907 No. 232,<sup>36</sup> stipulated that under this system the residents (the heads of the *gewestelijk bestuur*, or provincial administration) in Java and Madoera were authorized to give local people permission to cut commercially valueless firewood and timber for agricultural tools and fencing in a designated area of the forest within the tentative set-up of the teak forest. As mentioned above, they also had the power to permit local people to collect fallen timber for firewood, agricultural tools, and fences in other protected forests (*in stand te houden wildhoutbosschen*), based on the people's needs and circumstances. Residents also had the power to grant local people permission to cut and drag out trees for special purposes, provided they paid the state a fee (Wilde 1911, 222–223).

Managers of teak forests could give local people permission to gather dry sticks and fallen trees. The governor-general could give local people permission to cut and drag out trees from the state forest for use as agricultural materials in times of disaster. Poor people could take trees for their own use for a small fee. Local people could be given

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34) *Boschwezen. Reglement voor het beheer de exploitatie der bosschen op Java en Madura* (*Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië* 1874, No. 110).

35) *Boschwezen. Reglementen. Herziening van het Reglement voor het beheer der bosschen van den Lande op Java en Madoera* (*Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië* 1901, No. 208).

36) *Boschwezen. Reglementen. Nader wijziging van het Reglement voor het beheer der bosschen van de Lande op Java en Madoera* (*Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië* 1907, No. 232).

permission under particular conditions to let their cattle graze, to burn charcoal, and to collect bark, fruit, and other products from the forest (Wilde 1911, 222–223).

Under these systems, the Forest Service continued to expand the area of forest territory managed and developed under its jurisdiction. Specifically, the area of teak forests in the Java region was increased by designating new areas of teak forest, planting teak, and converting other forests to teak forests. Teak forests expanded from 645,000 ha in 1901<sup>37)</sup> to 680,000 ha in 1913,<sup>38)</sup> 739,000 ha in 1920,<sup>39)</sup> 799,000 ha in 1930, and 815,000 ha in 1938.<sup>40)</sup> The area of the other forests subject to conservation and non-teak timber use grew steadily from 1.489 million ha in 1920<sup>41)</sup> to 1.665 million ha in 1930 and 1.905 million ha in 1938.<sup>42)</sup> Accordingly, the total forest area, comprising both forest types and the percentage of total land area in Java accounted for by such forests, increased from 1.71 million ha (13.4 percent) in 1913 to 2.22 million ha (17.1 percent) in 1920, later increasing to 2.464 million ha (18.6 percent) in 1930 and 2.72 million ha (20.6 percent) in 1938. As of 1914, there were 31 active forest administration districts, averaging 5,000 ha per district. The amount of timber supplied by the Forest Service increased gradually. In 1898 its supply of timber in Java was 247,542 M<sup>3</sup> (120,988 M<sup>3</sup> teak timber, 126,554 M<sup>3</sup> other timber) and firewood was 507,779 M<sup>3</sup> (266,877 M<sup>3</sup> teak firewood, 240,917 M<sup>3</sup> other firewood),<sup>43)</sup> while in 1937 timber accounted for 435,363 M<sup>3</sup> (420,202 M<sup>3</sup> teak timber, 15,161 M<sup>3</sup> other timber) and firewood 1,101,416 M<sup>3</sup> (868,483 M<sup>3</sup> teak firewood, 232,933 M<sup>3</sup> other firewood).<sup>44)</sup>

### III Forest Security and Local People

According to the annual report of the Forest Service, illegal logging was a particularly serious issue in the 1900s. Below are some examples of this problem in the forest district (*boschdistrict*) of Tegal-Cheribon and its subdistricts of Pemalang, Tegal, Brebes, Cheribon, Madjalengka, Koeningan, and Indramajoe. In this forest district, there were around 22,003 ha of teak forest (*Djatibosschen*)<sup>45)</sup> and around 60,000 ha of wild timber

37) Dienst van het Boschwezen (1902a, 122).

38) Dienst van het Boschwezen (1914, 2).

39) Dienst van het Boschwezen (1923, 64).

40) Dienst van het Boschwezen (1939, 7–9).

41) Dienst van het Boschwezen (1923, 64).

42) Dienst van het Boschwezen (1939, 9).

43) Ministerie van Koloniën (1899, 191).

44) Ministerie van Koloniën (1938, 118–123).

45) Dienst van het Boschwezen (1903, 14).

forest (*wildhoutbosschen*).<sup>46)</sup> In December 1901, for example:

between 100 and 150 people from two villages entered the forest district in Indramajoe. and felled around 600 trees. Fortunately for the authorities, there were police *mantri* located in the West-Cheribon-Complex who responded quickly. If there had been no police *mantri*, no trees would have been left there.<sup>47)</sup>

Cheribon Residency was plagued by frequent large-scale robberies and illegal logging in the forest area in the last decade of the nineteenth century. In 1894 the forest manager (*houtvester*) reported large-scale degradation as a result. His successor also found a similar level of devastation in the forest a few years later. In 1901 yet more large-scale destruction was witnessed, with significant conflicts taking place in the forests of Indramajoe the following year. In these districts, timber thievery on private land (*particuliere landerijen*)<sup>48)</sup> was rampant on the western side of the Tjimanoeek River. Incidentally, the opposite side of the river consisted of government forest, where the same situation was reported. The stolen timber was transported to Indramajoe or to the district of Gegesik-lor. The thieves did not seem to have encountered any transportation difficulties, otherwise so much timber could not have been stolen. If the thieves could not use the stolen trees themselves or sell them, they would have immediately ceased their nefarious activities. The authorities failed to locate the timber stolen from the forest in Indramajoe. Of all the suspects, only seven were punished. The others, who were found to be in possession of large quantities of timber, were all released because the judge was not convinced of their guilt. The author of the annual report of the Forest Service agreed with the judge that it was hard to ascertain whether the timber found in the homes searched during the investigation had been stolen or not.<sup>49)</sup>

Why were so many people involved in illegal logging? A. Neijtzell de Wilde (1911, 225) argued that local people generally felt no guilt about stealing trees from the forest because they considered at least the usufruct of the wild timber forest well within their land rights. In this case, the issue was whether the land belonged to the village or not. Government regulations such as the *Ontginning Ordinantie* of 1874 and *Agrarische Aangelegenheden* of 1896 stipulated that the clearance of state land—excluding community pastureland and land belonging to the village—by local people should be sanctioned via a permit issued by administrators. But it seemed that nobody bothered to obtain permis-

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46) Dienst van het Boschwezen (1902b, 21).

47) Dienst van het Boschwezen (1903, 18).

48) *Particuliere landerijen* were estates controlled by a private landlord who had the power of tax collection, policing, coercing corvée labor, and pronouncing judgment; see “Particuliere landerijen” in Stibbe *et al.* (1919).

49) Dienst van het Boschwezen (1903, 18).

sion to clear land even within the state forest.

Dealing with permission to clear wasteland, or uncleared land (*woeste gronden*), the Survey of Decreasing Welfare of Indigenous People in Java and Madoera (*Onderzoek naar de mindere welvaart der Inlandsche bevolking of Java en Madoera*) included the question of whether people were asking solely to clear wasteland or were doing so mainly for the purpose of felling the standing trees and selling these to earn a livelihood. Local officers in Cianjur-Sukabumi said that no applications to clear wasteland had been found, while their counterparts in Sumedang said that no applications were possible under the current regulations. The forest manager (*houtvester*) of West-Preanger and Banten said that there was no need for applications to clear wasteland in order to profit from the timber harvest, as long as the managers knew what was going on. On the other hand, because there were applications to clear wasteland in relation to leasing the land to Chinese and Europeans, officers in Limbagan were warned to be on the lookout.<sup>50)</sup>

Discussing the permit system, Wilde said that its stipulations about asking permission were seldom or never used (in Djepara and Banywangi, and also in Djember), but in most other areas timber was stolen from state forests, and the amount stolen decreased where strict police watches were implemented (Wilde 1911, 225).

Forest theft was rampant in the districts of West Tegal-East Cheribon and West Cheribon, where the forests had already been seriously damaged. Many rivers and streams crisscrossed West Tegal and East Cheribon, and these were ideal for transporting timber over long distances within a short time—so after stumps were discovered in the forest, there was little chance of finding the offenders. In Koeningan, the majority of forest offenses consisted of illegal clearing in the wild timber forest. This was compounded by forest fires that constantly reduced the forested area. The best solution to prevent illegal clearing was to set up inspection checkpoints along the roads throughout the wild timber forest. Each instance of illegal clearing could then be immediately detected, making it very difficult for the culprits to get away.<sup>51)</sup>

At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were still large expanses of uncleared land or wasteland in West Java. The government attempted to keep these tracts as they were, especially in the state forest, and to encourage the expansion of wet rice fields in the plains, ensuring the designated reserve area for the village community in the state forest but preserving the permit system.

However, the clearing of wasteland, or uncleared land, took place everywhere, especially in the case of land that could be used for swidden agriculture. Officers in Sumedang complained that this activity was not covered by the *Ontginning Ordinantie* of 1874. A

50) Welvaartcommissie (1907, 25–26).

51) Dienst van het Boschwezen (1902b, 28).

stipulated intervention by the government did not stop these clearings. The authorities had hoped that the ordinance (*Ordinantie*) would impose stricter regulations to curb what they considered “looting agriculture” (*roofbouw*, or swidden agriculture), but officers in Sukabumi and Soekapoera lamented that the *Ontginning Ordinantie* could not halt the spread of swidden agriculture by local people.<sup>52)</sup> In Sukabumi new settlements mushroomed because wasteland was no longer available in the older settlements and people did not have the means to buy new land. As they had always done, people moved to areas where the wasteland on which they hoped to cultivate rice fields could be cleared. A forest manager in East Preanger said there were extensive wastelands in the Preangan area on which people had no difficulty clearing land. On the other hand, *erfpacht* (75-year long-term usufruct land rights granted to European companies) was enforced here and there. Common people (*de kleine man*) already had abundant land there, and they had never applied for a permit to clear it. In 1904 the head of Cipeujueh in Soekapoera reported 78 cases of illegal clearance in his area. The common people did not practice permanent agriculture but used the land for *huma*, or dry rice, cultivation on swidden fields.<sup>53)</sup>

Around the same time, the need for timber was growing. Trees on plantations were being cut down to make charcoal. After the expiry of the land lease for a plantation, there would no longer be any opportunities to obtain firewood for charcoal burning. There were also plenty of illegal charcoal burners in the numerous sugar factories. Creating provisions to regulate the transport of charcoal could help reduce illegal clearing and wood theft for charcoal burning. In regions where there was a great need for charcoal, it would be worthwhile to set firewood fees at a reasonable level. Exorbitant firewood fees meant that contractors could not make charcoal without damaging the forest: without the wherewithal to pay for firewood, they would end up stealing it to make charcoal. By issuing a regulation stating that wood could be burned only on empty blocks, and with all authorized firewood already stacked (with the approval of a judge or the forest manager), offenses could be prevented.<sup>54)</sup>

Here we can see that setting up the royalty system might have benefited some people; but the system did not function well, so illegal clearing for charcoal burning persisted. Speculating on why local people did not make use of the permit system, Wilde noted that the timber area or forest designated under the permit system was too far from villages, so the cost of dragging out trees was very high. Moreover, locals were often not aware of the system, and even if they were, the fees were too expensive for many of

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52) Welvaartcommissie (1907, 25–26).

53) Welvaartcommissie (1907, 32).

54) Dienst van het Boschwezen (1902b, 28).



them (Wilde 1911, 225). Quite simply, the procedure for obtaining permits was too complicated for local people.

The most significant effort the government made to prevent forest offenses at the beginning of the twentieth century was to increase the number of forest authorities on patrol. Certainly various efforts were made to uphold state property rights in the state forest (*de eigendomsrechten van den staat om 's lands bosschen*). The situation improved in Grobogan Sub-province (*afdeeling*), partly as a result of the appointment of special staff and also because of the halt to tree felling on adjoining lease land belonging to Solo. The forest police strongly supported this difficult task. Favorable reports were also received about the situation in the forest districts of North Kruidan and Northwest Wirosari. The Toeder Forest District manager had earlier reported on the unbridled boldness of forest thieves. However, the situation gradually improved, and the number of thieves was kept in check by the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>55)</sup>

The unfortunate situation in the Toeder Forest District was thought to have arisen in the first instance from the inadequacy of the police and forest patrol forces. The area was simply too big, and the fifty persons with degrees in forest science recruited by the Forest Service as new personnel barely made a dent. Second, local people did not fully appreciate or even grasp the need for forest conservation. Third, the methods by which forest offenses were judged were always completely dependent on the personal opinions of police magistrates, who were often biased and inconsistent. Pertinently, the punishment was also frequently not proportional to the offense.<sup>56)</sup>

Table 1 details the number of forest authorities in place in five complexes.

From Table 1, we can calculate that the average areas per personnel within each complex were 831.82 ha, 1,660.31 ha, 1,206.4 ha, 1,176.6, and 10,000 ha, respectively, and therefore appreciate the size of the *mantri*'s area of responsibility at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>57)</sup> Generally the number of forest police officers was thought to be too small (Eyken 1909, 53). This area was too expansive for a *mantri* to cover properly, which led to increases in the number of *mantris*, as mentioned below.

More often than not, the theft of trees was motivated by the trees' potential sale value rather than the people's own needs. In many areas punishment was hardly a deterrent, as the probability of prosecution or imprisonment for such crimes was low. The profit to be gained by stealing wood from the forest was therefore well worth the risk of being caught.<sup>58)</sup>

55) Dienst van het Boschwezen (1903, 32, 125, 135, 140–141).

56) Dienst van het Boschwezen (1903, 140–141).

57) Dienst van het Boschwezen (1902b, 28; 1903, 14).

58) Dienst van het Boschwezen (1903, 14).



**Table 1** Number of Forest Police and Forest Guards in Some Forest Complexes

East-Tegal complex (3,327.27 ha)	1 forest police ( <i>mantri</i> ) and 3 forest guards ( <i>bosch wachter</i> )
Marasari complex (6,641.25 ha)	1 <i>mantri</i> and 3 forest guards
West-Tegal/East-Cheribon complex (7,238.38 ha)	2 <i>mantri</i> and 4 forest guards
West-Cheribon complex (4,706.4 ha)	1 <i>mantri</i> and 3 forest guards
Wildhoutbosschen (60,000 ha)	3 <i>mantri</i> and 3 forest guards

Source: Dienst van het Boschwezen (1903, 14).

**Table 2** Number of Accused Forest Offenders, Number of Cases in Court, Level of Punishment, and Average Days of Labor and Fines Imposed

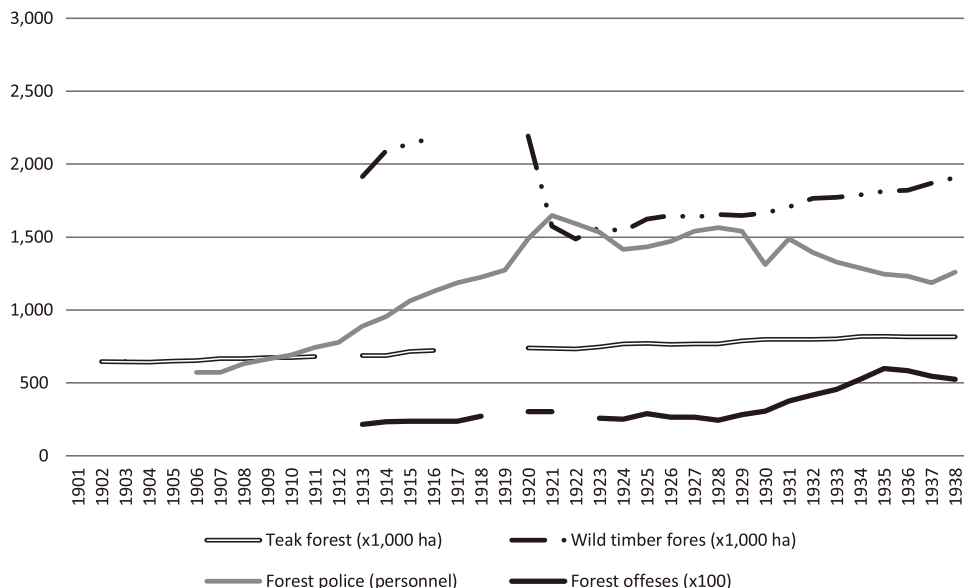
Name of District	Number of the Acused					Level of Punishment				Average Days of Labor Imposed	Average Fine Imposed
	Total	Illegal Clearing	Not yet Proceeded	Already Given	Sentence of Innocent	1-3 Month Labor	1-21 Days Labor	8 Days or Less	Fine from 0.25 g to 15 g		
Pamalang	263	62	108	155	20	86	37	6	6	31 days	f 0.41
Tegal	72	–	52	20	2	6	10	–	–	20 days	–
Brebes	945	128	233	712	179	87	8	54	54	15 days	f 2.65
Cheribon	457	4	78	379	146	54	106	14	14	22 days	f 6.00
Madjalengka	153	–	5	147	28	16	57	13	13	20 days	f 1.00
Koeningan	133	93	84	49	10	5	8	1	1	12 days	–
Indramayu	30	1	20	10	2	5	–	–	–	33 days	–

Source: Dienst van het Boschwezen (1902b, 28).

From the cases cited in the Forest Service reports, it is clear that the colonial government was worried about the conduct of people in the state forests and considered a number of security-judicial approaches at the beginning of the twentieth century. The number of forest police on patrol was thought to be too low, so the government attempted to increase their numbers; and indeed, many cases were brought to court as a result of the forest authorities' efforts. In fact, the number of cases became far too high for the criminal judges to deal with.

Table 2 shows the number of those accused of forestry-related crimes, the number of court processes, the level of punishment, and the average length of forced labor imposed and/or the severity of fines issued per case in 1901. The data also show how many cases were heard and the types of verdict (that is, how many were found innocent or guilty), alongside the various levels of punishment.

Fig. 1 covers the period from 1901 to 1938, detailing changes in the size of the teak forest area and wild timber forest area, plus increases and decreases in the number of



**Fig. 1** Area of Teak Forest, Area of Wild Timber Forest, Number of Forest Police Officers, and Number of Forest Offenses (1901–38)

Sources: Dienst van het Boschwezen (various years).

forest police and number of forest offenses throughout that period. The size of the teak forest and wild timber forest areas has been divided by 1,000, and the number of forest offenses by 100. The number of forest police employed is displayed as raw data and so can be compared in a table.

The data in Fig. 1 show that the area of teak forest steadily increased, and that the area of wild timber forest also expanded, especially between 1923 and 1938. The number of forest police officers employed rose consistently between 1906 and 1921. After that, the number remained constant or sometimes declined slightly. Against these trends, the number of forest offenses constantly increased until the end of the colonial era.

There were many kinds of forest offenses. The major crimes were timber theft, illegal clearing of the forest, illegal pasturing, burning of the forest, and charcoal burning. Fig. 2 shows the long-term changes in the frequency of forest offenses and timber theft.

As described earlier, timber theft was motivated principally by the value of the sale of timber or timber extracted for a particular purpose (that is, for use in local people’s houses). In the Todanan Forest District, large-scale firewood theft took place in 1902 after the development of the lime-calcining industry in villages surrounding the state forest. In Ngampel village on the Remman-Blora post road, there were many kilns that had permission to burn lime, although they did not have permission to either excavate

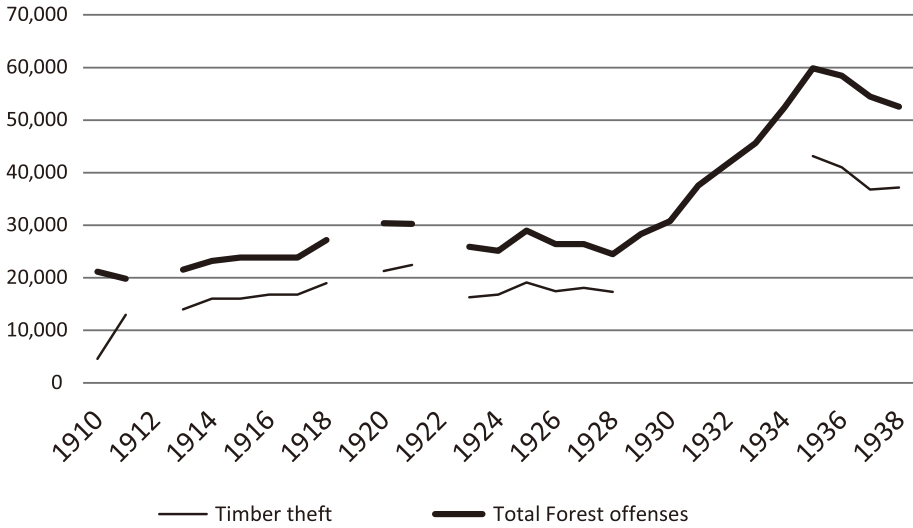


Fig. 2 Incidence of Timber Theft and Total Forest Offenses

Sources: Dienst van het Boschwezen (various years).

limestone or chop down firewood. It was difficult for the forest police to patrol this area because the kilns were located outside the state forest. This ambiguity led to the forest being significantly degraded.<sup>59)</sup> In Cheribon Residency, large-scale timber theft was rampant in 1920, and many businesses were complicit either in the direct theft of timber or in receiving and selling timber. These businesses reaped large profits as a consequence of the high price of timber.<sup>60)</sup>

Various businesses were developing at the time, and both charcoal and timber sold well, as both were important sources of energy. It was also a period in which lime kilns, brickmaking, roof-tile making, pottery making (Rouffaer 1904, 77–90), and sugar mills were all taking off in Java.

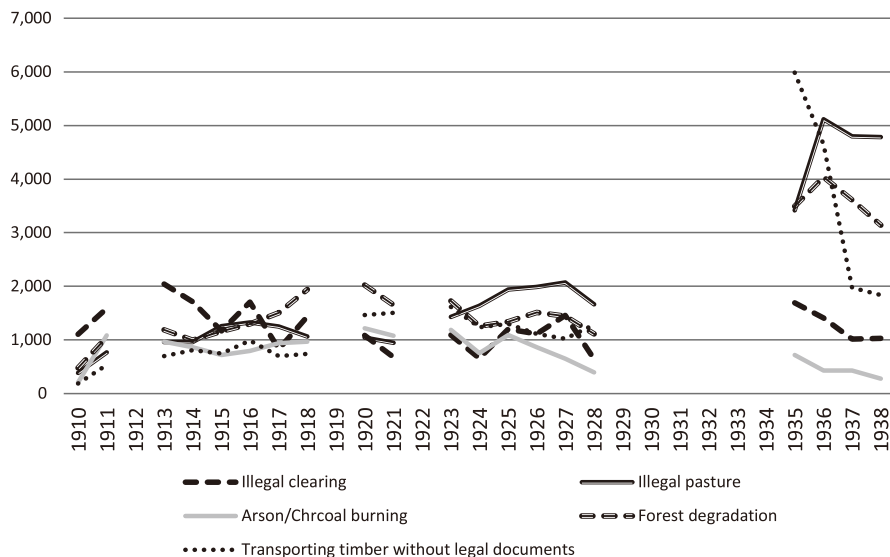
Although timber theft loomed largest, there were many forest offenses. Fig. 3 shows the nature and frequency of forest offenses besides timber theft, although data from 1929 to 1934 are unavailable.

The data available include the number of charcoal-burning offenses and the frequency of setting fire with malicious intent (or arson) in the forest by local people. There was an unmistakably increasing trend in forest offenses.

Forest fires broke out very often in 1911, mainly because of the dry east monsoon wind. Fires had also been prevalent the previous year, partly as a result of accidents and

59) Dienst van het Boschwezen (1903, 62).

60) Anonymous (1923).



**Fig. 3** Nature and Frequency of Forest Offenses besides Timber Theft  
 Sources: Dienst van het Boschwezen (various years).

partly due to arson perpetrated by local people. To deal with the cases of arson, by far the most significant source of such fires, intensive police surveillance was carried out, despite the small number of police officers available. The harsh actions taken by the police against cattle breeders, *alang-alang* grass cutters, and other violators of the Forest Regulations often provoked arson in retaliation. This was easily perpetrated in areas with fewer policemen on patrol. The opposite could be observed in areas with plenty of police officers, with fire being limited to small areas.<sup>61)</sup>

A Forest Service report on the period between 1921 and 1922 states, “It is often said by the majority of forest managers that a large number of forest fires are the result of malicious intent or acts of revenge perpetrated by people against the forest or village police.”<sup>62)</sup> It is obvious that forest fires as the people’s expression of discontent were of real concern to the Forest Service.

The number of forest police and offenses constantly increased after the beginning of the 1910s. The importance of forest policing and the insufficient number of forest police personnel had been a constant complaint, explaining why the number of personnel was increased from the beginning of the twentieth century. It was hoped that cooperation between the forest police and the village police or village administration would also

61) Dienst van het Boschwezen (1913, 89–90).

62) Dienst van het Boschwezen (1924, 24).

increase.

The cooperation between the village and district police in the sub-province (*afdeeling*) of Demak still left great room for improvement. There are many proven facts that show this. For example, in the previous year, a large amount of timber was found [to have been used] for the purpose of home garden cultivation. Two village heads were found to have granted permission to fell forest trees for the purpose of constructing agricultural gardens and fences. The village heads were warned not to misuse their authority in this instance.<sup>63)</sup>

This case shows that although the actions of the village heads benefited the villagers, the latter were considered guilty of a forest offense by the authorities. Eyken (1909, 53) lamented that local people as well as village officers considered the punishment for timber theft and illegal clearing as nothing dishonorable. Since the number of forest police officers in Toeban was only 27, while the village police and district police numbered two thousand, it was only with the support of village police that forest police could perform their functions effectively.

Around 1920, there were serious discussions on how to control the problem of timber theft. An additional proposal was put forward: a new investigative department would be set up under the authority of the district head and supervised by the head of the police office and the residents. The police office would collaborate with the forest police division to catch thieves on the ground. The police office would therefore be actively involved in preventing forest offenses, with the district office backing the forest police. The proposal was implemented in a part of Cheribon Residency in 1921. Six *mantris* and 11 forest guards were employed in the Cheribon complex, which covered the Karawang-Indramajoe, West-Cheribon-Soemedang, and East-Cheribon-Tegal Forest Districts in 1920. Each forest guard was assisted by two investigators, a police inspector (*politieopziener*), a forest inspector (*boschopziener*), a forest controller (*houtvester*), and local administrative officers. However, the results were disappointing. There were many new instances of illegal logging, especially in the ravines. Suspicions were raised, and it turned out that police officers were patrolling only the easily accessible areas of the forest. Ultimately, the trial was written off as unsuccessful and the conclusion was that the forest police and forest guards would be better suited to assuming the responsibility of forest control.

The following year, a revised plan was proposed whereby police officers would be organized by the Forest Service and expected to assist the forest police in instances where the latter were not placed under the authority of local administrative officers. This method was tested in Cheribon in 1921 despite widespread objections. Finally, the sys-

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63) Dienst van het Boschwezen (1903, 36).

tem of collaboration between the police officers and the Forest Service was altered as follows: (1) police officers were placed under the authority of the Forest Service office in the forest; (2) outside of the forest, police officers were under the control of local administrative heads; (3) the forest police force was under the control of the Forest Service; and (4) the investigation department was abolished. Under this system, central leadership was in the hands of the Forest Service, and in the event of urgent and important cases, the forest guards and forest police were assisted by local police officers. The village police and general police provided help, and in emergencies the assistance of the field police was obtained. Forest managers took over the management that was previously the task of local government officers. Orders were issued by the *wedono* (head of subdistrict). Liaisons with the general police force had to be initiated by the Forest Service.<sup>64)</sup>

Finally, a system was established in which the forest guards were fully managed by the Forest Service. Given the extent of their responsibility in apprehending forest thieves, the district heads were to be kept fully informed at all times. This gave local government officials the chance to prepare themselves to provide backup. When matters became particularly bad, local people could be brought in to collaborate with the Forest Service and the local administration, working alongside police officers.

After the establishment of a system of collaboration between the Forest Service and the local administration, especially between the forest police and regular police officers, the number of those employed as forest police did not increase from 1920. However, the number of forest offenses did not decrease. The Forest Service failed to establish an efficient system to curb the number of forest offenses despite collaborating with the local administration, the police, and the judicial system, which were very much on the alert for this very purpose.

This begs the questions: What were the customary community land rights, and what were the changes in government policies introduced by the *Ontginning Ordinantie*, *Agrarisch Besluit*, and *Boschwezen Reglement*? The survey of village autonomy in 1926 (*het Eindverslag over het Desa = Autonomie Onderzoek*) found that people were convinced of the community's (village's) rights to any uncultivated land adjoining their settlements. As mentioned above, they had nearby village forestland earmarked not only for the expansion of agricultural (swidden) lands, but also for future timber needs for houses and projects of the village, cattle grazing, and future settlements or agricultural lands (Laceulle 1929a, 24). In Lebak, many villages had swidden fields carved out from cleared wasteland and claimed on the basis of the customary communal rights of disposal (*beschikkingsrecht*)

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64) Dienst van het Boschwezen (1924, 25–28).

that had prevailed from time immemorial. These villages had a strong sense of communal customary law that strongly forbade ever turning forest into agricultural land. However, local people could clear the wasteland freely after notifying the village office, and outsiders (including foreigners) could clear the land after paying compensation. The problem was that because of the government policies mentioned above, some of these customary communal rights were weakened or disappeared altogether (Laceulle 1929b, 18). Some villages retained customary rights to the forest, for example, a village in Malang District kept its right to collect forest products both in its own forests and in other forests. On former government-run coffee gardens, where the government management had been withdrawn, people retained the right to pick berries from the coffee bushes. These rights were called *boesoeran* (Laceulle 1929b, 503). F. A. E. Laceulle concluded that because of the government policies mentioned above, the village areas (which used to be under village communal customary rights) had been transformed into agricultural land with attached individual rights; however, in practice the village administrations could take the interests of villagers into consideration in matters pertaining to the *Ontginning Ordinantie* (Laceulle 1929a, 24).

The above discussion provides some understanding of the persistence of people's belief in and government changes to village customary rights to land and forests. The situation was volatile, and conflicts could erupt anywhere the people collected forest products or cleared wasteland.

One of the reasons it proved impossible to establish an efficient, stable system was that the government paid too little attention to the rights and benefits accruing to local people. It allowed local people to make use of the state forest but by drafting many regulations that only had the effect of causing more problems for the people. The latter secured what they considered their God-given livelihoods by enforcing their own rights, including engaging in government-ordained but unrecognized-to-them forest offenses such as timber theft, illegal clearance, and pasture keeping. Village officials and the village police sometimes collaborated with local people.

For their part, local people felt they were not stealing trees from the forest, because they believed they had land-use rights to—at least—the wild timber forest. They believed they were acting well within their rights when they felled and dragged out trees, cleared the forest, and created pasturelands.

The other reason the government failed to establish a properly working system was the prevalence of corruption (according to the government) or the persistence of collusion between Forest Service officers and village officers for personal gain. The resident of Cheribon argued that the 1921 trial mentioned above was not as significant as the corruption related to timber theft among Forest Service officers and village officers. This



was a matter on which the resident expressed his disappointment. In Loengkoda, the forest guards were branded the real timber thieves, with the investigator criticizing the lack of attention paid to corruption (Anonymous 1923). This collusion could also be considered an expression of the local people's initiative to protect their customary rights and traditional benefits.

## Conclusion

Today, state forest covers 65 percent of the Indonesian land surface and has become a hotbed of issues arising from overlapping land rights, illegal logging, forest degradation, forest fires, and haze from forest fires. State forestry was established during the colonial era, beginning with the state forest declaration by Daendels in the early nineteenth century in response to severe deforestation toward the end of the previous century. This damage revealed the desperate need to create a forest administration system. Many of Daendels' reforms in forest administration were discontinued by the governments that followed; however, the principle of state ownership of teak forests still held sway in the 1830s and was extended to non-teak forests in the 1860s. All major forest acts passed during the colonial period only set stipulations and regulated state forests. The principle of managing only state forests was maintained after Indonesian independence with the promulgation of the Basic Forestry Act of 1967, although the latter did recognize private forest areas (*hutan hak*) and, more recently in 2019, customary forests (*hutan adat*). Nevertheless, the principal concern remained the administration and regulation of state forests; private forests were dealt with only infrequently.

The colonial government had opportunities to recognize and distinguish between community forests and private forests. When the government prepared to abolish the corvée-based Cultivation System in the 1850s, the Government Regulation stipulated the areas belonging to villages, which included community forests. Unquestionably, when a committee was set up in 1860 to discuss the stakeholders in forest administration, community forests and private forests were included in their discussions about drawing up a new Forest Act. However, in the end these ideas were dismissed.

After the enactment of the Forest Act in 1865 and the rearrangement of the forest bureaucracy focusing on the Forest Service, especially after the abolition of the corvée labor system in the 1860s, an elaborate system of forest management was created in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. The official principle was that all forests were state forests. Although the colonial government did introduce the ideas of the German scientific forest management system, it did not intro-

duce the concomitant ideas of private forests, community forests, public forests, and forest unions that were common in countries where German scientific forest management was introduced, such as Japan. For example, in Japan private foresters could be organized in a forest union that was obliged to make exploitation, conservation, forestation, or infrastructure building plans and was controlled by the government, while the government would give subsidies to the unions. The owners of public forests, each administrative village, made a forest use plan that divided forests into three types: production forests, conservation forests, and wild timber forests. The last supplied firewood, charcoal, timber for housebuilding, and so on. Each household supplied labor for the conservation forestation program based on consensus at villagers' meetings. In such a way, people could actively participate in forest management and foster harmonious relations with the state. In Indonesia all forests were owned by the state, but their exploitation was originally managed primarily by private companies based on contractual agreements; later, exploitation was monopolized by the state. Local people participated only as laborers or contract workers who took care of young teak shoots while harvesting the secondary crops planted in an intercropping system.

The Forest Service made all efforts to extract as much profit as possible from state forests by making use of and developing production forests and teak forests, and by conserving and protecting wild timber forests for hydrological, climate, and sanitation purposes while preventing erosion and degradation. The Forest Service developed its own infrastructure by building roads, bridges, warehouses, and fire prevention belts and by carrying out reforestation. The Forest Service also contributed to the building of infrastructure in society by supplying quality teak for railway construction and shipbuilding in addition to firewood for industries and households. Quality Java teak was preferred by European countries for shipbuilding, dikes, and military equipment as well as furniture. The Forest Service generated great profits; its revenue was sufficient to cover all its own expenditures as well as contribute to the state budget.

This good performance was accompanied with strict control over local people. Most of the ways in which local people related to the forest—such as cutting trees, collecting firewood, cutting grass for their own cattle, bringing cattle to graze, clearing the forest for shifting cultivation, transporting timber, and collecting non-timber forest products—were considered illegal and harmful to the forest and were strictly prohibited. People were prohibited from entering the fence bordering the state forest, walking with tools to cut trees, bringing cattle, carrying torches, and collecting firewood and herbs within 100 m of the fence. The Forest Service understood that these policies would create conflict but felt that public interest should be prioritized over local interests.

These hostile policies were reflected in the government's conservation and foresta-

tion policies. The government never involved local people in implementing its programs. People could have been active in exploitation, conservation, and forestation programs through forest unions, for example, with mechanisms for participation and mobilization.

Some measures were taken to accommodate local people's livelihoods: the introduction of the intercropping system (*tumpanghari*), employment opportunities in the Forest Service, and the permit system by which local people could make use of the forest. The intercropping system functioned well, and it brought benefits to local people as contract workers, but it did not involve local people in the conservation of forests. Although employment opportunities were created, people were engaged only as wage laborers or contract workers; local people were not expected to be involved in the exploitation or conservation of forests or in reforestation. Of the three measures, the permit system functioned the worst because it was plagued by a variety of problems; the upshot was that almost no one ever obtained any permit. One overriding problem thwarting the government's ambition was that local people were convinced they had customary rights to the forest. Therefore, things the government considered illegal—cutting and dragging out trees, clearing the forest, and creating pastureland—were viewed by local people as just exercising their ancient rights. The increase in forest "offenses" reflected the development of the local economy, which was driven by industries such as lime burning and sugar refining, both of which demanded firewood and charcoal.

To cope with the illegal acts of local people as a logical consequence of the government's hostile policies, the colonial government established a system of policing and legal sanctions. Local people's forest-related activities—clearing forest, using fire, creating cattle pastures, collecting firewood, and transporting timber, among other undertakings—were deemed criminal acts by the system. This situation led to perpetrators/offenders being brought to court and sentenced to imprisonment, forced labor, and/or the payment of fines.

To keep in check illegal logging, or timber theft, the government increased the number of police officers. From 1921, collaboration with the administrative police was strengthened; however, the number of forest offenses continued to increase until the end of the colonial era. The government's failure to establish an efficient, stable system can be attributed to the scant attention it paid to local people's welfare; in fact, the system it put in place had the effect of making local people's lives harder. More fundamentally, the government denied local people's customary rights to the forest surrounding their village, and it also denied them participation in forest exploitation, conservation, and forestation. Undaunted, local people carried on in the spirit of customary rights. Various local administrators and forest police officers who worked with local people were branded "forest thieves" when they exercised their customary rights through their networks.

Many of the local people deliberately lit forest fires as acts of revenge and protested against the colonial government's harsh laws. Any form of control, therefore, was effectively impossible.

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# Why Did the Railways Fail to Monopolize Transport? The Limits of Rail Transport in Thailand and Burma before World War II

Kakizaki Ichiro\*

This article aims to analyze the limitations of rail transport in Thailand and Burma before World War II, focusing on inland transport between entrepôts and their hinterlands. Before the arrival of the railway age, the main forms of transportation were by water and by animal power on land. The introduction of steamships in lower river basins and coastal areas improved transport conditions in terms of time and cost. In inland areas where traditional water transport by boat or animal-powered land transport was indispensable, these forms of transport remained unchanged until the opening of the railways. Inland railways inevitably absorbed almost all the traditional forms of transportation, with two exceptions: teak logs and animal transport from inland areas. Teak logs from the Shan highlands and Northern Thailand were still floated down rivers to their destinations, and draught animals such as cattle and buffalo were still brought to market on foot even after the opening of the railways. As these modes of transport were apparently regarded as free, the railways could not dislodge them until people recognized the actual costs involved. The end of traditional forms of transport was not ushered in by the modernization of transport, but by government prohibitions.

**Keywords:** railway, water transport, land transport, teak transport, animal transport, draught animals

## Introduction

After the first railways emerged in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the building of railway systems spread all over the world. Rail was characterized as the first form of land transport to adopt artificial power—the steam engine—and it was the most important form of land transport until it was overtaken by vehicles with internal combustion engines. Although the timing of this transition varied in each area, most

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countries experienced a so-called railway age from the latter half of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth. Railways largely supplanted traditional transport using natural power such as wind, river flows, and tides or biological power such as that of humans and animals. Since their crucial role was to improve transport conditions—defined in terms of time and cost—trains played an important role in expanding existing commodity flows and creating new commodity flows all over the world.

After railways made their debut in mainland Southeast Asia in the 1870s, they expanded rapidly, contributing to the replacement of traditional transport, the expansion of existing commodity flows, and the creation of new commodity flows. Maung Shein's study in Burma shows that while Burmese railways contributed to the expansion of rice exports from Rangoon, their impact on other important export commodities such as teak and oil was limited (Maung Shein 1964, 70–71). J. S. Furnivall (1956, 154) has pointed out that the railway line along the Sittang River switched the main trade route from the river to the railway, while newly built railway towns replaced traditional riverbank towns along the Sittang. Kakizaki Ichiro (2017, 6–13) studied the impact of the two railways running in the direction of the Shan highlands and found that both the Northern and Southern Shan States Lines largely replaced the existing commodity flow between Burma and the Shan States carried out by traditional land transport, and created new commodity flows, especially in the Northern Shan States. He pointed out that the Thai railways, especially the inland lines between Bangkok and the interior, created new commodity flows of rice, pigs, and wood (Kakizaki 2005, 253–255). Such studies confirm assumptions about the impact of the railways on commodity flows in Burma and Thailand—at least to some extent.

On the other hand, the limitations of the railways' role in converting modes of transport is also supported by several studies. For example, Cheng Siok-Hwa (2012, 64) pointed out that rail transport for paddy was not important in the Irrawaddy Delta and the coastal region except for paddy transport from the higher areas along the Henzada-Bassein line; lower working costs and keen competition meant that water transport was cheaper than rail transport. J. W. Grant (1958, 2) noted that the Pegu-Moulmein branch line with the extension to Ye was another important railway for paddy cultivation in Burma. David Feeny (1982, 79) asserted that in Thailand railways did not have a notably positive effect on agriculture, insisting that rail service did little to lower the cost of transportation for major Thai exports. Howard Dick and Peter Rimmer (2003, 170) also argued that river transport retained its role in the movement of teak downstream from Northern Thailand because rail freight rates were set too high for bulk commodities. These studies suggest that cost was the most important factor for merchants in selecting modes of transport.

Nevertheless, the limitations of the railways have not yet been sufficiently studied. As Maung Shein has indicated, railways did not always contribute to the development of commodity flows. In a similar vein, Kakizaki (2005, 199, 226) has pointed out that two kinds of traditional transport—teak transport from Northern Thailand and cattle and buffalo transport from the Northeast—survived even after the opening of the railways. With most studies focusing on the positive aspects of the railways, the negative aspects or limitations of the railways have not yet been examined in sufficient depth. As for the argument that railway transport cost more than water transport, it is still unclear from analyzing actual transport volumes how the railways' transport volumes developed or stagnated.

In an attempt to fill this gap, this article aims to analyze the limitations of rail transport in Thailand and Burma before World War II, focusing on the inland transport between entrepôts and their hinterlands. This exercise requires using primary sources showing the volumes of the various primary means of transport; the three most important sources are *Note on the Internal Trade of Burma (NITB)*, *Note on the Transfrontier Trade of Burma (NTB)*, and *Annual Report on the Administration of the Royal State Railways (ARA)*. These are the sources of the most important statistics on the transport volumes of railways in Burma and Thailand, although they have not been greatly utilized by previous studies.<sup>1)</sup>

## I Traditional Transport and Railway Construction

### I-1 Water Transport

By and large, traditional transport can be divided into two types: water transport and land transport. Since this article concentrates on inland transport in Thailand and Burma, I have chosen to focus on inland water transport.

The most important water transport routes in this region were two large rivers: the Irrawaddy and the Chao Phraya. The Irrawaddy is the largest river in Burma, flowing from north to south and debouching into the Andaman Sea. Its lower basin is the huge

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1) *NITB* contains the statistics of commodity flows between Lower and Upper Burma via railway, river, and road between 1890 and 1896. This is one of the main sources used by Kakizaki (2016). *NTB* contains the statistics of the trans-frontier trade of Burma, including trade between Burma and the Shan States, between 1889 and 1924. Since the trade volumes of each item/transport mode passing through each border are available, the transport volume via railway and road can be calculated; these have been utilized by Kakizaki (2017). *ARA* is the administration report of the Department of State Railways in Thailand, with the statistics of dispatch and arrival volume of each item at the main stations; this was the main source for Kakizaki (2005). However, few other studies have utilized them, as far as the author knows.

delta on whose easternmost point the important center of Rangoon is located. Although Burma has two other large river systems—the Sittang and the Salween—their role as water transport routes has been relatively insignificant since in most parts they are not suitable for navigation. In Thailand, the Chao Phraya is the most important water transport route from Bangkok to its hinterland. The Mekong, while being the largest river in Southeast Asia, is not suitable for navigation because of the impediments posed by its numerous rapids and reefs. Therefore, most of the water transport routes are located in the middle and lower basins of the Irrawaddy and Chao Phraya, including the main streams, their tributaries, and numerous man-made canals in their deltas.

The introduction of steamships in the latter half of the nineteenth century contributed to improving conditions for water transport. On the Irrawaddy, the Irrawaddy Flotilla Co. Ltd. was founded to operate a regular steamer service between Rangoon and Thayetmyo, the frontier town of Lower Burma, in 1865 (see Fig. 1) (Wright *et al.* 2015, 142).<sup>2)</sup> The service was then extended to Mandalay, the capital of the Konbaung Dynasty in Upper Burma, and Bhamo, the gateway to Yunnan (Maung Shein 1964, 29). In 1910 there were three weekly round trips by steamer between Rangoon and Mandalay and two weekly round trips between Mandalay and Bhamo (Wright *et al.* 2015, 143). Since the Irrawaddy has sufficient depth of water and few rapids in its lower and middle courses, steamers could reach as far as Bhamo, about 1,280 km upstream from Rangoon, all year round. This meant that water transport on the Irrawaddy by steamer was the most important inland transport route in Burma.

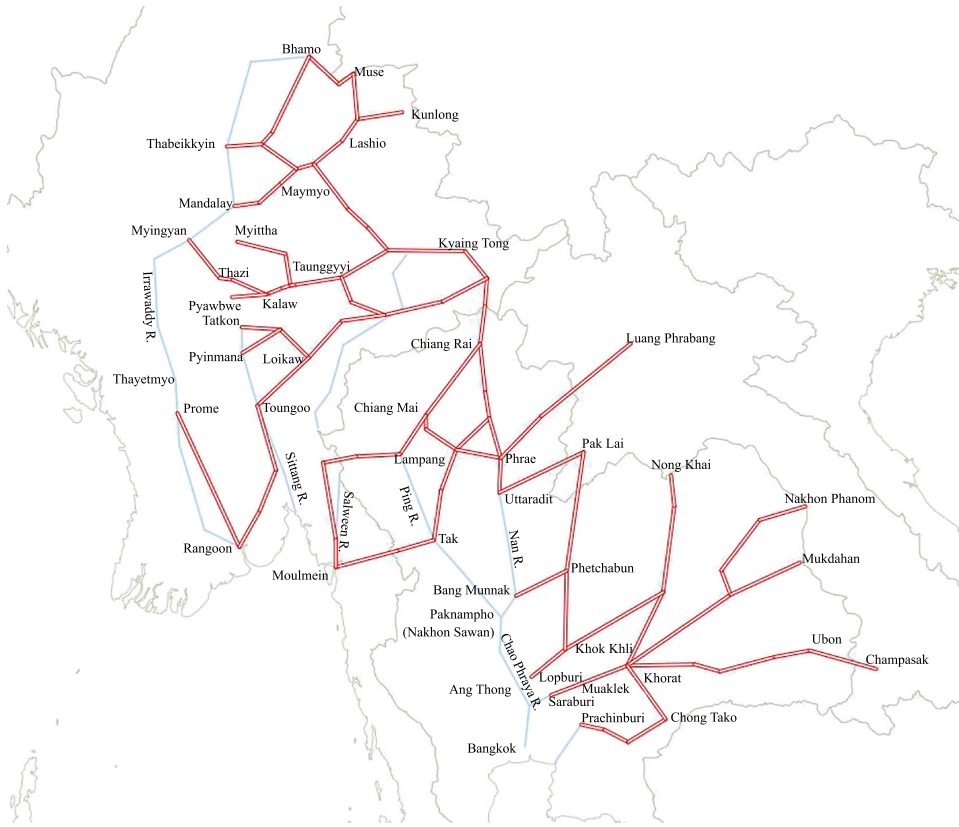
Steamers were introduced on the Chao Phraya River in the 1880s. The first regular steamers appear to have been mail ships operated by the Post and Telegraph Department on the route between Bangkok and Nakhon Sawan beginning in 1889 (Kakizaki 2005, 24).<sup>3)</sup> Since the Chao Phraya is a much smaller river than the Irrawaddy, the section navigable by steamer was relatively limited and changed with the seasons. During the rainy season, when the water level was at its highest, steamers could reach as far as Tak on the Ping River, the westernmost tributary of the Chao Phraya, about 500 km north of Bangkok, or Uttaradit on the Nan River, another tributary in the eastern Chao Phraya basin, located about 700 km north of Bangkok. It was a different story in the dry season, when the water level dropped to its lowest and steamers could reach only as far inland as Ang Thong, about 120 km north of Bangkok (Kakizaki 2005, 25). Navigation on the upper course was extremely difficult; oared vessels could be used to go northward beyond

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2) The original company, founded in 1865, was the Irrawaddy Flotilla and Burmese Steam Navigation Co. Ltd., which was reorganized as the Irrawaddy Flotilla Co. Ltd. in 1875 (Maung Shein 1964, 29–30).

3) The frequency of these steamers was as follows: three round trips per week between Bangkok and Ayutthaya, and two round trips per month between Ayutthaya and Nakhon Sawan.





**Fig. 1** Traditional Inland Waterways and Land Routes in Thailand and Burma

Sources: Kakizaki (2005, 23, 27; 2017, 6).

Tak or Uttaradit only during the rainy season. Therefore, land transport had to be used for moving goods in the upper Chao Phraya basin during the dry season.

The introduction of steamers led to a reduction in travel time. On the Irrawaddy, in 1910 the express steamer could sail upstream from Rangoon to Mandalay in seven days, a trip for which oared vessels would previously have taken about a month (Wright *et al.* 2015, 143). The time taken from Bangkok to Tak during the rainy season was reduced from twenty days to nine after the introduction of steamers (Kakizaki 2005, 24, 42).<sup>4)</sup> Naturally, the reduction in time was much more marked in upstream sailing since steamers could push against the current.

4) However, it took 29 days during the dry season, since the distance steamers could cover was curtailed and the speed of oared vessels also dropped. For details, see Kakizaki (2005, 36–43).

### I-2 *Animal-Powered Land Transport*

While the introduction of steamers improved the efficiency of water transport, there was no evolution in land transport until the introduction of the railways; land transport had to rely on manual or animal power.

Land transport was inferior to water transport in tropical areas like Thailand and Burma. It was extremely difficult to walk or use pack animals for long periods of time during the day in tropical areas with high humidity, searing temperatures, and intense sunshine; humans and animals were forced to rest in the shade during the hottest part of the day. Frequent sudden squalls during the rainy season also hampered travel and often turned roads into muddy swamps. In fact, roads in lower river basins were usually flooded during the rainy season, forcing people to be heavily reliant on water transport. Therefore, land transport was generally regarded as a complement to water transport (Kakizaki 2005, 29).

Since the role of land transport was limited, most roads in these areas were secondary routes used as feeder networks for navigable rivers, which functioned as the main transport routes. As shown in Fig. 1, there were many feeder roads radiating from the Irrawaddy River to the inland areas of Upper Burma, although this map shows only the roads on the eastern bank of the Irrawaddy, especially those running to the Shan highlands. Two routes were extremely important: one from Mandalay to Lashio and the other from Myingyan to Taunggyi.<sup>5)</sup> Apart from feeder roads into inland areas, there were two trunk roads from Rangoon which were first constructed by the British colonial government for political and strategic reasons. Interestingly, the road to Prome was later largely converted into the railbed of the first railway in Burma (Maung Shein 1964, 42). Then, the colonial government built an alternative road to Prome and constructed another road to Toungoo; these two trunk roads were completed by the end of the nineteenth century (*ARP* 1899/00).

Thailand did not construct trunk roads radiating out from Bangkok until the 1930s; before that there were only feeder roads from the Chao Phraya and its tributaries.<sup>6)</sup> As shown in Fig. 1, the southernmost limits of the road networks in the Northern Region were Tak and Uttaradit, the northernmost points of steamer navigation during the rainy season, or the northernmost points on the middle Chao Phraya basin. Apart from the roads commencing from the tributaries of the Chao Phraya, there were two roads to

5) These two roads were first developed as cart tracks in the Northern and Southern Shan States, respectively (Kakizaki 2017, 6–12).

6) Thailand adopted a railway-oriented policy during the 1920s. It tried to avoid competition between railways and roads until the constitutional revolution in 1932. Only feeder roads radiating from railways were constructed during this period. For details, see Kakizaki (2005, 117–151).

Moulmein, another entrepôt for the Northern Region. Although transport conditions in the direction of Bangkok via the Chao Phraya were superior to those of the route to Moulmein, some high-value commodities such as raw silk and textiles were still transported between Moulmein and the Northern Region since the distance between them was shorter than the Bangkok route (Kakizaki 2005, 48–50). On the other hand, the roads heading toward the Northeastern Region originated from towns closer to Bangkok (about 150 to 200 km from the city), since the Dongphayayen Mountains—the range between the Chao Phraya and Mekong basins that lies close to Bangkok—presented a formidable barrier. The most important route was the road from Saraburi to Khorat, the gateway town to the middle Mekong basin.

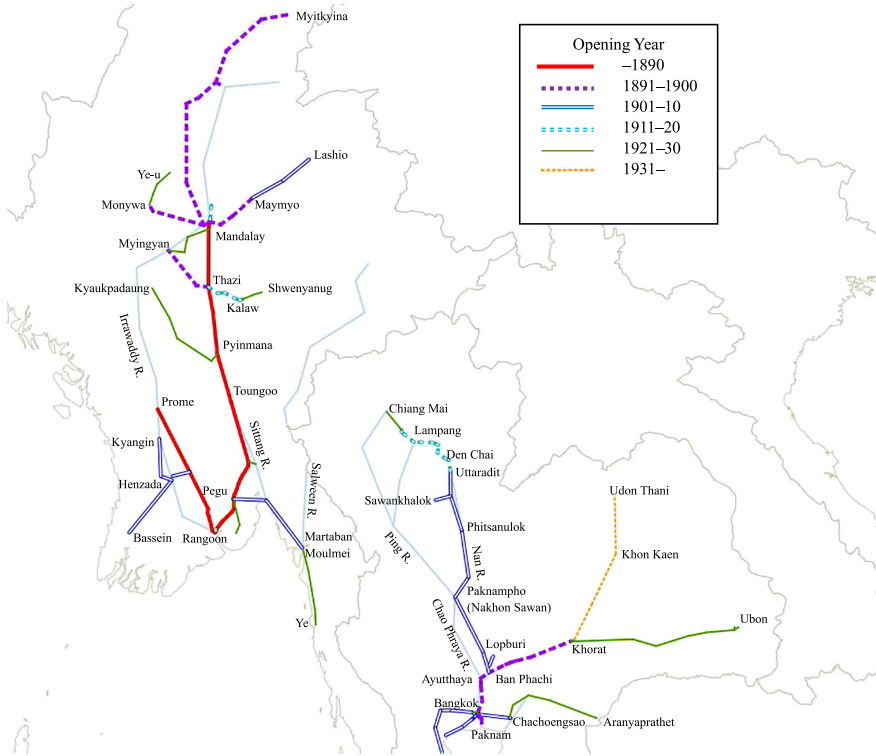
Either pack animals or carts were used on these roads depending on the nature of the terrain and the road conditions. In mountainous areas such as the Shan highlands of Northern Thailand, pack animals were the most common form of transport. They were usually assembled into caravans of 100 to 200, carrying cargoes of 50 to 60 kilograms each. However, carts were used on specific routes where roads were sufficiently developed, such as between Mandalay and Maymyo (Kakizaki 2017, 7). On the other hand, carts were commonly used on the roads in flat Northeastern Thailand: the Khorat Plateau. One cart hauled by two oxen could convey about 180 to 240 kilograms (Kakizaki 2005, 33). However, only pack animals were feasible on the mountainous sections across the Dongphayayen mountain range.

### I-3 *Construction of the Railways*

The railway was a new means of land transport involving the harnessing of a steam engine to a vehicle. Railways were introduced in Southeast Asia in the 1860s and rapidly became the most important means of transport in inland areas.

Burma was the second country in Southeast Asia to introduce a railway system, following the example of Java in the Netherlands East Indies. The first line was the Irrawaddy Valley Line between Rangoon and Prome, which opened in 1877, followed by the Sittang Valley Line between Rangoon and Toungoo, which was completed in 1885 (Kakizaki 2012, 5). These lines served as access routes to the border between Lower Burma—then a British colony—and the Konbaung Dynasty in Upper Burma. After the latter was annexed by Britain, the Sittang Valley Line was rapidly extended to Mandalay; the railhead reached Mandalay in 1889. From there, the railhead was pushed farther northward as the Mu Valley Line before terminating at Myitkyina in 1898 (Kakizaki 2012, 5). By 1900, two main lines from Rangoon and some branch lines had been constructed, as shown in Fig. 2.

As the twentieth century progressed, railway construction kept pace. Between 1900



**Fig. 2** Railway Networks in Thailand and Burma

Sources: Kakizaki (2005, 106; 2016, 4).

and 1910 the Northern Shan States Line was extended to Lashio, becoming the first railway to the Shan highlands, although ideas mooted about an extension to Kunlong were finally abandoned (Kakizaki 2012, 18). In Lower Burma several branch lines, like the lines to Martaban and Bassein, were also constructed during this decade. The tempo of construction dropped during the next decade; only part of the Southern Shan States Line and the short branch from Mandalay were completed (Kakizaki 2016, 5–6). New line construction resumed during the 1920s, ushering in lines such as the Kyaukpadaung Line and the Ye Line as well as the extension of existing lines to Ye-u and Shwenyaung. No further construction was carried out during the 1930s; the 3,300-km Burmese railway network had been completed by 1930 (Kakizaki 2012, 6).

Thailand lagged behind Burma in railway construction; its first railway was opened in 1893. Although several proposals for railway construction had been put forward since 1870, the government did not decide to commence any construction until 1890. Prompted by the fact that both Britain and France planned railway construction that would pass

through a part of Thailand in the 1880s, the Royal Thai Government finally decided to construct its first railway between Bangkok and Khorat. Although construction did not progress smoothly, the first section between Bangkok and Ayutthaya opened in 1897 and the whole line was completed in 1900 (Kakizaki 2005, 90–92). Apart from state railways, several private railways were also constructed during the initial stage of railway construction. Hence, the first railway in Thailand was the 21-km private railway between Bangkok and Paknam, opened in 1893 (Kakizaki 2005, 93).

During the 1900s and 1910s, Thailand constructed two main lines from Bangkok: the Northern Line to Chiang Mai and the Southern Line to the border with Malaya. The construction of the Northern Line along the Chao Phraya began at the end of the nineteenth century, and by 1910 the railhead had reached the mountainous Northern Region (Kakizaki 2005, 102–104). Then the tempo of construction slowed down, hampered by the mountainous terrain and the shortage of construction materials caused by World War I. It was only in 1922 that the whole line as far as Chiang Mai finally opened (Kakizaki 2005, 113). The construction of the Southern Line also took a long time. Although the first section between Bangkok and Phetchaburi opened in 1903, any further extension toward the south was delayed; the main line to Padang Besar on the western Malayan border was completed in 1918, while another line to the eastern border at Sungai Kolok opened in 1921 (Kakizaki 2005, 104–105, 112–113). The first section of the Eastern Line to Chachoengsao was also constructed in the 1900s.

During the next two decades, railway construction was extended toward the east. Three eastward extensions were built during the 1920s and were finally completed by 1933: the Eastern Line to Aranyaprathet, on the French Indochinese border; and the Northeastern Lines to Ubon and Khon Kaen (Kakizaki 2005, 126–129). Although further extensions to Nong Khai and Nakhon Phanom from Khon Kaen had originally been planned, only the section between Khon Kaen and Udon Thani was actually constructed during the 1930s, finally opening in 1941 (Kakizaki 2012, 64–67). By 1941 Thailand had expanded its railway network to about 3,300 km, almost the same scale as in Burma.

## II Changes in Traditional Transport in the Railway Era

### II-1 *Little Impact on Water Transport in Lower and Middle River Basins*

With the construction of the railways, the existing commodity flows that had been dependent on traditional means of transport changed quite drastically in both Thailand and Burma. This was not a blanket operation; the level of change differed according to the traditional means of transport available in each area.

**Table 1** Annual Average Volumes of Important Commodities Transported between Lower and Upper Burma (1890–96)

Lower Burma to Upper Burma						
Items	Annual Average Volume (tons)				Rail Share (%)	Remarks
	Road	River	Rail	Total		
Betel nuts	23	1,533	2,355	3,904	60	
Cotton products	4	2,342	2,466	4,812	51	Yarn & piece goods
Salt	153	9,807	8,046	17,955	45	
Provisions	573	20,479	12,839	33,700	38	
Iron	1	2,870	1,412	4,283	33	
Rice	5,139	70,017	26,773	100,217	27	
Oil	0	4,141	1,240	5,382	23	
Grand total	6,049	127,121	74,886	206,040	36	
Upper Burma to Lower Burma						
Items	Annual Average Volume (tons)				Rail Share (%)	Remarks
	Road	River	Rail	Total		
Rice	51	45	6,555	6,635	99	
Cutch	149	6,141	4,697	10,938	43	
Chilies	16	1,707	1,286	3,009	43	
Jungle products	11	1,033	602	1,646	37	Hides, horns, & stick lac
Grains & pulses	8	20,741	1,600	22,346	7	
Sugar	3	15,470	1,207	16,678	7	
Timber	-	143,735	8,259	151,994	5	
Oil	48	35,176	162	35,370	0	
Raw cotton	1,419	2,206	30	3,655	0	
Grand total	4,031	374,298	48,870	425,856	11	

Sources: *NITB* (1Q 1890–4Q 1896).

Note: Each year corresponded to April to March of the next year. Years in the following tables are also the same.

The impact of the railways was smallest in the areas in which water transport, especially steamers, was available. Table 1 shows the annual average volumes of important commodities transported between Upper and Lower Burma during the first half of the 1890s. As the railway between Rangoon and Mandalay was completed in 1889, these figures show the transport situation just after the competition between railways and water transport began.<sup>7)</sup> They reveal that the share of the railways was relatively low: 36 per-

7) However, these figures were collected on the border between the two regions; they did not target only transport between Rangoon and Mandalay.

cent for outbound transport from Lower to Upper Burma and 11 percent for inbound transport from Upper to Lower Burma. The overall trend was that the railways had a higher share in outbound transport than inbound transport.

The low share of inbound transport toward Lower Burma is attributable to the extremely low or nonexistent share of important commodities such as timber and oil: only 5 percent and zero, respectively. These commodities had accounted for a large share before railway construction.<sup>8)</sup> Since they were the two largest inbound transport items, as shown in Table 1, the total share of railway transport in inbound transport dropped below that of outbound transport. Certainly there were some items whose shares in railway transport were high, but bulky primary commodities were generally still transported by water.<sup>9)</sup>

The situation was the same in the Chao Phraya basin. Table 2 shows the annual average volumes of dispatch and arrival at main stations on the Northern Line in Thailand. The low volume of dispatch from Ayutthaya station shows the effect of competition from water transport. Although Ayutthaya was the most important rice-producing center in the Chao Phraya Delta, with the largest production volume in Thailand, there were almost no consignments of rice from there.<sup>10)</sup> In 1910 neither paddy nor rice was dispatched from this station, and even twenty years later only 31 tons of paddy and five tons of rice were dispatched (*ARA* 1910, Table 12; 1930, Table 7).<sup>11)</sup> The conclusion has to be that in the lower Chao Phraya basin, the railways seldom impinged on traditional commodity flows of water transport, especially along the main stream.

The slight impact of the railways on water transport was primarily a consequence of the high cost of railway transport. Since the cost of water transport was lower than that of traditional land transport, the reduction in the cost of transport by rail was not sufficient to reduce transport costs on the routes on which water transport, especially by steamer, was available. For example, the cost of transporting rice by rail between Rangoon and Mandalay in 1895 was 8.05 rupees per ton, while the Irrawaddy Flotilla Co. levied 6 rupees for downstream and 7.5 rupees for upstream transport (Maung Shein

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8) In 1883–84, the transport volumes of timber and oil from Upper to Lower Burma were 40,000 tons and 1.1 million gallons (about 5,000 tons), respectively (*FMSA* 1869–1886, 12).

9) The share of the railways was to some extent dependent on point of origin. For example, the lion's share of inward-bound rice—the commodity that accounted for the largest share of rail transport—originated in Kyaukse, which was far from the Irrawaddy but in close proximity to a railway station (Kakizaki 2016, 19).

10) In 1911–12, Ayutthaya Province produced 464,962 tons of rice, the largest volume among the 25 provinces for which figures are available (*NA Ko So.* 13/733, 735, 747, 748, 1043, 1142, 1180, 1187).

11) The arrival volume in Ayutthaya increased in the first half of the 1910s because of the rapid increase in the import of firewood.



**Table 2** Annual Average Volumes of Dispatch and Arrival in Main Stations on the Northern Line (tons)

Dispatch									
Station	Ayutthaya	Lopburi	Paknampho	Phitsanulok	Sawankhalok	Uttaradit	Den Chai	Lampang	Chiang Mai
1897–1900	685								
1901–5	1,015	3,523	498						
1906–10	2,397	1,524	5,761	366	1,082	1,552			
1911–15	4,372	4,477	22,772	1,255	5,276	2,071	2,080		
1916–20	5,565	5,197	12,015	3,545	6,007	3,411	4,326	5,775	
1921–25	4,846	7,764	16,123	7,083	10,902	5,467	8,009	5,863	13,230
1926–30	4,361	7,897	15,844	7,306	8,222	7,129	10,260	10,653	20,886
1931–35	2,488	4,697	14,350	9,087	10,630	8,657	10,194	24,947	22,718
Arrival									
Station	Ayutthaya	Lopburi	Paknampho	Phitsanulok	Sawankhalok	Uttaradit	Den Chai	Lampang	Chiang Mai
1897–1900	166								
1901–5	304	3,928	2,660						
1906–10	869	1,590	19,965	5,935	425	2,128			
1911–15	7,004	3,888	14,202	3,095	1,870	809	4,606		
1916–20	7,476	5,057	9,933	4,117	2,405	2,097	4,171	12,468	
1921–25	6,311	7,300	11,073	7,446	3,444	3,137	4,969	12,204	10,410
1926–30	7,729	9,376	12,316	7,900	5,787	2,990	6,693	18,905	14,977
1931–35	13,575	6,620	10,680	7,134	5,139	4,089	6,047	19,585	14,865

Sources: ARA (1897–1935).

Note: Excluding livestock.

1964, 102). Since freight charges on the railways differed according to the unit price of the item transported, the gap widened for such high-value items as manufactured silk: 45.27 rupees by rail versus 24–30 rupees by steamer (Maung Shein 1964, 102). Although such gaps between railway and steamer transport were later corrected, it is safe to say that the railways did not help to reduce transport costs in the lower and middle river basins, in which water transport was far more convenient.

## II-2 *The End of Water Transport in the Upper River Basins*

However, the railways did play an important role in the upper river basins as a substitute for water transport, which came at a greater cost and had seasonal limitations. The most typical example was the change in transport routes between Bangkok and Northern Thailand. As mentioned above, water transport in Northern Thailand had not been widely

used; only oared vessels could be used during the rainy season. Therefore, as the railhead pushed its way northward, transport between Bangkok and the Northern Region gradually shifted from water to the railway.

The first change occurred when the railhead reached Paknampho (Nakhon Sawan) in 1905. Nakhon Sawan is at the confluence of two tributaries of the Chao Phraya, the Ping and the Nan. When the railhead reached there, some merchants began to use the railway between Bangkok and Paknampho, continuing upstream beyond the railhead on oared vessels. As Table 2 shows, both dispatch and reception volumes at Paknampho increased temporarily; the dispatch volume reached its peak during the first half of the 1910s, and for the reception volume the peak occurred in the latter half of the 1900s. The reason for the rapid increase in dispatches during the first half of the 1910s was the increase in paddy dispatches: from 3,546 tons in 1910 to 16,697 tons in 1915 (*ARA* 1910, Table 12; 1915, Table 6). Although the rapid increase in rail transport should have been partly due to the reduction in railway freight charge from Paknampho in 1910 (Kakizaki 2005, 161–163), the increase in the volume of rice from Chiang Mai meant that there was a larger quantity of grain to be transported (*BTWM* September 5, 1912).<sup>12)</sup> The advantage of using a combination of boat and rail was an overall saving in transport costs (*DCR* 1906, 7–8).<sup>13)</sup>

The extension of the railhead in 1910 ushered in the second change. That year the railhead reached mountainous Northern Thailand, where the rugged terrain gave rise to another form of combined transport: rail and caravan. Several traditional caravan routes passed through Northern Thailand, and merchants in this region now began to dispatch their caravans to the railhead at Uttaradit or Phrae to connect with rail transport to and from Bangkok. It is claimed that the caravans from Yunnan changed their destination from Moulmein to the railhead at Uttaradit in order to connect with the Bangkok-bound railway (*DCR* 1910, 9). At Lampang, a large proportion of imported textiles from Bangkok began to be transported via the railhead at Phrae in 1913, although some 300 oared vessels still plied their way down the river to Paknampho carrying primary commodities from Lampang (*DCR* 1913, 19). Although it was difficult to transport heavy, bulky primary commodities using pack animals, lighter and more valuable goods such as textiles could be taken to the Northern Region more conveniently using combined forms of transport.

12) In 1910 the Department of State Railways reduced freight charges to promote the transport of goods by rail and introduced a special discount rate for paddy transport from Paknampho to Bangkok to compete with water transport (Kakizaki 2005, 161–163).

13) Transport by railway saved about 150–200 baht per ten-ton freight transport on a round trip from Lampang to Bangkok.

**Table 3** Estimate of Railway Freight Transport to/from Bangkok in 1935 (tons)

To Bangkok				
Items	From North	From Northeast	Total	Remarks
Rice	75,564	304,945	380,509	Bran, broken rice, paddy, & rice
Wood	13,924	35,100	49,024	Plank & timber
Garden products	7,188	-	7,188	
Charcoal & firewood	-	10,985	10,985	
Jungle products	4,546	994	5,540	
Package	1,764	7,411	9,175	
Hides & horns	1,316	4,245	5,561	
Grand total	109,760	370,154	479,914	
From Bangkok				
Items	To North	To Northeast	Total	Remarks
Cement	3,418	1,605	5,023	
Cloth	3,101	4,347	7,448	
Fish & fish products	4,010	2,863	6,873	
Metal goods & machinery	2,930	4,595	7,525	
Oil	6,091	3,477	9,568	Benzene, kerosene, & other oil
Package	2,781	8,348	11,129	
Salt	6,414	1,949	8,363	
Sugar & molasses	643	2,522	3,165	
Grand total	35,973	47,697	83,670	

Sources: *ARA* (1935–36).

Note: Excluding livestock.

The final change occurred with the arrival of the railway in the main cities in the Northern Region. After the railhead reached Lampang in 1916, the bulk of inland water transport to and from Paknampho disappeared (*BTWM* October 17, 1916). The decline in the volumes dispatched from Paknampho during the latter half of the 1910s, shown in Table 2, must have been caused partly by the reduction in water transport between Paknampho and the Northern Region. In contrast, after the opening of the railway, Lampang began to dispatch and receive large volumes of freight. The opening of the last section of the railway to Chiang Mai in 1922 also sounded the death knell for water transport on the upper Chao Phraya (Saratwadi 1996, 474–475). Table 3 shows an estimate of the freight transported by rail between Bangkok and the Northern Region in 1935: the Northern Region dispatched about 110,000 tons and received about 36,000 tons

of freight. Since the conditions for both water and land transport in the upper river basin were very poor, the Northern Line had no difficulty absorbing almost all the trade between Bangkok and the Northern Region except teak, which will be mentioned later.

### II-3 *Decline in Animal-Powered Land Transport*

Animal-powered land transport in the upper river basins was also mostly replaced by railways. Since animal-powered land transport was the most expensive and time-consuming means of transport, the railways absorbed most of the traditional commodity flows by pack animal or cart before expanding the existing commodity flows or creating new commodity flows.

Table 3 shows that freight transport between Bangkok and Northeastern Thailand carried larger quantities than did transport between Bangkok and the Northern Region. Since only pack animals had been available for crossing the Dongphayayen mountain range between Bangkok and the Northeastern Region, it is safe to say that almost all the commodity flow in Table 3 was created by the railways. Before the construction of the railway between Bangkok and Khorat, the annual volume of freight transport across the Dongphayayen was estimated at about 240 tons in either direction (Kakizaki 2005, 222). Before railway construction, the transport of bulky primary commodities such as rice and wood from the Northeastern Region to Bangkok was unprofitable because of the high cost of land transport, even were the transport possible. Therefore, the railway contributed to raising the commercial value of various primary commodities in the Northeastern Region.<sup>14)</sup>

The effect of the railways on absorbing existing commodity flows created by animal-powered land transport is also clearly visible on the two Shan States Lines. Table 4 shows the annual average value of trade between Burma and the Northern Shan States. After the completion of the Northern Shan States Line in 1903, the existing trade via road was largely replaced by trade via the railway. The rail share had risen to 94 percent for export and 93 percent for import by the first half of the 1920s. While the trade value via rail was steadily increasing, the trade value via Maymyo, the parallel route overland, experienced a sharp decrease. It should be stressed that the railways not only replaced the existing trade by pack animals or carts but also expanded commodity flows as well as creating new commodity flows. The most important transport on this route was metals for export, such as lead and zinc. The most essential imports were oil and steel for smelting at the Bawdwin mine in the Northern Shan States (Kakizaki 2017, 9–10).

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14) The opening of the railway as far as Khorat was an important turning point, as bulky commodities from the Northeastern Region such as rice and wood were emerging as major export items to Bangkok. For details, see Kakizaki (2005, 152–252).

**Table 4** Annual Average Trade Value to/from Burma in Northern Shan (thousand rupees)

Export to Burma					
Year	Road		Rail	Total	Rail Share (%)
	Maymyo	Others			
1889–94	1,831	292		2,123	
1895–99	2,514	986		3,500	
1900–4	1,040	1,764	2,301	5,105	45
1905–9	332	2,454	5,669	8,455	67
1910–14	331	3,242	9,822	13,395	73
1915–19	338	3,599	24,518	28,455	86
1920–24	415	2,925	51,576	54,916	94
Import from Burma					
Year	Road		Rail	Total	Rail Share (%)
	Maymyo	Others			
1889–94	1,140	316		1,456	
1895–99	1,943	1,033		2,977	
1900–4	1,363	1,117	2,121	4,601	46
1905–9	463	1,567	5,062	7,093	71
1910–14	317	2,635	9,098	12,050	76
1915–19	427	3,168	27,937	31,532	89
1920–24	521	2,793	43,652	46,966	93

Sources: *NTB* (1889–1924).

A similar change was also observed in the Southern Shan States. Table 5 shows the trade between Burma and the Southern Shan States. As the construction of the Southern Shan States Line had been delayed, the expansion of trade following the opening of the railway was less than that experienced on the Northern Line. However, the rail shares of both exports and imports rose after the opening of the railway as far as Kalaw, the westernmost gateway to the Shan highlands, in 1914. The impact of the railway is clearly demonstrated by the rapid reduction in road trade via Kalaw, the most important trade route prior to railway construction, from the latter half of the 1910s. Although the total value of trade between the Southern Shan States and Burma was lower than that between the Northern Shan States and Burma, the only factor that made a real difference was the Bawdwin mine in the Northern Shan States (Kakizaki 2017, 9–10).

It is obvious that the railways played an important role in reducing the cost of transport compared to animal-powered land transport. The average transport cost in the mountainous regions of Thailand before railway construction was about 0.5 baht per

**Table 5** Annual Average Trade Value to/from Burma in Southern Shan (thousand rupees)

Export to Burma					
Year	Road		Rail	Total	Rail Share (%)
	Kalaw	Others			
1889–94	553	342		895	
1895–99	1,481	2,744		4,225	
1900–4	1,737	2,909		4,646	
1905–9	3,788	2,941		6,728	
1910–14	3,382	5,338		8,720	
1915–19	285	2,842	5,007	8,134	62
1920–24	215	2,725	8,941	11,881	75
Import from Burma					
Year	Road		Rail	Total	Rail Share (%)
	Kalaw	Others			
1889–94	641	242		883	
1895–99	2,333	2,004		4,337	
1900–4	2,862	1,728		4,590	
1905–9	7,130	1,492		8,622	
1910–14	6,842	3,335		10,177	
1915–19	198	1,629	9,061	10,889	83
1920–24	163	830	14,658	15,651	94

Sources: *NTB* (1889–1924).

Note: Trade via Kalaw includes trade registered at Kywelebin, Pyawbwe, Yabokson (up to 1911), and Kalow (after 1912).

ton-kilo, roughly ten times higher than water transport by steamer or oared vessel (Kakizaki 2005, 29, 36). Thus, it was expensive to travel where water transport was unavailable; the transport cost from Bangkok to Khorat was estimated at 54 baht per ton, while it was only 16 baht to Nakhon Sawan, where water transport was available—although the geographic distance from Bangkok to both areas was similar (Kakizaki 2005, 45). However, the railways dramatically cut transport costs between Bangkok and Khorat by as much as 7.2 baht per ton for paddy transport (Kakizaki 2005, 162).<sup>15</sup> Such a sharp reduction in cost was the most important factor in the disappearance of animal-powered land transport after the railways became available.

15) This figure is based on the revised freight charge in 1910. It was more expensive before the revision.

### III Unaffected Traditional Transport

#### III-1 *Floating Teak Logs*

As mentioned above, the railways mostly replaced expensive traditional modes of transport: water transport in the upper river basin and animal-powered land transport. However, there were several exceptions where the railways failed to absorb traditional commodity flows between peripheral inland areas and their entrepôts. The most typical examples were teak logs and animals.

Teak was one of the most important export commodities from Burma and Thailand. During the 1890s, about 250,000 tons of teak were produced annually in Burma, including about 200,000 tons destined for export, mainly to India (Saito and Lee 1999, 107).<sup>16)</sup> The bulk of teak logs were transported to Rangoon or Moulmein by floating them down the Irrawaddy or the Salween, respectively. As Table 1 shows, most of the timber from Upper to Lower Burma was transported via river to Rangoon; only small consignments were transported by rail. During the 1890s, the annual export volume from Rangoon was about 120,000 tons, while Moulmein exported about 80,000 tons (*FMSA* 1886–96, 12).

While the main line between Rangoon and Mandalay did carry a certain volume of teak logs, the two branch lines to the Shan States played no role in transporting them. Table 6 shows the annual average dispatch of teak logs from the Shan States. The Northern Shan States dispatched more logs than the Southern Shan States after the second half of the 1900s: about 800,000–900,000 cubic feet were dispatched from the former in contrast to about 400,000–500,000 cubic feet from the latter. Since there is no record of teak log transport by rail during this period, all teak logs must have been floated downriver to Rangoon or Moulmein; those from the Northern Shan States headed

**Table 6** Annual Average Dispatch of Teak from Shan (cubic feet)

Year	North	South	Total
1898–1902 (tons)	9,278	11,607	20,884
1905–9	893,593	495,584	1,389,176
1910–14	832,546	353,034	1,185,580
1915–19	1,133,132	331,498	1,464,630
1920–24	838,630	375,795	1,214,425

Sources: *NTB* (1889–1924).

16) This excludes the teak from the Karenni States and Siam, amounting to about 60,000 tons.



to Rangoon via the Irrawaddy, while those from the Southern Shan States went down the Salween to Moulmein.<sup>17</sup> The conclusion has to be that the railways at that time had no impact on the floating of teak logs from the Shan States.

The floating of teak from Northern Thailand, another important production center of teak in Southeast Asia, also remained unaffected, even after the opening of the Northern Line. The teak-felling industry in Northern Thailand was set up in the 1880s by European firms, mostly British. About 85 percent of the teak forest was under concession to Western firms, among them the Bombay Burmah Trading Co., the Borneo Co., and the East Asiatic Co. in 1930 (Kakizaki 2005, 196). Teak became the most important export item from the Northern Region. It was estimated that about 60 percent of the export value of the Northern Region lay in teak exports to Moulmein and Bangkok (*DCR* 1898, 5). As in the Shan States, teak logs from the Northern Region headed to different destinations depending on their origin; those in the Salween basin, mostly in Mae Hongson Province, headed to Moulmein, while those in the Chao Phraya basin went down to Bangkok.

The increase in log floating to Bangkok turned out to be more than the increase on the Moulmein route. As Table 7 shows, the numbers of logs headed to Bangkok and Moulmein were almost the same around 1890. Then the number to Bangkok increased, but the number destined for Moulmein decreased during the 1890s and 1900s. As of the mid-1930s, the volume of logs to Bangkok was about three times larger than the volume of logs bound for Moulmein. Despite this growth spurt, there was almost no transport

**Table 7** Annual Average Dispatch Volume of Teak from Northern Thailand (logs)

Year	Destination		Total
	Bangkok	Moulmein	
1889–93	58,700	55,531	114,231
1894–98	73,429	37,749	111,178
1899–1903	88,672	19,885	108,557
1904–9	119,545	9,979	129,523
1909–13	97,620	15,519	113,139
1934–36	155,253	58,361	213,614

Sources: *DCR* (1891–); *SYB* (1935/36–36/37).

Note: Volumes to Bangkok are volumes arrived at Chainat up to 1894 and Paknampho after 1895.

17) During the latter half of the 1900s, there was a temporary dispatch of timber other than teak on the Northern Shan States Line, amounting to about 40,000 cubic feet per year.

of teak logs from the Northern Region to Bangkok by rail. About 14,000 tons of timber were dispatched from the Northern Region to Bangkok by rail in 1935, but none of it seems to have been teak (Kakizaki 2005, 225).<sup>18)</sup> Although there were several industrial railways built by European felling firms to transport teak logs from the forests to the nearest rivers in the Northern Region, the only transport route from the Northern Region to Bangkok remained the Chao Phraya and its tributaries (Kakizaki 2005, 202–203).

The reason log floating remained unaffected by modern transport was its extremely low cost. The cost to transport one teak log from the Northern Region to Bangkok was eight rupees (about nine baht) during the 1880s (Satow 1994, 171). Since logs floated naturally downstream, almost no transport costs were incurred after they were put into the river. It is true that the logs took a long time—usually three to five years—to arrive at their destination, but there were almost no problems or damage (Kakizaki 2005, 196–197). Therefore, even when all other river trade had disappeared from Northern Thailand after the opening of the railway to Lampang and Chiang Mai, log floating remained unaffected.

### III-2 *Walking Animals*

Another traditional means of transport that remained unaffected was the walking or driving of animals: cattle, buffalo, mules, and horses. Cattle and horses were usually used as draught power—either pulling carts and wagons or serving as pack animals—while buffalo played an important role in plowing. Since they could walk a long distance for a long time, traditionally they would be driven from the Shan States to Upper and Lower Burma and from Northeastern or Northern Thailand to the Central Region in order to be sold.

In Thailand, the Northeastern Region was the most important area for the supply of cattle and buffalo; mules and horses were a rare sight. Most of the cattle were sold to merchants who would export them from Bangkok, while most buffalo were sold to farmers in the Chao Phraya Delta (Kakizaki 2005, 55–56). These animals, along with jungle products such as stick lac (lac in its natural setting, encrusted on leaves and twigs), cardamom, and hide and horns were the main export items from the Northeastern Region before the opening of the railways (Kakizaki 2005, 63). However, only a limited number of these animals were actually carried by rail after the railhead reached the region. Table 8 shows that the average annual number of cattle and buffalo dispatched from the Northeastern Region was about 2,400 during the first half of the 1900s, accounting for

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18) These logs were Burma padauk (*Pterocarpus macrocarpus*) or *mai pradu*, largely found in teak forests in Northern Thailand (MCC 1930, 135).

**Table 8** Annual Average Number of Cattle and Buffalo Transported on Thai Railways (head)

Year	Livestock Total	Cattle and Buffalo		
		Total	From Northeast	Share (%)
1901–5	46,272	5,639	2,419	43
1906–10	113,441	6,157	947	15
1911–15	103,854	13,451	1,102	8
1916–20	184,414	39,650	6,593	17
1921–25	231,205	20,737	2,658	13
1926–30	326,311	24,510	2,519	10
1931–35	251,048	13,289	726	5

Sources: *ARA* (1897–1935).

Note: Excluding buffalo up to 1915.

**Table 9** Annual Average Number of Cattle and Buffalo toward Bangkok and Lower Central (1935–37) (head)

Station	Cattle	Buffalo	Total
From Northeast	Chong Tako	4,300	7,406
	Khok Khli	10,759	10,248
	Muaklek	2,409	1,652
	Total	17,468	19,306
From North & Upper Central	Phetchabun	1,804	3,229
	Ban Munnak	202	800
	Total	2,006	4,029
Grand total	19,474	23,335	42,809

Sources: NA [2] So Ro. 0201. 35. 2/9.

43 percent of total railway transport. However, the share of transport from the Northeastern Region decreased after that, recording its lowest share in the first half of the 1930s.<sup>19)</sup> In fact, the main livestock carried on Thai railways was not cattle or buffalo but pigs.<sup>20)</sup>

With the railways transporting fewer than 1,000 head of cattle and buffalo during the first half of the 1930s, most of the animals still walked across the mountain range from the Northeastern Region toward the Chao Phraya basin. Table 9 shows the average annual numbers of cattle and buffalo that passed through quarantine stations, most of

19) The extraordinarily large number of dispatches from the Northeastern Region during the latter half of the 1910s was the result of a sharp increase in dispatches in 1919 and 1920, perhaps caused by the poor rice harvest during this period.

20) For pig transport on the Thai railways, see Kakizaki (2005, 186–195).

**Table 10** Annual Average Number of Animals toward Burma (head)

From Northern Shan					
Year	Road		Rail	Total	Rail Share (%)
	Maymyo	Others			
1889-94	172	9,658		9,830	
1895-99	304	13,012		13,316	
1900-4	445	13,267	4	13,716	0
1905-9	693	2,729	30	3,452	1
1910-14	1,756	5,915	2,683	10,354	26
1915-19	428	7,835	1,058	9,321	11
1920-24	98	3,403	2,775	6,276	44
From Southern Shan					
Year	Road		Rail	Total	Rail Share (%)
	Kalaw	Others			
1889-94	252	724		976	
1895-99	486	7,748		8,234	
1900-4	607	10,691		11,298	
1905-9	2,236	11,528		13,764	
1910-14	4,595	33,458		38,053	
1915-19	2,515	21,148	1,691	25,353	7
1920-24	1,902	19,527	1,735	23,164	7

Sources: *NTB* (1889-1924).

Note: Trade via Kalaw includes trade registered at Kywelebin, Pyawbwe, Yabokson (up to 1911), and Kalaw (after 1912).

them located on the border between the inland regions and the Lower Central Region, in the mid-1930s. It shows that more than 40,000 head of cattle and buffalo walked from the inland regions toward the Central Region, 86 percent of them from the Northeastern Region. The number of cattle and buffalo transported by rail from the Northeastern Region decreased after peaking in the latter half of the 1910s, as shown in Table 8, and inevitably dropped during the 1930s.

The transport of animals from the Shan highlands to Upper and Lower Burma was also common. In contrast to Thailand, mules and horses were among the animals transported on this route, especially from the Northern Shan States. In 1900 the Northern Shan States exported 1,412 head of horses and mules and 189 head of cattle, while the Southern Shan States exported 698 head of horses and 9,177 head of cattle (*NTB* 1900, 8-13). As shown in Table 10, the number of animals exported from the Northern Shan States decreased sharply during the latter half of the 1900s, causing a sudden fall in "other

animals” exported via the Bhamo route in 1903.<sup>21)</sup> After the 1910s, the export of sheep and goats also increased, especially from the Northern Shan States; the number reached its peak of 3,169 head in 1920 (*NTB* 1920, 13).

Although the share of animal transport by rail was not as low as on the North-eastern Line in Thailand, the role of the railways in animal transport remained small. Table 10 shows that the Northern Line had a higher share in animal transport, while the Southern Line played a more modest role. Since the number of animals being driven along the Maymyo and Kalaw routes decreased after the opening of the railways, it has to be concluded that the railways absorbed a certain volume of the animal transport from parallel road routes. However, since the major routes for animal transport did not run parallel to the railway tracks, the driving of animals remained unchanged on these routes even after the opening of the railways, especially in the Southern Shan States.<sup>22)</sup>

The main reason behind the preference for animal walking rather than rail transport was the low cost of walking. While rail transport required a freight charge, the driving of animals under their own steam was free. Although it took a considerably longer time, animals could walk toward their destination, fueled by the plentiful dry grass in the fallow rice fields; neither transport costs nor food costs had to be incurred.<sup>23)</sup> A report by Henry Gittins (1908, 31–49), a British railway engineer in the Department of State Railways in Thailand, noted that the number of cattle dispatched by rail from Khorat in Northeastern Thailand decreased in 1906 as merchants saved the railway freight charge of seven baht per head by driving the livestock along trails parallel to the railway tracks. Thus, saving freight charges was the main reason why this traditional form of transport remained unaffected by the railways.

## IV The Failure of the Railways to Monopolize Transport

### IV-1 *Higher Transport Cost of Railways*

As mentioned above, although the railways in Thailand and Burma were the most modern means of transport at the time and largely replaced traditional means of transport,

21) There were about 10,000 to 20,000 head of “other animals” exported via the Bhamo route until 1902. However, because of a mistake in registration, the number of other animals via this route fell from 14,869 head in 1902 to just 140 head the following year (*NTB* 1902, 4; 1903, 1, 6).

22) In 1920, 10,590 head of animals were exported on the Toungoo route (including the Leiktho route), accounting for 48 percent of the total exports from the Southern Shan States (*NTB* 1920, 16–17).

23) The driving of animals took place during the dry season after the rice harvest. This ensured that plenty of dry grass and hay was available for fodder on the vast harvested rice fields.

they could not monopolize the whole commodity flows of traditional transport. Of course, railways were almost completely irrelevant to micro-level short-distance local transport such as between a village and its nearest market town; and even in middle- and long-distance transport, some traditional commodity flows survived after the advent of the railways.

Although railways were the most modern means of transport, their effect on the improvement of transport conditions was limited. Compared to other means of transport, railways were unquestionably the fastest, aside from water transport by steamer. However, they were not the cheapest: coastal railways frequently came out worse in a comparison to coastal steamer lines. One such example was the Southern Line in Thailand. The majority of transport between Bangkok and the Southern Region bordering on the Malay Peninsula was still the preserve of coastal navigation, even after the completion of the Southern Line in the 1910s (Kakizaki 2005, 238–241). Even in inland areas, such as Mandalay in Upper Burma, the cost of water transport was generally lower than railway freight charges. Hence, it can be surmised that the role of the railways in the reduction of transport costs was limited on any route on which water transport by steamer or motorboat could be conveniently used all year round.

That said, railways were able to replace traditional transport on routes on which year-round convenient water transport was not available, with the exception of teak-log floating and livestock driving. All railways penetrating mountainous terrain—among them the Northern and Southern Shan States Lines and the Northern and Northeastern Lines in Thailand—were able to monopolize a large part of existing commodity flows and expand them; teak and animal transport were the exception rather than the rule. The reason such traditional transport survived was quite simple: it was seemingly free. Teak logs could float downstream freely, even though it took a considerably long time for them to arrive at their destination. Animals such as cattle and buffalo were also able to walk long distances free of charge, even though it took a couple of weeks or months before they reached their destination. It can be said that such “free” transport was environment friendly, since there was no need to consume fuel.

This “free” transport was possible since there was no need to use either ships or vehicles. Floating teak logs had no need of ships; the only assistance they required was the traction of logs by animals, usually elephants, when they jammed in rapids or on sandbanks (MCC 1930, 131–132). Animals also needed no vehicles to transport them; they could walk by themselves.

Although railway freight charges were generally higher than year-round water transport, the railway authorities in Thailand and Burma did not levy excessive charges, at least for teak log transport; it was the third lowest charge among seven

categories in 1910 in Thailand (Kakizaki 2005, 162).<sup>24)</sup> The railways did not aggressively promote teak transport by giving special discounts as they did with paddy, but they had no intention of hampering teak transport by levying too high charges. Nevertheless, it was extremely difficult for the railways to compete with the apparent free transport even though they charged the lowest amounts possible. Therefore, traditional modes of transport were regarded as the most economical means of moving commodities.

It is worth noting that it was not only the indigenous people who recognized the value of free transport. It did not take long for European firms to catch on to its advantages. In Thailand, Tongsu or Lao merchants who brought animals from the Northeastern Region to the Central Region preferred free transport, but the Indian merchants who bought them in the Central Region did begin to use railways to convey them to Bangkok (Kakizaki 2005, 225–226).<sup>25)</sup> For example, Lopburi dispatched the largest number of cattle—2,130 head—in 1910, followed by Chachoengsao with 1,211 head and Saraburi with 638; all of these places were located in the Lower Central Region (*ARA* 1910, Tables 12, 13). When they had the choice of floating teak logs, Western felling firms also decided to continue to use this free mode of transport even though railways were available.

Since there were few goods that needed rapid transport at the time, the longer time taken by water transport was not a critical problem for most merchants.<sup>26)</sup> Therefore, the cheaper rather than faster means of transport was usually selected. This was the most important reason for the survival of traditional transport.

#### IV-2 *The Actual Cost of “Free” Traditional Transport*

However, “free” traditional transport was not really free: there were various losses and indirect costs involved. For one, there was the risk of fire, loss, and theft. Since teak forests were usually burned at the end of the dry season, fire guards were employed to prevent the burning of logs (MCC 1930, 132). This sort of protection was important when teak logs were lying inert on the dry riverbeds before the water level rose. Since there were not enough guards to ensure smooth flotation, not a few logs went missing or were stolen on the way to their destination (Andrus 1948, 104–105). During the decade between 1948 and 1957, the Forest Industry Organization of Thailand floated a total of

24) For example, the transport charge for teak from Uttaradit to Bangkok was 6.9 baht per ton, which was 25 percent higher than the transport charge for paddy but 40 percent lower than silk and almost 80 percent lower than packages (Kakizaki 2005, 162).

25) Tongsu are one of the Karen ethnic groups that emigrated from around the mouth of the Salween to the Thai-Burmese border. They often traveled to the Mekong basin to buy animals and woven silk to take back to Moulmein (Kakizaki 2005, 265).

26) Pigs were the only livestock that required rapid transportation by rail.



834,013 teak logs down rivers; of these, 30,866 logs—or about 4 percent—did not arrive at the forest checking station at Paknampho (UPO 1997, 38).<sup>27)</sup> Such straying or theft, of course, added indirectly to the total transport cost.

The free transport of animals also entailed an indirect cost: that of personnel. Animal walking or driving required considerable manpower to ensure the livestock reached their destination. For example, in April 1890 a group of animal traders—three Tongsu and 110 Lao—with 109 head of cattle, 971 head of buffalo, and two ponies were attacked by a hundred bandits at Chong Samran, on the major animal-driving route from Northeastern Thailand to the Central Region.<sup>28)</sup> Although it is unclear whether all the Lao had been hired for transportation or not, the traveling cost for a hundred persons for several months, including the cost of board and lodging, would not have been cheap. Therefore, “free” animal transport also had to take account of the travel costs of large numbers of men for a long time.

When comparing rail transport, which involved a freight charge, with “free” traditional transport, the latter would no doubt have seemed more economical. However, if the indirect costs had been added, the free transport would no longer be free. Although it is difficult to judge whether the indirect costs of free transport were higher than railway freight charges, it has to be said that many people, including Europeans, recognized that railway freight charges were by no means cheaper than the indirect costs of traditional transport. Indian merchants who had switched to using the railways for transporting animals from the Lower Central Region to Bangkok might have realized that the total cost of water transport—including indirect costs—was higher than the total cost of rail transport, since the direct cost of water transport within the lower river basin was clearly lower than that of rail transport. Even though there might have been some people who understood the actual transport cost, it was likely difficult for most to grasp it.

#### IV-3 *The End of Traditional Transport*

Although the “free” traditional transport of teak and animals survived after World War II, it had disappeared by the 1980s, at least in Thailand. The first obstruction to teak transport by floating was the construction of dams in Thailand. Of the dams on the four tributaries of the Chao Phraya, the first, the present Phumiphon Dam, was planned on the westernmost Ping River. When the construction of the dam began in 1961, it ended

27) The Forest Industry Organization was founded in 1947 by the government with the aim of promoting the forestry business (Thiam 1971, 65–66).

28) NA Ro. 5 Mo. 2. 12 Ko. (Nakhon Ratchasima)/6 “Bai Bok Phra Phirenthep. May 24, 1890.” It was reported that all of the animals had been stolen by bandits.

the possibility of floating teak logs from the Ping basin, where Chiang Mai was located. Therefore, the Forest Industry Organization began transporting logs from the Northern Region by rail in 1958. This was virtually the first instance of teak logs being transported by rail in Thailand (UPO 1997, 39). In 1966 the volume of timber arriving in Bangkok via the Northern Line was 35,177 tons—the largest volume among the three main lines.<sup>29)</sup> In a nutshell, the construction of dams was the turning point in the decline of log floating.

However, the traditional transport of teak logs below the dams or in the basins of other tributaries still continued. In 1975, 76,369 teak logs arrived at the forest checking station at Paknampho (*SYB* 1976–80, 238). Although it is not known when exactly log floating ended, it must have been by the end of the 1980s, if for no other reason than because of the exhaustion of forest resources. In 1977 the government prohibited the export of teak timber, sounding the death knell for teak exports from Thailand (UPO 1997, 112). After severe floods ravaged Southern Thailand in 1989, the government decided to prohibit all commercial logging in natural forests; this was the virtual end of “legal” forestry in Thailand (UPO 1997, 112). Therefore, the free traditional transport of teak logs finally disappeared; but it also has to be said that it coincided with the end of the “modern” transportation of teak logs by rail and road.

The first turning point in free animal transport had occurred earlier. When Thailand entered World War II at the end of 1941, it was compelled to run several military trains for the Japanese army. This led to a reduction in the capacity of civilian transport (Kakizaki 2012, 84–85). After the stagnation of pig transport from Northeastern Thailand, the major supply center of pigs for Bangkok, meat-processing factories in Bangkok planned to increase their supply of beef by bringing cattle from the Northeastern Region.<sup>30)</sup> Since the transportation of cattle had to begin in June, at the beginning of the rice cultivation season, traditional cattle driving was out of the question.<sup>31)</sup> This was because the free traditional transport of animals depended on fallow rice fields for its route and fodder; wet rice fields were unsuited to cattle driving. The demand for cattle also increased as the Japanese army required large volumes of beef for its soldiers. Therefore, the number of cattle and buffalo transported by rail during the war rose sharply, reaching its peak of 42,098 head in 1943 (*ARA* 1947, Table 13).

The second turning point was the partial prohibition of the traditional transport of

29) NA Kho Kho. 0202. 9/369 “Kan Khonsong Sinkha Lak nai Suan Phumiphak Khao Su Talat Krungthep.” The other two lines were the Northeastern Line and the Southern Line.

30) NA [2] So Ro. 0201. 98/20 “Rai-ngan Kan Prachum Khana Kammakan Prasan-ngan Thahan-Phonlaruean Khrang thi 31/85. June 11, 1942.”

31) NA Bo Ko. Sungsut 2. 10/103 “Phu Amnuai-kan Rong-ngan Nuea lae Nom Thueng Khana Kammakan Phasom. August 22, 1942.”

animals in 1954. After the war, Thailand suspended the export of animals in order to cater to domestic demand before resuming foreign trade in animals.<sup>32)</sup> However, since many countries were aware of the diseases harbored by imported animals, Thailand was forced to introduce new regulations prohibiting the export of animals procured via traditional transport since the possibility of their becoming infected with diseases while on foot was far greater than if they were conveyed by rapid and isolated means of transportation.<sup>33)</sup> Therefore, the driving of animals for export from the Northeastern Region had to be replaced by rail or motor transport. Although it is not known when the “free” traditional transport of animals for domestic use ended, the development of highway networks during the 1960s, after the 1958 opening of the Friendship Highway—the first high-quality highway connecting Bangkok and the Northeastern Region—probably heralded its demise. Pertinently, it was not rail but road transport that finally replaced the traditional transport of animals.

Traditional forms of transport continued until the 1980s in Thailand. They may have survived longer in Burma, where the development of infrastructure was delayed. Environment-friendly traditional transport in Thailand was finally brought to an end by the government’s infrastructure development and regulations. In the final analysis, the end of “free” traditional transport was ushered in by its prohibition rather than any financial understanding of its real indirect costs. As long as it was recognized that traditional forms of transport were free, these modes of transport survived.

## Conclusion

This article has aimed to analyze the limitations of rail transport in Thailand and Burma before World War II, focusing on the inland transport between entrepôts and their hinterlands. Before the railway age, traditional means of transportation—both water transport and animal-powered land transport—had been used. While water transport saw some technological advancements with the introduction of steamers during the latter half of the nineteenth century, animal-powered land transport remained unchanged. The best water transport conditions were to be found in the lower and middle river basins, where steamers were best suited and the conditions for animal-powered land transport were the worst. Therefore, when railways were constructed in inland areas, they absorbed most of the commodity flow of water transport in the upper river basins and most of the

32) NA [3] So Ro. 0201. 32/49 “Sunthon Hongladarom Rian Lekhathikan Khana Rattthamontri Fai Borihan. September 6, 1954.”

33) NA [3] So Ro. 0201. 32/64 “Chalit Kunkamthon Rian Phana Nayok Rattthamontri. September, 1958.”

animal-powered land transport, but their role in replacing water transport by steamer was limited.

There were two exceptions where traditional transport was not replaced by railways: teak-log transport and animal transport from the inland regions. Even after the completion of the railways, teak logs from the Shan States and Northern Thailand were floated downriver to their destinations, and animals such as cattle and buffalo were still brought to market by driving them over long distances. Since there was no need to charter any ships or rent carts, these two methods were apparently regarded as free. As long as people were not fully aware of the actual costs of these traditional modes of transport, the railways made little headway in replacing them. The end of traditional transport came not because of the introduction of modern alternatives, but due to prohibitions placed on the movement of animals.

This article has focused only on Thailand and Burma, for which there are sufficient sources revealing the survival of traditional transport after the beginning of the railway age. However, it is quite possible that traditional transport survived long after in other areas of Southeast Asia. Although there is some uncertainty about whether sufficient sources are available, it is worth promoting the study of transport and commodity flows in other areas in search of such data.

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# Geography of Insecurity in Contemporary Jakarta: Cross-Class Spread of Residential Street Barriers

Kuno Genta\*

The practice of installing residential street barriers (RSBs) has become widespread in Jakarta. Although RSBs are a most common and familiar manifestation of a collective sense of insecurity in the city, the phenomenon has received scant scholarly attention. This paper presents the first comprehensive study of RSBs in Jakarta. It examines the diversity of the socioeconomic background of communities with the desire to create RSBs. The study finds that the cross-class spread of RSBs is characterized by: (1) a general pattern of inner-city-concentric distribution; (2) sparsely located local contagion spots; and (3) the coexistence of crime-related and traffic-related concerns. Finally, such spatial patterns are discussed in light of the recent socio-spatial changes in the city.

**Keywords:** urban gating, Jakarta, residential street barriers, portal

## I Introduction


The practice of erecting residential street barriers (RSBs) has become widespread in Jakarta. RSBs exist in various places throughout the city, from small alleys in informal settlements to the entrances of high-class housing areas. During the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, RSBs were an important means of infection prevention in various cities, including Jakarta, where they were used by neighborhood authorities to implement their own lockdown-like measures (Kuno 2020; Lazuardi 2020). With such a ubiquitous presence, RSBs are deeply embedded in the everyday life of people in the city (Fig. 1).

RSBs recall the spread of urban residential spaces with exclusionary designs, namely, gated communities (GCs). GC studies in Indonesia have focused on the residential segregation caused by the emergence of conventional GCs—medium- to large-

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**Fig. 1** Examples of Residential Street Barriers in Jakarta

Source: Author (the two photographs on the right were taken in 2018, before the Covid-19 pandemic, while the two on the left were taken in 2020, in the early stages of the outbreak).

scale housing clusters developed by commercial bodies (Hogan and Houston 2002; Leisch 2002; Firman 2004; Van Leeuwen 2011; Arai 2015; Hew 2018; Roitman and Recio 2020). On the other hand, RSBs can also be viewed as one of many forms of local security practice in Indonesia. From the guardhouse to the night watch, studies of local security have recorded the evolution of the role of neighborhood-based security measures in public order (Barker 1999; Bertrand 2004; Kobayashi 2006; Kusno 2006).

The prevalence of RSBs in the city is closely related to the segregation and securitization of residential areas. However, RSBs in Jakarta have received little attention from scholars, and a comprehensive examination of their spread has not been reported elsewhere. This paper attempts to present the first empirical description of the citywide proliferation of RSBs.

### I-1 *Contextualizing RSBs in Jakarta: Local Security and GCs*

An RSB refers to any object that is (semi-) permanently installed on a residential street for the purpose of access restriction. This is a global phenomenon that includes urban features such as boom barriers, bollards, height restriction gates, and other types of barriers installed on residential streets. For example, E. J. Blakely and M. G. Snyder (1997) have mentioned the spread of the “city perch,” i.e., neighborhoods enclosed by gates and barricades in some US cities. In some places in urban Ireland, municipal-level councils have installed alley gates, often on paths between houses (Kenna *et al.* 2015). In New Delhi there are many neighborhoods enclosed within gates. While the street blocking caused by such gates is illegal, resident groups have the power to overcome protests (Malhorta 2019). In urban Malaysia, governmental programs for community-

based policing, such as neighborhood watches and patrol groups, were implemented in the 1980s. By the 2000s, communities were building street barricades and hiring guards from security companies (Tedong *et al.* 2015, 123). As in New Delhi, the legality of RSBs represented a gray area in Malaysia, but in 2019 a federal court in Selangor ruled that RSBs were not illegal objects (Chan 2019). In Indonesia, especially Jakarta, the arbitrary installation of RSBs is illegal, but many communities have erected them without permission.<sup>1)</sup> In addition, whenever the local authority in Jakarta removes illegitimate RSBs, there tends to be a protest from residents.<sup>2)</sup>

In the literature, RSBs in Jakarta are related to two study fields: local security and GCs. The connecting line between the two perspectives is that both are fields of study for scholars concerned with the manifestation of a collective sense of insecurity or fear of crime in urban spaces. In order to acquire a point of analysis for a comprehensive picture of RSBs' proliferation, it is necessary to consider the RSBs' position in the discussions of both fields.

Starting with local security, it is noteworthy that in Jakarta RSBs are known as "portals" among the locals. The word "portal" is the most familiar term to denote an RSB-type urban feature in Indonesia. There is no historical documentation of when the word was first used in this context. From an etymological standpoint, some argue that "portal" is a loanword from the Dutch word *portaal*, which means "gate" or "main entrance" (Tri and Grangé 2016). On the other hand, if one asks community organizers

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1) The prohibition on erecting RSBs without permission has been explicitly mentioned in Jakarta's regional laws since the late 1980s:

- Article 3, Letters a, b, and c, Jakarta Regional Law, No. 11/1988 on Public Order.
- Article 14, Letter a, Jakarta Regional Law, No. 9/1992 on Traffic and Road Transport.
- Article 53, Letter c, Jakarta Regional Law, No. 12/2003 on Traffic and Road, Train, Rivers and Lakes Transport and Crossing.
- Article 3, Letter b, Jakarta Regional Law, No. 8/2007 on Public Order (currently in effect).
- Article 74, Letter c, Jakarta Regional Law, No. 5/2014 on Transportation (currently in effect).

2) For instance, in 2009 and 2014 RSB demolition instructions were issued in Jakarta (Governor Instruction No. 162/2014 on Opening of Access of Streets in Residential Areas for the Public Interest and Governor Instruction No. 47/2009 on Order of Street Usage in Neighborhoods and Real-Estate Residential Areas). The difference between the 2009 and 2014 instructions on RSB demolition was that while in 2009 there was reference to regional law on public order, in 2014 there was no specific reference to regional law, with the justification focusing on the "public interest" concerning growing traffic congestion in the city. In both cases, a resident group in Pondok Indah, one of the typical upper-class conventional GC districts in the city, conducted a protest movement, though without success (Tempo 2009; Otosia.com 2013). On the other hand, unlike the Pondok Indah case, the protest movement against the RSB demolition policy conducted by a resident group in Bekasi, a satellite city of Jakarta, in 2013 was successful in making the regional administrative courts acknowledge local government misconduct and force the cancellation of the policy (Court Decision Number 150/G/2013/PTUN-BDG).

in present-day Jakarta about their recollections of the existence of portals, many recall that they began to be installed in neighborhood spaces from the 1980s (Fig. 2a).<sup>3)</sup> Correspondingly, some scholarly records indicate that portals have existed as neighborhood security tools since the New Order era (Suharto's authoritarian regime, 1967–98) (Barker 1999, 98; Goebel 2010, 131).

Newspaper articles show that the term “portal” has been used since the 1970s to describe RSB-type urban features. At that time, with the benefit of policies such as the Kampung Improvement Program (KIP), roads in informal settlement areas were asphalted. However, they began to get damaged with the subsequent influx of large vehicles such as heavily loaded trucks. To prevent further damage, the Jakarta government installed height restriction gates, which were called portals (Kompas 1976; Sinar Harapan 1979).<sup>4)</sup> Later, local communities began installing gates at the entrances to residential areas, and “portal” became a term for various forms of gates used mainly as community-based security measures.<sup>5)</sup> Hence, portals emerged in Jakarta's residential areas by the 1970s, which was the early period of the authoritarian regime and before the popularization of conventional GCs in the city.

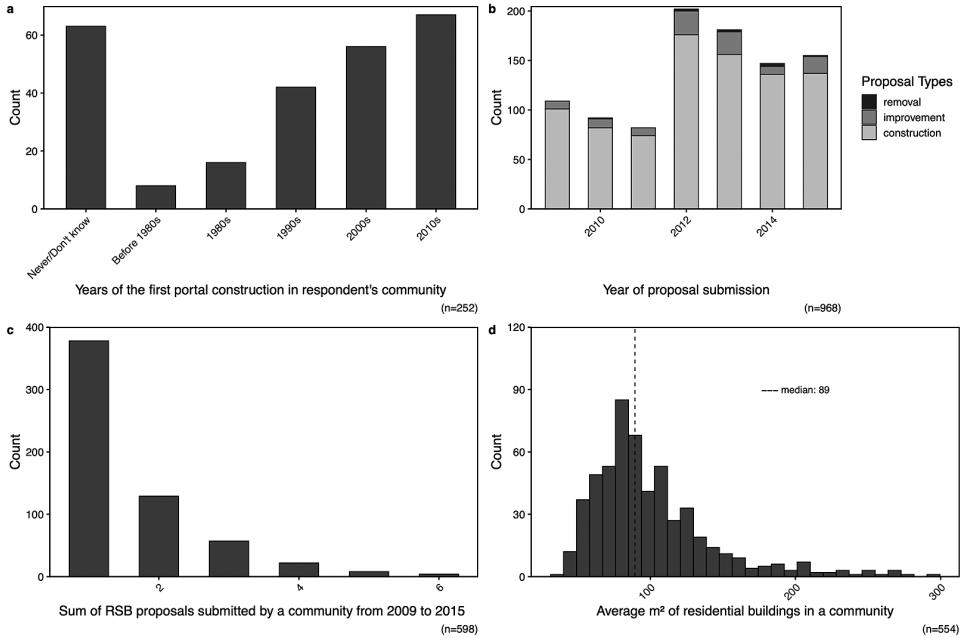
Following Abidin Kusno's (2006) documentation of the evolution of guardhouses

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3) For Fig. 2a, data was obtained from the Lembaga Musyawarah Kelurahan (“Ward Deliberation”; LMK) survey conducted by the author in 2019. With the help of Forum Komunikasi LMK Jakarta (the LMK communication forum in Jakarta), the author's team could disseminate the questionnaire at a post-Ramadan gathering of LMKs on July 24, 2019, to which LMK members from all over Jakarta were invited. Questionnaires were returned by 252 respondents, representing approximately 9 percent of all LMKs in Jakarta. In the survey, respondents were asked about when portals had been initially constructed in their neighborhood.

4) Apart from the residential setting, the construction of portals as supplementary tools for the management of street usage and the growing traffic was pervasive during the mid-New Order period. For instance, in the early 1980s ordinary villagers were mobilized by the local government of West Sumatra Province to build and operate portals in order to stop and inspect overloaded trucks to prevent them from driving on the Cross-Sumatran Highway (Kompas 1981). Also in the late 1980s, in response to a growing number of accidents at railway crossings, there was an attempt by the state-owned railway company to supply simple swing-up portals for every railway crossing in the country as an alternative to more sophisticated electronic gates (Suara Karya 1989; Suara Pembaruan 1989).

5) For instance, the World Bank's evaluation of the KIP in Jakarta and Surabaya states: “many residents are thankful that many pathways block access by car, which they see as dangerous, noisy, and polluting” (World Bank 1995, 41). In addition, reflecting on portals made during the KIP program, a Jakarta resident wrote in a newspaper's interactive column in 1994: “the portal is very important for the order and comfort of neighborhoods” (Suara Pembaruan 1994). Beyond the KIP context, it is recorded that in 1987 a set of portals installed by a community in East Jakarta was removed by the local government public order forces, but the residents protested to the district office because “they were worried about the deterioration of security situation there” due to the demolition of portals (Kompas 1987).



**Fig. 2** Time of RSBs' (Portals) Appearance in the City and Summary of Musrenbang Data

a) The time of the first portal installation in the neighborhood as remembered by current neighborhood leaders

Source: Author's survey, 2019.

b) Bar chart showing the frequency of RSB-related proposals in each year of Musrenbang (2009–15)

Source: Musrenbang Data (2009–15).

c) Bar chart showing the sum of RSB proposals (non-removal types) submitted by a community from 2009 to 2015

Source: Musrenbang Data (2009–15).

d) Histogram of the average building surface area in a community

Source: Musrenbang Data (2009–15).

(*gardu*), it is safe to say that local security measures in neighborhoods have historically engendered an ambivalence between public and local order. The current persistence of local security mechanisms is due primarily to the New Order's intervention in neighborhood associations. During the time of the New Order, neighborhood spaces were securitized in advancing the state's project of *kamtib* (security and order) and *tibum* (public order), which was rooted in the Dutch colonial notion of *rust en orde* (tranquility and order) (Bubandt 2005). During this process, military-sponsored and civilian-run security units became ubiquitous in neighborhoods (Bertrand 2004; Kusno 2006), where they cultivated traditional values (Kobayashi 2006) and instrumentalized communal territoriality (Barker 1999). As the emergence of RSBs in urban Indonesia occurred in parallel with this neighborhood securitization process, it became a manifestation of

the metamorphosis of local security measures.<sup>6)</sup>

On the other hand, several years after the KIP road controversy (1980s–90s), enclave housing spaces began to be constructed by developers in Jakarta (Arai 2001; 2015). As portals are usually one of the default design elements in conventional GCs in Jakarta, they also proliferated in the city along with the expansion of conventional GCs from 1990 (Kompas 1992; 1996). However, even though portals had been used in places other than conventional GCs, the perception of them as a local security tool in conventional GCs emerged after democratization in 1998. The following passage by Firman Lubis (in his memoir *Jakarta 1950–1970*) depicts how portals proliferated in the city:<sup>7)</sup>

This widening gap between rich and poor leads to social jealousy . . . and social problems such as increased crime and vandalism. . . . Thus, many houses in the elite's areas began to build sturdy and high fences [in the 1970s]. In fact, in the 1950s and in the Old Order era, houses were generally not fenced like this. But in the 1970s, as far as I knew, there were no housing estates with strict guarding at the entrance as many of such had appeared after the 1980s . . . though it is still not as strict as it was after the May 1998 riots when many elite housing complexes became very closed by making high fences around them and portals on roads that connect the area to the public space and are heavily guarded by dozens of security guards. (Lubis 2018, 341)

In Lubis's view, the gated dwelling style of the elites existed in the pre-1998 era. It became more exclusive after 1998, with the presence of portals that acted as obstacles

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- 6) The New Order's intervention in neighborhood associations refers to the series of institutional attempts to partition the space and authority of neighborhoods around the 1980s. It includes the codification of neighborhood associations as grassroots administration and community units in almost all regions via the enactment of Ministry of Home Affairs Regulation No. 7 in 1983 (Kurasawa 2011, 294). Slightly before the codification of neighborhood associations, the *ronda* (night watch) revitalization policy, known as *siskamling* (*sistem keamanan lingkungan*; neighborhood security system), was announced by police in 1981. *Siskamling* made *ronda*, which was previously implemented based on the discretion of the respective communal leaderships, a community-based security program that was incorporated into lines of coordination with the state apparatus. This was one of the forms of neighborhood securitization during the New Order that was arguably part of the regime's attempts to establish a set of tools for public order management penetrating the grassroots layer of society through physical and symbolic intervention in local powers, ranging from *preman* (freemen/thugs) to community leaders (Barker 1998, 11–17; Kobayashi 2004, 107–108). It is interesting to note that the background of the emergence of RSBs in Indonesia is similar to the case in Malaysia described by Peter Aning Tedong *et al.* (2015). While some observers and empirical facts (Fig. 2a) indicate that RSBs' spread is a contemporary phenomenon, there is no empirical evidence to suggest that RSBs/portals are replacing old and labor-intensive forms of local security (night watch and security guards). However, it is safe to say that the early emergence of RSBs/portals in urban spaces coincides with the period when local security was established during the New Order.
- 7) Firman Lubis was a professor of medicine at the University of Indonesia who specialized in community health. After being involved in a project supporting a national program of birth control (Keluarga Berencana; Planned Family), he became interested in the social history of the city, which he then extensively covered in his autobiography (Rizki 2018).



to public space. This is a typical case of a distorted depiction of portals/RSBs in which the urban feature is seen as a crime prevention measure that emerged in the residential areas of “elites” in the city. However, this view cannot be summarily dismissed as an unfounded assumption.

RSBs themselves are articulated by early GC observers as one of the material elements of enclosure and segregation; the relationship between class divisions and segregation is emphasized in studies of GCs (Blakely and Snyder 1997; Grant and Mittelsteadt 2004). This image of urban gating is also shared among studies of conventional GCs in Indonesia that have focused mainly on the wealthy suburban areas. Most of these studies focus on macro trends, analyzing how sociopolitical changes since democratization—e.g., the growth of the housing development industry (Hogan and Houston 2002; Firman 2004; Arai 2015), rising income inequality (Roitman and Recio 2020), and the rise of the middle class (Van Leeuwen 2011; Hew 2018)—are related to the spread of conventional GCs. Meanwhile, in Jakarta, given the current situation known to the author and evidenced in some studies, RSBs can be found both inside (Van Leeuwen 2011) and outside (Kim 2002; Tadié 2009; Simone 2014) urban zones recognized as conventional GCs. Therefore, it is not reasonable to follow the perspectival trends of previous studies and make the presumption that the diffusion of RSBs is an elite-driven phenomenon, as in the case of conventional GCs. However, it is also impossible to assert that the prevalence of RSBs is a cross-class phenomenon, due to the absence of empirical evidence.

Meanwhile, given that income inequality can create spatial segregation, the social inequality assumption in GC analysis tends to be extended to account for a certain geographic pattern. Blakely and Snyder (1997), for example, argue that GCs are a manifestation of middle-class people’s desire to escape from insecure inner city neighborhoods to more secure and affluent suburbs. On the other hand, previous observations of RSBs do not show any economic or geographic tendency in terms of locus. These studies, going beyond socio-spatial indicators, focus on micro-level practices leading to the construction of RSBs and how they are influenced by, for example, violence or security issues (Kim 2002; Hishiyama 2010; Colombijn 2018), collective reactions against some source of anxiety (Tadié 2009; Simone 2014), or degree of social capital (Mizuno 2006).

The problem here is that although the intra-city regional variation in the reaction to insecurities shown in the GC study may characterize the diffusion of RSBs in a certain way, the spatial distribution of RSBs in the city has not been analyzed.

## *I-2 Research Questions*

This paper asks a simple question: What kind of community is the major force behind the spread of RSBs in contemporary Jakarta? It considers that communities with a desire to



install RSBs play an important role in the spread of such urban security tools in the city. Based on the previous discussion about RSBs' position in GCs and local security studies, it sets three points of analysis: (1) socioeconomic characteristics of the community; (2) the community's motivation in seeking RSBs; and (3) intra-city regional variation in the communities' distribution.

First, while the literature review and observational facts indicate the class-independent quality of RSB spread, it is only an assumption unless empirically examined. Therefore, this paper begins with an analysis of the socioeconomic characteristics of communities that desire RSBs. Second, in situating the expansion of RSBs within local security, we found that RSBs may exist as embodiments of a collective response against crime and traffic. It would be interesting to examine whether and how motivation for having RSBs articulated by the community is associated with the two issues (crime and traffic). Third, one of the focal points in GC studies is intra-city geographic difference: namely, the suburban-concentric pattern of GC expansion. In analyzing RSBs, this paper is also interested in examining such regional differences (inner city/outer city) in the distribution of RSB-desiring communities. To investigate these points, this study builds and utilizes data on the geographic distribution of communities that have tried to install RSBs.

## II Data and Methods

This study focuses on the 2010s. This is because even though the origin of RSBs can be traced back to the 1970s, their spread is a relatively recent phenomenon in Jakarta.<sup>8)</sup> The main unit of analysis is the community, which is defined as the RW-community unit in the neighborhood association (RT/RW).<sup>9)</sup> For the analysis, different datasets were combined to construct relevant data (Table 1).

The author used data from Musrenbang (Musyawarah Rencana Pembangunan, Development Planning Meeting), a participatory policy-making platform that allows communities (RWs) to create annual budget proposals. Musrenbang showed that there were many proposals related to portals/RSBs that had been made by communities. Since

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8) As indicated in Fig. 2a, it is likely that communities that began installing RSBs in the 2010s are responsible for the spread of RSBs to the point where they can now be found in all areas of the city. The recent dynamics of RSB spread are also important because past research correlates RSBs with post-democratization societal changes.

9) The neighborhood association (RT/RW) in present-day Indonesia is a community unit formed as a set of two-leveled organizations in a ward (*kelurahan*): (1) groups of households (RT or *rukun tetangga*); and (2) groups of RTs (RW or *rukun warga*). While the RT/RW is run by local residents, it also serves as the smallest administrative division.

**Table 1** Data Sources

Source	Usage Notes	Source Link
OSM contributors (2020)	RW-community boundary and buildings	<a href="https://openstreetmap.id/data-dki-jakarta/">https://openstreetmap.id/data-dki-jakarta/</a>
LMK Survey (author, 2019)	–	–
Musrenbang Data (2009–15)	To calculate the sum of RSB proposal submissions	<a href="https://data.jakarta.go.id/dataset/data-aspirasi-masyarakat">https://data.jakarta.go.id/dataset/data-aspirasi-masyarakat</a>
Jakarta Land Use Data (2020)	To filter building polygon data extraction	<a href="https://jakartasatu.jakarta.go.id/portal/apps/sites/?fromEdit=true#/public/pages/unduh">https://jakartasatu.jakarta.go.id/portal/apps/sites/?fromEdit=true#/public/pages/unduh</a>

Source: Author.

there is no official record of RSB installation, it is difficult to obtain data that allows us to understand the actual distribution of RSBs across the city. However, by using the proposal data from Musrenbang, we can measure whether and to what extent a community desired to install RSBs. This study used Musrenbang data from 2009 to 2015.<sup>10</sup> Portal/RSB-related proposals were extracted from the dataset by searching for inquiries containing the word “portal.” By manually reading the text of every such proposal, its relevance to the categories of purpose predefined by the author (“construction,” “removal,” and “improvement”) was examined (Table 2).<sup>11</sup>

Fig. 2b shows the yearly frequency of RSB-related proposals in the Musrenbang data. From 2012, more than 100 proposals were made every year on a stable basis.<sup>12</sup> For further analysis, “removal” proposals were excluded. Then, the communities that submitted RSB proposals (“construction” or “improvement”) were treated as the communities with RSB desire. Among such communities, a variation in the number of proposals submitted was observed (Fig. 2c). This sum of proposals per community over the years was treated as the degree of RSB desire.

10) This is made available online for free by the Jakarta government.

11) It must be noted that most of the RSB proposals were rejected in the government’s final decision. In fact, given the continual and somewhat inefficient rejection of proposals, the local government finally decided to forbid RWs from submitting proposals related to portals. The Musrenbang guidelines in 2018 and 2019 for Rembuk RW (RW Community Board; representing the RW-level proposal-making stage) explicitly stated that RWs were not allowed to propose *pembangunan portal* (construction of portals); in this connection, it was also forbidden to make proposals not in line with *kepentingan umum* (public interest) (Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah 2018, 6; 2019, 9). This means that RSBs-as-portals were somewhat illegitimate in the legal sense and in a gray area in the social sense. The RSB-related proposals discussed in this paper were submitted at a time when the legal validity and public relevance of RSBs had not yet been clarified. Accordingly, the communities that submitted RSB-related proposals, especially those categorized as “construction” and “improvement,” can be considered as being solid drivers of RSBs, because they submitted these proposals even though the legitimacy of their inquiry was unclear and often ultimately denied.

12) This could be because of the establishment of the online application procedure.

**Table 2** Examples of RSB-Related Proposals

Ward Name & RW Number*	Problem	Solution	Type	Year
Cakungtimur8	Area prone to theft	- Add <i>hansip</i> /security personnel - Construct security posts - Establish an entrance portal - Arrange police patrolling	Construction	2013
Pondoklabu4	Traffic disturbances from heavy vehicles (material trucks and <i>metromini</i> -city buses)	- Construct a portal - Install an entrance door	Construction	2010
Grogolutara16	No portals or streetlights	Construct portals and streetlights	Construction	2011
Rawamangun7	Portal has been permanently closed by residents	Reopen the portal, and close it only at night	Removal	2012
Kemanggisan7	Getting cars in and out of the ward is a bit difficult	Demolish telephone poles, power poles, <i>gapura</i> (gates), and portals	Removal	2013
Kebonpala10	Order and security	Control portals and speed bumps	Removal	2013
Malakasari1	Portals are broken, scavenger carts can enter the area, there is a lack of <i>hansip</i> /security guard posts, vehicles are often lost, and drug trafficking occurs frequently	Repair portals and set up <i>hansip</i> /security posts	Improvement	2010
Guntur1	Portal is broken, and the area is vulnerable to theft	Repair the portal	Improvement	2012
Malakajaya10	Many portals are broken	Repair the portals	Improvement	2012

Source: Musrenbang Data (2009–15).

Note: \* In the RT/RW neighborhood association system, each unit in a ward is annotated by a number such as “RTn/RWn of x Ward.”

For community-level indicators of socioeconomic status, this paper uses building polygon data provided by OpenStreetMap (OSM) to calculate the average size of buildings within the communities that made an RSB proposal.<sup>13)</sup> Fig. 2d is a histogram showing the distribution of the average area of buildings. The higher the average building area,

13) This method was chosen as an alternative way to obtain community-level indicators of socioeconomic status, which was a challenging task because the smallest sample unit for official surveys in Indonesia is usually the *kelurahan* (ward), not the community. We can assume that the larger the size of a building, the richer the owner; therefore, regions with a high concentration of large buildings represent a cluster of economic strength. In this way, the average size of buildings in a community (m<sup>2</sup>) can be taken to represent the community’s economic capacity. However, we must admit that, for various reasons, calculating economic indices directly from building polygon data has some limitations. These were addressed in the following ways. The author utilized land use data provided by the Jakarta government, and only extracted the buildings located on land classified as residential, to avoid the influence of other building types, e.g., shops and offices. This filtering process was also used to discard residential structures with obvious outlier qualities such as apartment blocks, pavilions, and dormitories. In this process, communities with NA values on either the residential land use layer or the building polygon layer were omitted.

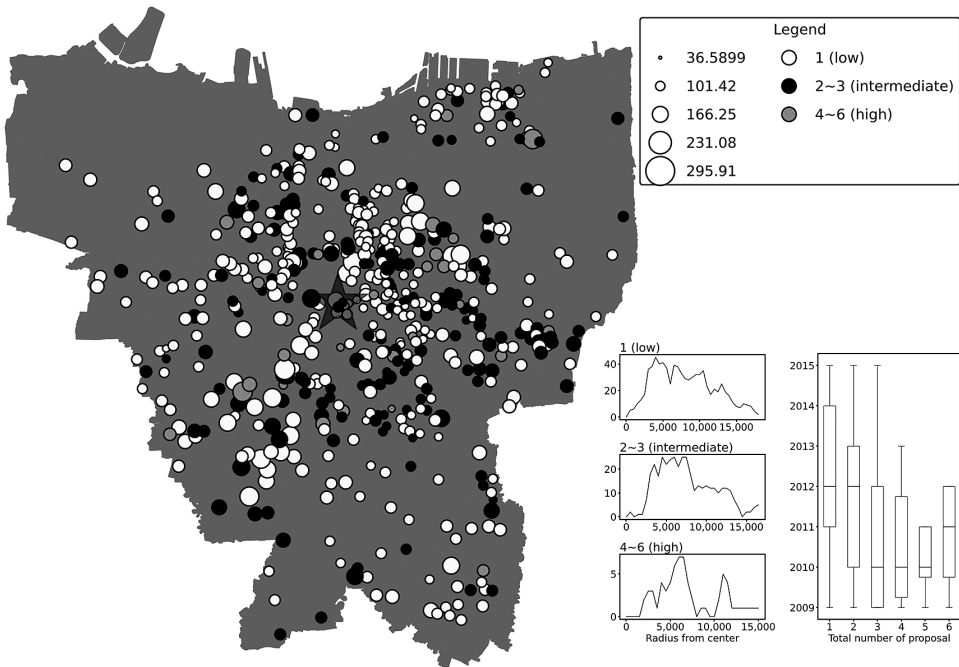
the lower the frequency, indicating that only a limited number of communities indicated by large building size are wealthy. Then, these data (degree of RSB desire, RSB proposals, and average building size) were combined with the polygons of community boundaries (RWs) in the city provided by OSM.

### III Results

#### III-1 Socioeconomic Characteristics of Communities with RSB Desire

##### General Pattern

Fig. 3 shows a map of communities with RSB desire based on a combination of two indices: degree of RSB desire and economic capacity. Overall, the spatial distribution of



**Fig. 3** Geographic Distribution of Communities with RSB Proposals by Average Building Area in a Community  
 Source: Musrenbang Data (2009–15).

Note: The size of the circle represents average building area (left column of legend).

The color of the circle represents degree of RSB desire based on the number of proposals submitted over the study period (right column of legend).

The left inset shows the count of communities within radius steps (expanding per 500 m) from the city center point (the star symbol), per RSB desire level.

The right inset shows the box plot of years of first proposal applications by communities grouped by total number of proposals.

communities with RSB desire has an inner-city-concentric pattern. Through visual inspection alone, we can see that closer to the city edges the communities' distribution becomes less dense. Differing behavior per degree of RSB desire is also observed, where communities with a higher degree of RSB desire—especially those categorized as high—have a sparser distribution. This observation is in line with the left inset in Fig. 3, which shows the count of communities within the radius steps from the city center point (per three groups of degree of RSB desire). It shows that the higher the degree of RSB desire, the farther away the peak, indicating that communities with a lower degree of RSB desire are located largely near the city center compared to communities with a higher degree of RSB desire. It also shows that the higher the degree of RSB desire, the less stable the decrease in the count of communities along with an increase in radius. This means that while communities with a lower degree of RSB desire gradually weaken their presence in the outer city, those with a higher degree of RSB desire show a significant presence in the outer city.

#### Socioeconomic Characteristics

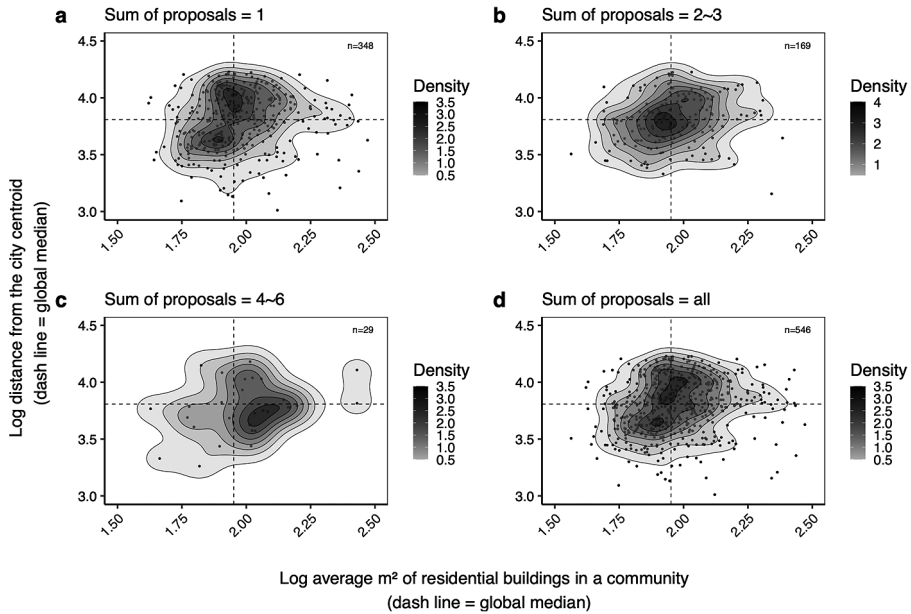
Having described the overall patterns of RSB distribution, we now examine the socioeconomic characteristics of communities with RSB desire in Jakarta. In Fig. 3, more communities with a higher economic capacity (bigger point size) can be found in places closer to the edge of the city, while those with a lower building size average (economic capacity) are spread throughout the city.<sup>14)</sup> Taking a closer look, Fig. 4a shows that a significant portion of communities with a low degree of RSB desire have average building sizes slightly lower than the median and a distance from the center slightly above the median. Meanwhile, in the case of communities with a high degree of RSB desire, Fig. 4c shows that densely populated spots move in the opposite direction from that observed in communities with a low degree of RSB desire.<sup>15)</sup>

This observation recalls the point made by GC studies that gated living is popular in outer and wealthy parts of the city. However, the difference is that for communities with RSB desire, the wealthy outer-city communities do not represent the majority. This is because of two reasons: first, the inner-city-concentric pattern of the communities' distribution in general; and second, a significant and scatter presence of less wealthy communities that have a desire for RSBs.

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14) However, it must be noted that this pattern makes an exception for communities with a high degree of RSB desire, because they have a generally sparse distribution.

15) In the case of communities with an intermediate level of RSB desire, Fig. 4b shows that although there is no overt concentration region as in Figs. 4a and 4c, many communities are distributed within the range of values around the concentration area observed in Figs. 4a and 4c.



**Fig. 4** 2-D Scatter Density Plot between Average Area of Building and Distance (meters) from the City's Center Point

Source: Musrenbang Data (2009–15).

Note: A median line was added to both axes.

### III-2 Motivation to Install RSBs: Crime or Traffic?

#### Contagion Process of RSB Desire

Next, we move to the second point of analysis: the motivation of communities in requesting RSBs. As a starting point of analysis, it is useful to review some contents of the proposals, especially those submitted by communities with a high degree of RSB desire. To do so, it is necessary to articulate the importance of communities with a high degree of RSB desire in the overall proliferation of RSBs.

Recalling the spatial distribution of communities (Fig. 3), those with higher RSB desire are less likely to exist in isolation, regardless of economic capacity. To make a further inference, a community with higher RSB desire may play a significant role in the contagion process of RSB desire in each locality. It must be noted that the willingness to possess RSBs is, conversely, also a perception of RSB shortage. From the Musrenbang data, the degree of RSB desire is indicated by the total number of proposals submitted. This shows how much a sense of RSB scarcity has been accumulated in the community. Communities with low RSB desire (only one proposal in our sample) are those that once had a willingness to possess RSBs but later lost awareness of the RSB shortage for some reason or circumstance, and thus their willingness did not accumulate. On the other

hand, communities with a degree of RSB desire as high as “4~6” are those that submitted proposals consecutively from year to year, i.e., their willingness to install RSBs accumulated.<sup>16)</sup> In other words, a high degree of RSB desire is a state in which, for whatever reason, the sense of RSB scarcity does not resolve easily and does not disappear over time, but rather accumulates and grows.

Thus, communities that are highly motivated to possess RSBs tend to be the senior communities in an area compared to others in the area that also have RSB desire. This point is in line with the right inset of Fig. 3, which shows the box plot of the year of first RSB proposal application per degree of RSB desire (the total number of proposals submitted by RWs). The higher the total number of proposals, the more the distribution of the first application year concentrates on earlier years. From Fig. 3, it is clear that the spread of communities with RSB desire is characterized by the existence of some local cluster zones where communities with a high degree of RSB desire are surrounded by others. From this observation, we can assume that the formation of such zones starts with the emergence of communities with a high degree of RSB desire. Therefore, communities with a high degree of RSB desire play an important role in the spread of RSBs in the city because they are the starting points for the contagion of RSB desire.

### Proposal Contents

Next, we take a deeper look at the contents of the proposals submitted by some communities. Communities with a high degree of RSB desire tend to put forward consistent proposal contents over time.<sup>17)</sup> For instance, RW6 in Bintaro, part of a residential area developed as a large conventional GC on the southern edge of Jakarta, expressed concerns related to road safety. This community submitted four proposals from 2012 to 2014, with double applications in 2013. Except for one proposal in 2013 that was more related to concerns about theft, the rest of the proposals had the same articulated reason: “potential risk of traffic accidents” in the area.<sup>18)</sup>

In contrast, RW15 in Semper Barat, one of the densely populated areas in the northern part of the city, expressed concerns related to crime and violence. The community submitted one proposal each year from 2011 to 2015. The contents of the first proposal

16) The condition behind the disappearance of RSB desire includes the subsequent installation of RSBs.

17) As shown in Table 2, the proposal format is designed to provide a proposed “solution” to a “problem” in the community (the exact format varies from year to year, but these two elements have been used consistently). In this context, reason/motivation refers to the content of the “problem.”

18) As in the case of RW6 in Bintaro, the exact same reasons were articulated in multiple applications by RW4 in Rawamangun, East Jakarta, where the community proposed the replacement of an old RSB with a new one because “the iron is damaged and the bar is broken,” without articulating the specific concern related to the RSB’s installation.



were related to road safety issues: “the unavailability of road safety facilities or portals for roads.” After that, this community began to include two keywords in the statement of reasons for the RSB construction request: “motorcycle theft (*curanmor*)” and “neighborhood brawls (*tawuran*).”

Similar to RW15 in Sempur Barat, RW5 in Slipi submitted one proposal each year from 2011 to 2015. However, the contents of the proposals submitted by this community were less consistent than the other two. At the time of the first application, this community expressed concerns about a specific type of theft: “motorcycle theft.” After that, from 2013 to 2014, the mention of “motorcycle theft” was replaced by “theft” in general. Finally, in 2015, the expressed motivation became more related to road safety issues: “the roads are unsafe because there are no portals.” From the author’s observation, this community began installing CCTVs in 2015 in many spots prior to the construction of RSBs in 2017 on some of the small streets that serve as entry points into the residential area.<sup>19</sup> Thus, we can deduce that this community initially wanted RSBs for crime prevention, but that was not possible for certain reasons. Instead, CCTVs were installed; and since then, RSBs have been desired not for crime prevention but for traffic safety.

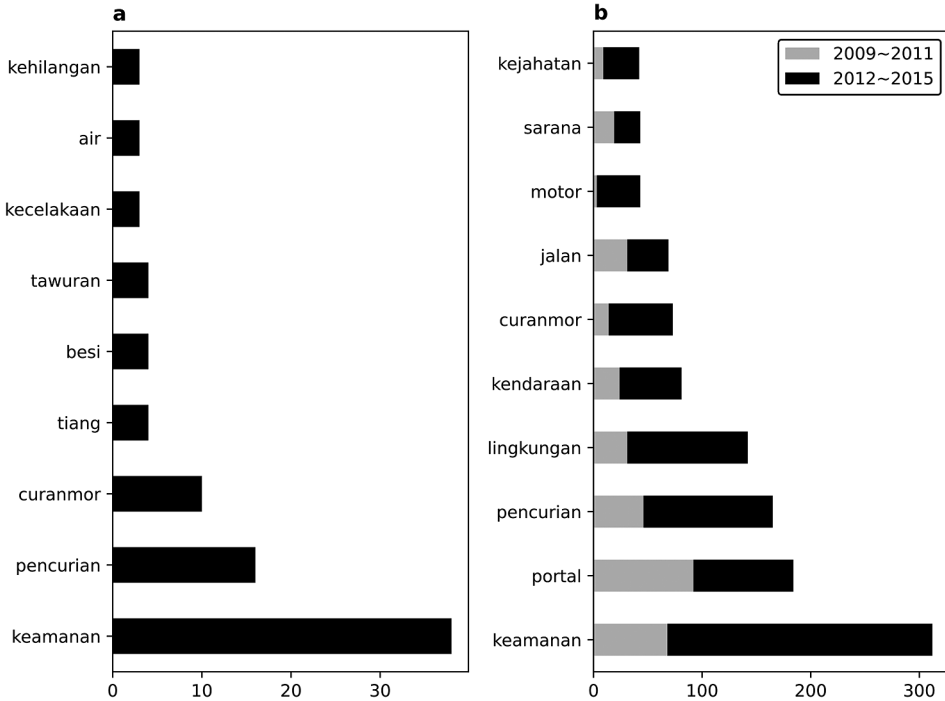
From a brief review of the proposals’ contents, it is clear that there are two major types of issues behind RSB requests: crime and traffic. This is consistent with Fig. 5, which shows the most frequent words for (a) a noun repeated in multiple applications by communities with high RSB desire, and (b) a noun for all proposals. From Fig. 5, *keamanan* (security), *pencurian* (theft), *curanmor* (motorcycle theft), *kejahatan* (crime), and *tawuran* (neighborhood brawls) may represent the crime-related keywords, while *motor* (motorcycle), *kendaraan* (vehicle), *jalan* (street), and *kecelakaan* (accident) may represent the traffic-related keywords. In this way, we can see that traffic-related keywords are less likely to be repeated in multiple applications than crime-related keywords. One way to interpret this finding is that crime-related issues in the community are harder to resolve than traffic-related ones.

### III-3 Regional Variation

Finally, we move to the third point of analysis: regional variation in the spread of communities with RSB desire. Drawing on previous results, three aspects of analysis are determined: (1) the existence of communities with RSB desire; (2) the heterogeneity of degree of RSB desire; and (3) the motivational association of RSB desire. In order to compare the regional variation of these aspects, the variables are aggregated on the scale of the district (*kecamatan*).

19) Interview with local RW head and LMK member, September 8, 2019.





**Fig. 5** Top Ten Nouns Appearing in Proposals

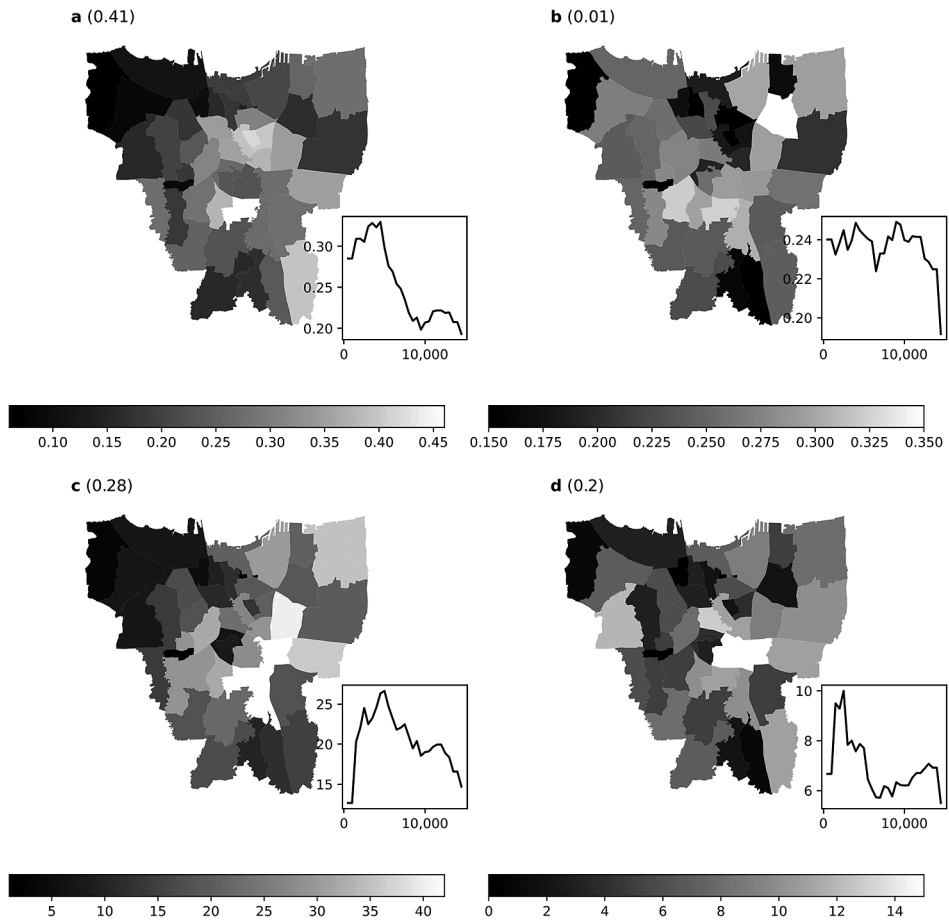
- a) Frequency of nouns repeated in multiple applications by high-RSB-desire communities with more than two occurrences per community
  - b) Frequency of top ten nouns appearing in all proposals
- Source: Musrenbang Data (2009–15).

For the existence of communities with RSB desire, Fig. 6a shows the percentage of communities (RWs) in the district that submitted at least one RSB proposal over the year. The Moran’s I in Fig. 6a (0.41) indicates that the distribution of the percentage of communities with RSB desire is clustered in a certain part of the city. Consistent with previous findings, such a concentration occurs in the inner part of the city, as the inset of Fig. 6a shows a clear decreasing trend of mean value by increase in radius.

For the heterogeneity of degree of RSB desire, Fig. 6b shows the Gini index of proposal counts per community in the district. It shows that the heterogeneity of degree of RSB desire has no spatial correlation. Previous findings indicate that communities with a high degree of RSB desire trigger the local contagion process and create local clusters of communities with a diverse degree of RSB desire. Such cases of local contagion are randomly located all over the regions in the city, as the inset of Fig. 6b also shows no stable trend.

For the motivational association of RSB desire, two plots have been made of the

total number of proposals in the district that contain crime-related keywords (Fig. 6c) and traffic-related keywords (Fig. 6d). For both sets of keywords, a weak and similar level of spatial correlation is observed. This indicates that while a pattern of an inner city center and gradual outward diffusion affects the distribution of communities with RSB desire, it only slightly affects the distribution of issues associated with RSB desire.



**Fig. 6** Regional Variation in the Spread of RSB Desire

- a) Percentage of communities that proposed RSBs in a district
  - b) Gini index of the number of proposals submitted by a community in a district
  - c) Number of proposals that contain crime-related keywords in a district
  - d) Number of proposals that contain traffic-related keywords in a district
- Source: Musrenbang Data (2009–15).

Note: Each plot has the Moran's I of the variable (the number within parentheses next to the label) and the inset plot showing the average value of the variable for the districts within the radius step (expanding per 500 m) from the city center point in which the geometry of the district was transformed into the centroid.

Furthermore, crime-related and traffic-related issues have different inner-to-outer-city distribution patterns. For crime-related keywords, the mean value of counts of proposals containing the keywords among the districts per radius step (inset of Fig. 6c) shows a mild decreasing trend. For traffic-related keywords (inset of Fig. 6d), it shows a rapid initial drop and a mild increasing tendency afterward. To summarize, in Jakarta RSB desire spreads through the concentration belt in the inner city and local clusters scattered throughout the city, with crime-related desire more centrally clustered than traffic-related desire.

#### IV Discussion

The analysis reveals three major findings. First, an inner-city-concentric pattern of the overall distribution of communities with RSB desire is observed. Second, some distinct behaviors of communities with a high degree of RSB desire are identified. Third, a coexistence of crime- and traffic-related RSB desires and different regional variations between the two are found.

The first finding indicates that the collective sense of insecurity is concentrated in the inner parts of the city. The logical explanation for this is that inner city residential areas are usually characterized by a high crime rate, unsafe roads, and unclear distinction of public space. In such places, it is not surprising that many RSBs are required, and their concentration creates a space with characteristics of a “security zone” which Blakely and Snyder (1997) have depicted as a kind of GC prevalent in the inner city.

Beyond the logical explanation, some previous observations on RSBs in Jakarta have argued that the increase in the sense of insecurity in the inner city after democratization prompted the installation of RSBs by relatively wealthy communities (Kim 2002; Colombijn 2018). The roots of post-democratization insecurity lie in the societal upheaval and rioting that took place around the time of regime change: especially in Jakarta, ethnic Chinese people living mainly in the inner city were severely victimized by looting and violence. During this period, temporary barricades were built in communities near these danger zones; many of them were eventually replaced by more permanent RSBs, which were then normalized in the following years (Colombijn 2018). In some cases, RSBs were established after the situation stabilized (Kim 2002). It has also been reported that this riot-triggered RSB adoption occurred throughout the relatively affluent inner city neighborhoods and was not limited to ethnic Chinese neighborhoods (Kompas 1998a; 1998b; 1998c; 1999).

Considering the inner-city-specific sources of insecurity and RSB desire, two pos-

sible dynamics must be further noted. This study covers the relatively recent distribution of RSB desire in the 2010s. Given that, one possible reason why the collective desire to have RSBs in the inner city has become so prevalent during the post-democratization era is that inner city communities have recently developed a strong sense of insecurity due to factors such as post-democratization social changes. On the other hand, we also assume that while such insecurity has existed for a relatively long time, there are conditions in inner city neighborhoods that make it difficult to install RSBs. Even when RSBs are installed, they often need to be repaired or built afresh, leading to the persistent emergence of RSB-desiring communities in recent years.

Regarding the second finding, communities with a high degree of RSB desire have a relatively wealthy socioeconomic status and an important role in the local contagion process. It is no coincidence that many communities with a strong RSB desire are more affluent than other communities. Some past studies have argued that RSBs are one of the built features in Jakarta that have a deep symbolic dimension (Simone 2014; Kuno 2022). This is one aspect of RSBs that makes communities want them repeatedly, more than they need them for their functional (security/safety) purposes. As a strong desire for RSBs in such a way involves a cost, many communities with a high degree of RSB desire are relatively affluent.

Interestingly, the analysis indicated that communities with a strong desire for RSBs serve as the starting point of the local contagion process: once such a community emerges, other nearby communities also want RSBs. This type of transmission is related to the inter-community interaction that has been pointed out as a factor of RSB diffusion in some previous studies in Jakarta (Tadié 2009; Roitman and Recio 2020) as well as in other cities in the global south (Plöger 2006; Nijman 2010). These studies focus on a variety of inter-community interactions but share the argument that a certain form of local contestation over space affects the adoption of urban gating. The results of this paper may further add the insight that following such inter-community interactions, the contagion of varying degrees of desire tends to occur especially when there is a community in the area that has a strong desire for RSBs. It also means that such an area with a local cluster of RSB desire can be the place where access and the usage of spaces are highly contested. In such areas, we may also find some cases where the drive for RSBs diffuses from affluent to less affluent communities. Moreover, local clusters centering in these highly desiring communities are randomly scattered throughout the city. This can be one of the reasons why while the distribution of RSB desire is generally inner city concentric, it is not confined to the inner city but is diffused throughout the city.

On the other hand, Kusno (2012) provided an interesting picture of the socio-spatial order of residential segregation in Jakarta. He argued that whereas the urban poor flow

in and out of the city because of their unstable and insecure livelihood, a socio-spatial layer of “collective isolation” is created selectively in the inner city and massively in the outer city for advantaged residents (Kusno 2012, 55). Drawing on these findings, we can add that in between the gated zones designated for advantaged residents, there is a significant presence of economically less affluent communities that also embrace gating—both in the inner and outer parts of the city. This indicates that residential segregation in the city has a layer of cross-class interactions that contribute to the widespread circulation of desires, insecurities, and ideas regarding RSB construction.

Finally, the last result suggests that while the source of such a collective sense of insecurity is more associated with crime for communities in inner parts of Jakarta, it is more associated with traffic for communities in outer parts of the city. As indicated in the literature review, while these two kinds of RSB desire have emerged over time, it is not clear which is the original one. Fig. 5b also shows no consistent tendency in terms of the time of submission for both sets of keywords.<sup>20)</sup> In other words, it is better to view these two kinds of RSB desire as intertwined collective attitudes. Therefore, the findings indicate that such a mixture of crime-related and traffic-related insecurities occurs mainly in the inner city. And the farther we go to the outer parts of the city, the less crime-related insecurity there is, and the more traffic-related insecurity remains.<sup>21)</sup>

The cross-class diffusion of RSBs reflects the condition in contemporary Jakarta, where both crime- and traffic-related insecurities are closely related to people’s daily lives regardless of class, though the quality of such experiences may differ by class. Considering the extensive spatial range of the spread of traffic-related RSB desire, we can assume that traffic is more closely related to the cross-class spread of RSB desire. As the city saw a rapid increase in the number of vehicles and congestion after democratization, many aspects of everyday dynamics in contemporary Jakarta became affected by routine traffic issues (Lee 2015). As this paper shows that most communities in Jakarta began installing RSBs in the 2000s or later (Fig. 2a), the growth in urban flows and traffic-related problems can be associated with the spread of RSBs in contemporary Jakarta. Given that, we can make another interesting speculation from Fig. 3: many communities with RSB desire are located near the major arterial roads, as if their spatial arrangement was superimposed on the route of those roads. In such places, residents may be concerned about the danger of traffic accidents, as in the case of RW6 in Bintaro. Even in inner city neighborhoods such as RW5 in Slipi, where crime is a

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20) It is unclear whether the number of notations in proposals submitted after 2012 is higher or lower than those submitted before that time, in terms of either traffic-related or crime-related keywords.

21) This also shows that crime and traffic are basically interrelated issues, especially in inner city neighborhoods, as streets are among the usual sites of property crime in community spaces.

major concern, once the problem is handled, people's concerns may shift to traffic-related issues. As such, the spread of RSB desire in the city is sustained by the spatial distribution of traffic-related desire covering a wide area beyond the concentric spots in the inner parts of the city.

## V Conclusion

This paper shows that the spread of RSBs is a cross-class phenomenon. This cross-class spread neither validates nor contradicts arguments about the influence of the class factor in residential segregation and securitization. However, it does show that RSBs' presence in the city is ubiquitous as it becomes a common feature of Jakarta's neighborhood spaces. Also, this pattern of RSB spread is not constrained by certain types of residential spaces, such as conventional GCs. Therefore, by empirically demonstrating the ubiquitous presence of RSBs, this paper indicates that a large portion of urban features causing residential segregation and securitization in the city have not been captured in previous studies.

Moreover, by investigating communities that desire RSBs, this paper identifies some characteristics of communities that have become a major force behind the spread of such security devices. First, it shows that communities with RSB desire have an inner-city-concentric pattern of diffusion. Second, it finds that the cross-class spread of RSBs is characterized by the dispersed presence of communities that have a strong and persistent desire for RSBs, which also play an important role in the local contagion process. Third, it demonstrates that RSBs are a manifestation of a collective sense of insecurity which is a mix of crime- and traffic-related concerns. In the context of the contemporary prevalence of RSBs, the study discusses the possible correlation between the recent growth in urban flows and the extensive and non-monotonic distribution of traffic-related RSB desire.

One of the shortcomings of this paper is that the data and analysis are confined within the boundaries of Jakarta as a province. Jakarta as a province is part of the larger urban area of Greater Jakarta. Thus, this paper captures only a portion of the urban-to-suburban distribution of the studied object. However, put another way, this study confirms that there are inner-outer city variations in various aspects of RSB spread, even within the boundaries of Jakarta as a province. This is a detail and important fact that is often overlooked in previous studies that have focused on the dynamics of residential segregation and security in suburban areas. Nevertheless, in the future, the analysis in this paper should be conducted in other locations in Greater Jakarta to investigate how the identified

inner-outer city variations develop in suburban areas.

Another limitation of this study is that the discussion is based on the degree of communities' desire to have RSBs, which does not capture the relationship between the degree of desire and the actual presence of RSBs in communities. In other words, we have not clarified whether communities with a low desire for RSBs are communities that already have enough RSBs, or whether the shift in the degree of desire for RSBs correlates with the number of pre-existing RSBs. Furthermore, the nature of the dataset in this paper assumes the community to be a homogeneous entity, which undermines the complexity of the spread of RSBs in the city. Therefore, further research is needed to construct a dataset that will allow us to understand the actual distribution of RSBs throughout Jakarta.

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# From *Pengusaha* (Businessperson) to *Penguasa* (Ruler): Migrant Traders and the Politics of Hospitality in Indonesia

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This article discusses how Eastern Indonesian merchants maneuver into politics to expand their networks, while on the other hand they have to grapple with being perceived as foreigners. In Maluku Province, Eastern Indonesia, traders are considered *orang dagang* (foreigners, migrants) who do not belong to the local culture, even though they may have lived in the Malukan islands for centuries. *Orang dagang* are mostly migrants from Sulawesi Island (Butonese, Buginese, and Makassarese). Using a still undertheorized concept of hospitality, conveying cordial gestures toward potentially dangerous strangers to oblige them into a manageable relationship, this article elaborates on how hospitality and distributive activities come into play when traders navigate their tricky circumstances. Traders, often consisting of a few select ethnic groups in Indonesia, indeed occupy ambiguous and precarious positions in their locales. Their ambivalence has also been utilized, whether by ethnic groups, themselves, or others. This article also discusses the limits of hospitality. Despite traders trying to change their circumstances, there are still prejudices and societal structures that are consistently unchanged at the very core.

**Keywords:** trader, post-conflict society, entrepreneurial politicians, hospitality, migrant-local communities

## Introduction

This article depicts how migrants (Butonese, Buginese, and Makassarese) from the island of Sulawesi have finally turned to the political field in the province of Maluku. It aims to update classical and common arguments that traders care only about their business and move beyond to see how politics is a step for traders to further show their unboundedness, and yet also their interconnection with mutual benefits with people

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from different backgrounds. For the purpose of this article, I argue that traders offer hospitality not only to build their sense of belonging and reputation among local Malukans, but also with the political interest of expanding their power in the aftermath of religious conflict and decentralization in Maluku. Even though hospitality has its limits, it has allowed the upward mobility of some successful Butonese entrepreneurs in getting social-political recognition in the eyes of native Malukans.

Historians have found that people from Sulawesi fled to Eastern Indonesia as a result of two events. The first was during the mid-seventeenth century, as Sulawesi expanded throughout the Malukan archipelago when the Dutch East India Company (VOC) initiated a thorough *Hongitochten*, an inspection and protection of spice markets using traditional Malukan seafaring fleets. The aim of *Hongitochten* was to restrict the production of spices from Maluku in order to control their price as a global commodity (Muridan 2009, 24–26, 34–38). Bugis sailors from Sulawesi helped smuggle spices from Maluku to sell in the Makassar entrepôt; the spices were later exported to Singapore markets. The waves of migration from Sulawesi increased with the VOC's invasion of Makassar, culminating in a war from 1667 to 1669 that led many people from Makassar and Bugis to leave (Andaya 1995, 120–121; Sutherland 2021, 155–157). The arrival of these Sulawesi migrants was accompanied by Arab and Chinese traders who introduced various commodities from outside (Andaya 1991; Clarence-Smith 1998; Ellen 2003; Swadling 2019). In addition to exchanging the new commodities for forest products, the Arab and Chinese traders settled in various coastal areas that would become the main ports in Maluku, such as Ambon, Banda, Geser-Gorom, and Tehoru.

In the next century, migrants from Sulawesi occupied Maluku, especially Seram Island, since colonial plantations needed cheap labour following the prohibition of the slave trade in the mid-1800s (Ellen 2003; Goodman 2006). Migrants from Sulawesi, especially from Buton, came to live in Seram Island. They finally built villages around colonial plantations (Geger 2020, 327). In the twentieth century Sulawesi migrants exploited both marine and terrestrial resources by becoming key players in the expansion of marine commodity exports, as well as distributing imported goods from the West for rural Malukans (Palmer 2009; Sutherland 2021).

When religious conflict broke out in the province of Maluku during the Indonesian transition to democracy in 1999–2000 (Sidel 2007; Sumanto 2016), these Sulawesi migrants became the target of riots due to negative perceptions of their economic success in both rural and urban Maluku (Adam 2010). The natives were often left behind, with the migrants dominating markets and bureaucratic networks that used to be the domain of native Christian Malukans (Chauvel 1990).

One of the crucial concerns in post-decentralization, post-conflict Maluku is the

issue of migrant traders who have experienced upward economic mobility and have turned into new patronage players in politics. Since the dawn of decentralization in 2001, democracy has provided equal opportunity citizenship status for migrants to be as involved in politics as local people. There have been increasing cases of migrant traders getting involved in politics after succeeding in business. Migrant traders, especially those with origins in Sulawesi, realized that the way to strengthen their social position in Maluku was to enter politics, where they could not only gain a legal bargaining position in the government but also enhance their citizenship status in the eyes of native Malukans.

This article is a micro-perspective within the broad picture of mass democracy in Indonesia, which allows wealthy entrepreneurs to access politics and disburse their money to win elections as well as gain social legitimacy (Aspinall and Berenschot 2019). The phenomenon of businesspeople occupying local and national legislative seats, as well as positions within executive institutions, is generally widespread in Indonesia (Warburton 2018; Tempo 2019). With the high cost of politics, businesspeople use their powerful economic resources to stand for election to political seats. By combining approaches rooted in history, political cultures, and ethnicities, this article attempts to contribute to the original ideas on the emerging phenomenon of entrepreneur politicians in Indonesia. It focuses on two questions. First, what kind of historical and cultural conditions exist to enable migrant traders to get involved in politics and even win over native Malukans, despite being considered “foreigners”/“strangers” with no political rights in the eyes of Malukan customary laws? Second, how do these migrant traders, who are often seen as guests, turn into entrepreneurial politicians? Furthermore, what kind of hospitality methods enable migrant traders to successfully make the transition from mere traders to elected political representatives?

To answer these two questions, research was conducted in two different locations. From December 2018, research was conducted in Ambon; and from March to April 2019, as well as January to February 2020, it was in Masohi, South Seram. During the research, I interviewed 35 urban migrants living in Ambon City, as well as 20 inter-island traders around south Seram Island. My research interviews focused on many migrant traders involved in politics. I engaged in informal interactions with selected key informant store owners who sold home appliances and kitchen and plastic wares, and some who also had grocery stores that received spices and cash crops as payment from smaller kiosk owners around Maluku. I conducted semi-structured interviews with several successful Sulawesi traders, especially those from Buton and Bugis, who became involved in politics after gaining success in business. During 2018–20, I also gathered historical and anthropological reflections from migrant traders who were involved in politics and used

to serve on the local council. I went to the Rumphius Library in Ambon City and to the Balai Pelestarian Nilai Budaya Maluku (Center for the Conservation of Malukan Cultural Values) to copy files on seminars and conferences on culture and society held in Maluku. I also gathered the track records of migrant traders who entered politics from the local newspaper *Ambon Ekspres*.

My trader informants identified me as Muslim, which allowed me to get more data about traders and politicians with the same religious background. This identification was advantageous for me as almost all migrant traders were Muslim, which made interlocutors more open with me. The same religious background also allowed me to conduct informal interviews and follow migrant traders' daily activities. Christopher Duncan (2013), who conducted research in post-conflict North Maluku, was in a similar situation as he was identified as Christian. This permitted him to live in Christian communities, and his interview tapes were filled with Christian informants. However, this did not rule out his ability to collect data from Muslim informants. The method likely involved structured interviews with selected Muslim informants in a conducive place.

### **Indonesian Traders: Transformation from Strangers to Entrepreneurial Politicians**

This article contributes to updating classical and common arguments that traders care only about their business and financial profit, and that their business is kept separate from politics (Sutherland 2021). Through politics, traders try to reconstitute themselves as part of the native society. This article attempts to move forward to see how politics is a step for traders to further show their unboundedness, and also their interconnectedness and mutual benefits with people from different backgrounds. My concern is specific to migrants who focus on their work as successful entrepreneurs and later go into politics. In this section, I argue that a deep history of sociality living in Maluku has allowed traders to participate in contemporary politics despite the negative stereotypes still often directed at them.

In many societies in Indonesia—and other parts of Southeast Asia—local people comprise the majority but do not dominate market exchanges, while despite their status as minorities, ethnic traders dominate the market (Hefner 1998; Nonini 2015; Landa 2018). Traders are members of ethnic or religious minority groups considered strangers because they are not originally descended from the host society (Geertz 1963; Evers 1988; Ellen 1996). Sulawesi traders came from the outskirts of the sultanates of Bugis, Makassar, and Buton. They migrated out of the Sulawesi area, perhaps motivated by

their exclusion from inherited nobility status had they remained in their home area (Errington 1989; Palmer 2009). The system of dynastic “apical demotion,” where transmission of status is based on the mode of exclusive genealogies, hinders upward social mobility for common people. Migrant traders, therefore, are usually descendants of common people who were long mapped into lower-class rankings in their home areas. They decided to leave Sulawesi Island to change, to take a risk, and to reinvent themselves. Migrant traders build their own moral codes that are distinct from those of aristocratic communities, which are old and static and based on a charismatic status given by others (Freeman 2014).

The historian Anne Booth (2001) points out that in contrast to societies in the West, where capital can develop from within the community, capital in Indonesia is generally brought in by people from outside the local community. Ample studies argue that traders from outside the community are able to increase their scale of business for two main reasons: they are not part of the community, and they have the courage to circulate credit and debt. The traders’ position as outsiders enables them to circulate credit and debt more efficiently than local people entangled in kinship obligations (Landa 1994; Gudeman 2001; Whitehouse 2012). It is easier for migrants, who are not considered local people or part of the community, to develop credit, lend money at high rates of interest, buy local people’s crops at a very low price, bring money, and supply prestige goods for local societies during the harvesting of forest and agrarian products as well as sea products, without being burdened by social pressures that can restrict traders’ capital circulation (Hospes 1996, 234–235; Henley and Boomgaard 2009; Chou 2010). However, as Chris Gregory (1997) points out, the movement of capital in migrant networks is ultimately dependent on certain types of kinship and sociality. I will combine these phenomena in a section discussion on how entrepreneur politicians cannot rely solely on their wealth; they also need hospitality and cooperation with the local traditional leader, referred to in Maluku as *raja*.

In Ambonese Malay, the term “trader” has two meanings. The first is outsider, or *orang dagang*, which refers to strangers “not from around here”; and the second is trader, or *pedagang* or *pengusaha* (entrepreneurial people), who exchange commodities. To begin with, the term “trader” as outsider refers to people who do not belong to local traditions and ceremonies. Malukans have commonly used the term *orang dagang* for people who journey from outside Maluku for the sake of economic survival. Raymond Kennedy (1955) points out that since the 1950s, Malukans have viewed as outsiders the ethnic Butonese from Sulawesi who lived in several districts in the Ambon Islands. From my interviews with older local Malukans in Ambon City and South Seram, it appears that they have popularly used the term *orang dagang* since the 1960s. *Orang*



*dagang* has the same definition as *orang rantau*: people who were originally from outside Maluku and journeyed in search of economic success by running small businesses as entrepreneurs.

The second meaning refers to *pedagang* or *pengusaha*: middlemen, moneylenders, and traders who come from outside the local society and stimulate the local economy. As these people mostly work in the market, harbours, and fishing docks and deal with cash, *pedagang* has become a derogatory term for outsiders who have different cultural values and ethics from the locals. This condescending view of traders was promoted by the New Order state. The specialization of particular ethnic groups as traders is also related to how they have been classified and regulated by the state, specifically by excluding them from owning land (Peluso 2012, 90–92). In Maluku, the negative feelings toward migrants do not stop at stereotypes. In customary law, all migrants, especially in rural Malukan areas, are denied the right to own land and the right to be elected as traditional leaders. They only have the right to vote (Lee 1997; Kadir 2019b).

During my research, I often heard Ambonese describe *orang dagang* as individualistic, greedy, dirty (*pankotor*), lazy, and uncivilized.<sup>1)</sup> *Pedagang* are seen as dirty since they work in the marketplace, which is literally filthy and muddy. Marketplaces, metaphorically, are also places for greedy people who cannot control their desire for money, i.e., avarice (Brenner 1998; Kadir 2019a). These negative views were strengthened into feelings of jealousy when middlemen and traders from Sulawesi and ethnic Chinese migrants controlled almost all the clove trade in rural Maluku, when the clove price boomed from the 1970s to the 1990s (Hospes 1996).

This article tries to debunk such old stereotypes and classical research to go beyond depicting migrants as foreigners who have a problem mingling with local people (Evers and Schrader 1994). The second-class treatment of traders and migrants in the face of customary laws has often led them to become the vanguard of state modernity in the marginal areas of Maluku (Spyer 2000). Jacques Bertrand (1995), who conducted research in Maluku during the New Order era, shows that compared to natives Malukans, traders and migrants frequently comply with governmental policies and programs. Learning from the state-endorsed development initiatives from which they benefited under the New Order government, capable migrants have turned their entrepreneurial wealth into political power in the post-New Order era. In addition, migrant traders play the role of patron,

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1) Tsuchiya Kenji and James Siegel (1990, 61–76) have observed that Butonese migrants in Banda were despised because they did not speak Bahasa Indonesia (the Indonesian language) and mostly lagged behind in terms of education. However, this argument was valid only in the 1970s. Lately, the Butonese have achieved higher educational accomplishments, and most of them can speak Bahasa Indonesia.

middleman, or moneylender, even sometimes emulating the administrative functions of the state, specifically in frontier areas. Migrant traders develop regions where the state fails to do so (Timmer 2010, 707). In some cases, migrant traders—as entrepreneurs—play a role in the center as non-state actors who emulate the role of the state in cases of regulating justice, especially by arranging natural resources and sharing them in the midst of environmental depletion. As patrons, migrant traders play a role that resembles that of state agents by providing financial assistance and lending money to clients, but also taking care of basic infrastructure and their clients' educational and health needs. Traders also take risks by buying the harvest in advance during uncertain seasons. The more successful they are in business, the more these traders are seen like the state since they share money when they have it. Jaap Timmer's (2010) argument is consistent with my research findings in Seram, which are discussed in the section below in the case of Haji Ahmad, Huang, and Sadikin. However, while Timmer's study shows that migrants struggle for their rights as citizens by legalizing tenure arrangements, this article illustrates that the dynamic of self-making by many successful migrants has improved their status through their political involvement.

After the sectarian conflict of 1999–2004, migrant traders benefited from the implementation of decentralization, which allowed them to be involved in local elections and even to express their cultural and religious traditions in politics (Bräuchler 2015). However, Nils Bubandt (2004) argues that the regional political and cultural map of Maluku was not shaped solely by the effects of decentralization. The new local politics were also influenced by cultural and historical conditions before the advent of decentralization. Long before decentralization, Phillip Winn's (2008) study on Butonese living in Banda Island showed that the definition of custom (*adat*) specifically belonged to land rather than to people. Accordingly, the Butonese often used this as an excuse to participate in local rituals and ceremonies by using their bodily performances. The Butonese in Banda perceived that *adat*, as a relevant body of practices, would be maintained in exile (Winn 2008, 96–97). In contrast, Geger Riyanto (2020) shows that Butonese migrants can claim to be indigenous people through shared cosmologies and reproduced myths, as they have been living in Seram Island for many generations. This allows the elder migrant generations to share their history and tie their folk stories into the beliefs and rituals practiced by native Malukans. Similar to Geger, Timo Kaartinen (2009, 61–65) shows that migrants from outside Maluku learned from internal Malukan migrants how to frame themselves as insiders: for instance, migrants from Banda Island (Central Maluku) who moved to Kei Island (Southeast Maluku) due to the VOC genocide in 1620. The Bandanese constructed a shared history and proved ancestral kinship and alliances between their ancestors and power holders. One of the aims was to legitimize access to

land on Kei for the Bandanese.

After the conflict and during the decentralization era, migrants have been expanding their business in both Muslim and Christian communities. The increasing ability of traders to enter post-conflict politics began with Muslim migrants taking over businesses in Christian parts of the island (Adam 2008). With these businesses as a starting point, migrant traders could build social capital to develop their political reach among Christian voters.

Migrant traders' ability to reach voters in Christian-majority villages has a history. Well before the conflict of the late 1990s, native Malukans, both Muslim and Christian, provided a place for the Butonese to live in vacant hamlets (Grimes 2006; Kadir 2019b). Accordingly, when migrant traders entered politics, they pragmatically tried to reach out to their brothers and sisters (*basudara*) in Christian villages. To do so, some also joined nationalist and modern Islamic pluralistic parties such as Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (National Awakening Party) and Partai Amanat Nasional (National Mandate Party). The main expectation in joining these political parties was to be accepted by both communities, Muslims and Christians.<sup>2)</sup> One of my informant traders, La Ridho, was first elected to the local legislature when Seram Bagian Barat (Western Seram Regency) was established in 2013. This, La Ridho said, was despite the fact that he had joined Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (Prosperous Justice Party; PKS), a party known for its exclusive ideology. Similar to the nature of traders, who must be open to any customers, La Ridho changed the course of identity politics in Maluku to become more pragmatic. He not only merges ethnic and religious sentiments to attract both migrants and native Muslim Malukans, but he also uses nationalistic populist jargon to gain Christian voters. When he runs a campaign, in order to broaden his appeal among voters in both Muslim and Christian communities, he changes the political jargon of PKS from "serving the *ummah* (Muslim brotherhood)" to "serving the *rakyat* (the people)." *Ummah* refers only to Muslim communities, both natives and migrants, while *rakyat* can embrace Christians too.

A successful pharmacy businessman in Seram Island, La Andi, who joined the nationalist Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya (Great Indonesian Movement Party; Gerindra), emphasized:

Money has no sex nor religious identity. It can be exchanged and cross over to both Muslims and Christians. I learned that from my experience selling medicine during the conflict. Everybody needs medicine regardless of their religious background. Even far before the conflict, we, the Butonese, lived alongside the Christians.

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2) Christians have preferred nationalist parties since President Soeharto fused Parkindo (Indonesian Christian Party) into PDI (Indonesian Democratic Party) in 1977. Since then, from the perspective of many Malukan people, PDI has been synonymous with Christianity.

Well before the conflict, migrants' decisions on where to dwell were not only determined by the kindness of native Malukuans but also based on where rural migrants saw the potential for clove, nutmeg, and coconut commodities to be exchanged for labor and cash.

The way migrant traders are involved in open politics, with no religious or ethnic boundaries, reflects the logic of commerce. Commercial activities make it possible to create friendships and trusting relationships, even under differing ideologies (Marsden 2012, 119, 127). Magnus Marsden (2018, 135–136) has shown that being a trader requires social interactions beyond conventional boundaries. In the Southeast Asian context, migrants are mostly traders with high mobility beyond religious communities and national and geographic boundaries. This flexible, cross-cultural interaction ability helps to mobilize their commercial activities and trade networks. However, trade history is not only about searching for land and customers and facilitating commodities, but also about sharing practices and cosmopolitan ideas (Ho 2002; Kahn 2006). My research has shown that it is especially this sociality talent that later helps migrant traders to develop their political activities that cross religious communities.

Marsden (2012, 121) notes that the condition of traders as guests who cross regional boundaries gives them the capacity to rearticulate their identity according to the space they live in. However, traders who do business across regional and state boundaries offer their hospitality as a pragmatic mechanism. The versatility of hospitality provided, as well as moral ethics, is part of a calculated strategy targeting the host. Hospitality can serve very useful, and even profitable, ends. Beyond economics, it also provides commercial ground for gaining advantage over stronger competitors in both everyday social life and politics.

### **The Politics of Hospitality**

My original contribution in this section is to argue that one of the reasons the Butonese traders were accepted and able to succeed in politics was because of their hospitality. Matei Candea and Giovanni Da Col (2012) show that hospitality emerges and is entangled with gift and material exchanges. Likewise, Sian Lazar (2004) in Bolivia and Lauren Bonilla and Tuya Shagdar (2018) in Mongolia demonstrate in their research that material gifting from a patron is a potential instrument for cultivating personal affection between citizens and political figures. For guests, being social helps to shift their position from dangerous stranger to familiar face (Candea and Da Col 2012, 14; Shryock 2012). For Marshall Sahlins (2009), hospitality serves a political purpose: to incorporate a new affin-

ity into the giver's own kinship circles. It also maintains the trade relationship, reinforces hierarchical differences, and establishes leadership. Similarly, Sherry Ortner (1978, 62) argues that hospitality is an arena for enacting social drama. As a display of virtues, hospitality mediated through rituals is commonly seen and becomes a public conversation. In contrast to acts of selfishness and greed, the act of hospitality is the most generalized form of being social.

Hospitality toward strangers is part of both Islamic and Christian ethics. Thus, genuine hospitality is something that local Malukan people also show toward traders, not merely the other way around. From a historical perspective, local Malukans showed their hospitality and generosity by providing vacant land along the border between two large native Malukan villages (Grimes 2006; Adam 2010). Hospitality has its political goals. In East Indonesian social stratification (Wouden 1968; Adhuri 2013), Jos Platenkamp (2019) found that Malukans had a basic dualism structure that distinguished natives from migrants. Malukans are aware that migrants are strangers who have different ancestors and cosmological principles. These antagonistic characteristics have potentially violent consequences. To avoid conflict, the migrants have been given political power over communication with the outside world and military concerns, while the indigenous people are in charge of local resources and land. This structure provides an effective framework for local communities to incorporate new events (as well as new actor groups) into their worldview, such as in the past foreign traders and colonial intrusions. Both parts are necessary and fundamental for society. Platenkamp (2019) shows that local Malukans solve the problem of migrants who still remain strangers by incorporating them into the customary systems. Villagers in Maluku deal with migratory populations in varied ways. Migrants are assigned to specific village segments (*soa*), and thus they have representational rights (Bräuchler 2015).

Learning from the historical and cultural modalities above, a successful and wealthy migrant entrepreneur has the ability to turn their wealth into political patronage by providing exchanges in material goods or resources. One example of a successful Butonese merchant who turned to politics is Haji Ahmad. He was born in West Seram (Seram Bagian Barat; SBB), but his father was from Lapan Dewa, Buton. In 1965 he started a cement business, as his parents could not afford his middle school fees. After the conflict ended in 2004, Haji Ahmad's business grew very well. The demand for cement increased. Many developers built houses on lots that had been left vacant during the conflict, and this created high demand for housing materials. Haji Ahmad was appointed as one of the official distributors of Tonasa Cement, the biggest cement company from East Indonesia, based in Makassar, South Sulawesi Province. There are five official distributors in Ambon, three of them ethnic Chinese and the other two Butonese. As a major distribu-

tor, Haji Ahmad distributes cement to Ambon on a large scale three times a month. He also supplies ethnic Chinese metal shops in the town of Ambon. He does not tack on a high profit margin for ethnic Chinese. When selling a sack of cement at 65,000 rupiah, he makes a profit of only about 5,000 rupiah.

Haji Ahmad runs the trick of selling cement on a large scale, but cheap, so that ethnic Chinese merchants will not overtake his role as a major distributor in Ambon. Under his holding company, he has also opened several branches of metal shops and retail shops. His son takes care of several of his metal shops and mini-marts that have spread around the Hitu Peninsula. At the start of his business, Haji Ahmad had four big shops: three of them on the Hitu Peninsula in the districts of Hila, Negeri Lama, and Nania, as well as one in the town of Ambon. Unlike cement from other companies such as Tiga Roda and Bosowa, Tonasa cement comes to Maluku unpacked; thus, it requires more employees to pack and distribute it. In Ambon, Haji Amhad's recruiting of 20 employees from among the local population is seen as contributing to saving young Malukans from unemployment.

In 2011 one of Haji Ahmad's sons, 34-year-old Ihsan, ran as a member of the local House of Representatives (Anggota DPRD Tingkat II) of SBB for one term. People were inclined to vote for Ihsan with the memory of Haji Ahmad's generosity. Long before the election, Haji Ahmad was known among the villagers for being generous in providing for material needs. He donated abundant materials from his metal shops, such as cement, brick, and zinc to build houses, bridges, mosques, and a health center, as well as materials to carry electricity, clean water supplies, and drainage facilities. This aid helped his son get elected as a member of the local council.

Traders' involvement in politics by using their hospitality is not unique to migrant traders. Ethnic Chinese Malukans, who have better-established trade networks, also do the same thing. Traders elected as political leaders are inseparable from the role of their previous generations who offered hospitality by creating patron-client networks in the villages. Huang, an ethnic Chinese Malukan merchant politician, inspires other Butonese merchants who have just risen in popularity during the era of decentralization. He is one of the biggest entrepreneurs in Seram Island. He was the largest supplier of electronic devices, but his shop was forced to close due to the economic crisis of 1998: the exchange rate of the rupiah weakened against the dollar, and all his products were imported. During and after the sectarian conflict that began in 1999, he turned his businesses into grocery stores, which continue to operate. Since his business developed well, he expanded into drinking water. He is the first entrepreneur with a water company in Seram Island.

In 2004 he joined a new national party, Partai Demokrat (Democratic Party; PD).

As he was good with finance, the PD trusted him to be the party treasurer. Huang is from the first generation of trader politicians. His parents had only been involved in the spice business. As in the case of Haji Ahmad's son, Huang was easily elected as a member of the regional legislature because of the cultural reciprocities due prior generations: "My parents have a lot of credit (*jasa*) with the villagers who vote for me. We give a lot to both the community and to the *raja* (traditional village head) individually." Huang remembered his father, who brought fishing nets to people in Tehoru, the village his parents came from. He also procured labour from Waai, known for its good-quality construction, installing fishing nets in the open sea and constructing housing and mosques. Huang's father also donated money for building a big mosque in Tehoru, even though he was of a different religious background from the majority of voters. This kind of generosity on the part of traders helps them build a good reputation for themselves, which is an asset they can later bring into politics. When Huang ran for local elections in 2014, the majority of people in Tehoru selected him with the memory of his parents' generosity.

Huang pointed out that hospitality must fulfill society's desire for progress. Therefore, gifts that he donates to the people involve infrastructure that symbolizes modernity, such as electric lighting and clean water. He metaphorically said of constructing infrastructure, "It's like building a temple." People easily see the object, and it reminds them of the politician's performance. To follow in his father's footsteps during his tenure from 2014 to 2019, he built a telecommunications tower in Tehoru. This tower symbolizes the villagers' connection to the rest of the nation and the world. During his tenure he also built a bridge, and a seawall to defend against the ocean, and installed 24-hour electricity facilities. Then he extended electricity cables from Perusahaan Listrik Negara (the state electricity company) to illuminate the villages adjoining Tehoru.

Like Haji Ahmad and Huang, successful migrant traders believe that money is not the only means for earning the trust of native Malukan voters in selecting a leader. In offering hospitality, traders use two main strategies. The first is to blanket their hospitable intentions with varieties of local rituals, ceremonies, and even religious concepts, to neutralize the appearance of political interest. The hospitality should be consistent, with constant maintenance and performance. Like other politicians, traders have to show their presence by visiting people, attending important ceremonies, showing up for wedding feasts and funerals, and consistently providing money, even before the elections. In the case of those who end up not being elected even though they gave money, the reason is usually because they showed up right before the election.

As described in a previous publication (Kadir 2019b), many successful migrant traders gained favorable positions among the locals by exploiting traditions, customs,



and hospitality. Sadikin, a successful trader with Butonese lineage, for example, lived in Batu Merah, a Muslim-majority village in downtown Ambon, but his shop was in Passo, a Christian-majority village. When the government decided to move traders from the crowded and slummy market in Batu Merah to Passo, Sadikin supported it. To show his support and compliance with the government's suggestion (Bertrand 1995), Sadikin gathered Muslims and Christians, as well as traders and common people, before the move by organizing a traditional Ambonese food festival, *makan patita*, or sharing a meal together.

In addition to that, realizing that these two villages had a long traditional connection, Sadikin was actively involved in a ceremony to warm up the inter-village alliance (*panas pela*) between Batu Merah and Passo in 2010. *Pela* is a system of dyadic social relations that ties together different villages, often with different religious backgrounds. One village may have two or three *pela* relations with different villages. This system ties together villages through a commitment to support and help one another (Bartels 2017).<sup>3)</sup>

Sadikin absorbed and assimilated autochthonous customs such as *makan patita* and *panas pela* in order to create a sense of unity. Since migrants do not have the right to own customary land (*tanah petuanan*) (Winn 2008), the way these entrepreneur politicians make their presence felt is through active involvement in rituals and ceremonies so that their acts of hospitality can be seen by local Malukuans. Entrepreneur politicians are aware that rituals, ceremonies, and acts of hospitality can create social solidarity among migrants and the host society. Likewise, when entrepreneurs enter a state, they mold and reinforce attitudes and perspectives through ceremonies and special occasions.

Sadikin succeeded in turning into an entrepreneur politician when he moved to Buru Island. He ran for the local legislature in Buru Island with PKS, the Islamic party, and was elected in 2014 and reelected in 2019. He observed that the reason many successful migrant traders who were elected in politics for one term were not reelected was that they never visited or got involved by recognizing local rituals, events, and ceremonies in their own districts. Through being involved in local rituals, events, and ceremonies, Sadikin applied his hospitality by paying attention to urgent collective needs in the community besides water and electricity.

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3) The beginning of *pela* relations between Batu Merah and Passo is believed to date back to 1506, when the people of Batu Merah came back from paying tribute to the Sultan of Ternate. Halfway back to Batu Merah in their outrigger canoe (*arumbai*), they rescued people from Passo whose canoe and all of their goods had almost sunk off a peninsula on Buru Island. The people of Batu Merah shared their food, sago, smoked fish, and coconut with the people of Passo. In gratitude, the Passo people declared their village as the younger brother of Batu Merah and pledged to form a *pela-gandong* relation. According to the Raja of Passo whom I interviewed, the last *pela* before 2010 was in 1960.

Sadikin found that mosques and graveyards had become urgent collective needs. Since the conflict ended, Muslims have wanted their own sovereign graveyard separate from Christians. Land struggles for graveyards are important as the small islands of Buru and Ambon have limited land to allocate for graveyards. Likewise, mosques have become an identity requirement for the Muslim community. “Muslims also want to have a well-built mosque of strong construction as Christians have built a well-constructed church in the aftermath of conflict,” said Sadikin.

In the realm of politics, Sadikin gives funds to voters, especially those who come from the same background as him, and he uses various Islamic terms for giving such *sadaqah*. *Sadaqah* is a voluntary act of flexible generosity that can be given at any time with no minimum amount of money and/or material. It is a neutralization technique to protect against criminal charges under legal political terms such as money politics, bribery, and corruption. The act of *sadaqah* is in line with the classical theory of gifts from Marcel Mauss, where he closes his argument by quoting Qur’anic verses that advocate charity to the poor as not only giving to God but as an act that will be remembered by many societies (quoted in Shryock 2012, 21–22).

Sadikin likened business to cultivating plants and *sadaqah* to water. If both business and political acts lack water, they will die. The more one gives, the more one pours water on the plants, the more one gets in return. Franz and Keebet von Benda-Beckmann (2007), who conducted research in the Ambon Islands, stated that various Islamic giving systems, specifically *zakat* and *sadaqah*, are also useful as informal social safety nets for those who do not have a regular income. Based on this social system, traders develop the social safety nets into political interest.

Helping people to build infrastructure may seem altruistic, but behind it is an interest in long-term politics. A common belief among the traders I interviewed was that if wealth were distributed generously, it would be reciprocated. Entrepreneur politicians are aware that in order to expand their business from the economy to politics, they have to offer greater hospitality to their constituents. The housing materials in their shops become commodities and gifts at the same time. They become gifts during certain occasions such as conflict and political elections, but on normal days housing materials are a very lucrative commodity (Appadurai 1986).

In the second strategy of hospitality, migrant trader politicians build a close relationship with traditional village leaders, or *raja*. The collaboration between traders and *raja* is not a new phenomenon; it has existed since the precolonial era. Heather Sutherland (2021) has pointed out that *raja* control the flow of commodities, so their power is decentralized not only in politics but also in the economy. A *raja*’s power involves fluid alliances based on common interests between clans and outside traders.

In contemporary politics, when traders implement their hospitality strategies, they use *raja* as political brokers. Richard Chauvel (1990) and Ardiman Kelihu (2021) have pointed out the continuity of history, where *raja* play important roles in connecting the outside world with the area within their territorial rule. Migrant merchants cannot deliver their hospitality if they do not have a good relationship with the *raja* and his local customary council (*saniri*); the presence and support of a *raja* are crucial for traders' political success. Even during the Central Maluku local elections in 2012, 2017, and 2021, entrepreneur politicians of migrant descent paired with either native Muslim or native Christian Malukan candidates. The aim was to capture ballots from villages with a majority of Butonese residents. During the campaign, candidates recalled how warmly the *raja* welcomed them with the *cakalele* dance, a traditional war dance welcoming guests. The hospitality of the *cakalele* dance is usually followed by a *makan patita*.

A trader's reputation is linked to the local leader's respectability. Migrant traders generally do not come to a village and directly offer their hospitality. In customary institutions *raja* and their apparatus have been political brokers since the colonial period, connecting the political and economic interests of the colonizer with local communities (Chauvel 1990). This role continues even in contemporary politics in Maluku (Tomsa 2009). Thus, unlike in the world of commerce, where traders can directly become patrons by buying crops and providing loans, in politics they have to ask for permission from the *raja* and senior officials in the village system with the same ethnic background as the majority of voters. Approaching local leaders and their team members has become a more effective means of political consolidation for traders, since political parties have a limited ability to establish relationships at the village level (Aspinall and Berenschot 2019, 31–37). Traders' hospitality strategies and creating linkages with traditional leaders have cultural and historical origins, as described in the initial discussion, with traders being joined to the autochthonous society through mythmaking, rituals, and ceremonies (Kartinen 2009; Platenkamp 2019; Geger 2020). In my research, I show that migrant traders use these kinds of old historical and cultural practices in contemporary politics. However, despite migrant traders' attempts to become part of the native society, economic inequality and social suspicion remain. Following is a discussion on the limits of hospitality.

### **The Limits of Hospitality**

In this section, I problematize people's responses to the gestures of hospitality by entrepreneur politicians. The aim is to evaluate the theoretical concept of hospitality, but also

to describe the biographical profiles of merchants, their electoral strategies, as well as vignettes of Indonesian and local political landscapes.

Unlike Ortner (1978), Michael Herzfeld (2012, 212) perceives the hospitality offered by traders as being motivated by a desire to expand economic and political power rather than altruism or civic virtue. When seen from the people's standpoint, the political behavior of Haji Ahmad, Huang, and Sadikin with respect to the material cost of political engagement may be viewed ironically as a condition for the traders' social acceptance. On the surface, it may be seen as benevolence toward the villagers, which helps the traders to gain social acceptance. On the other, the traders' seemingly virtuous behavior is self-serving. It is a competitive strategy to mobilize voters as well as eliminate political opponents.

Therefore, hospitality has an ambiguous value. Herzfeld does not sugarcoat the phenomenon; rather, he examines how it indicates an ambiguous relationship between courtesy and threat. Displaying generosity and manners can be seen as hypocrisy as it may mask evil plans. The migrant givers create a dependency in their recipients, and their generosity signals a search for new class privilege and often bureaucratic power.

Sometimes hospitable gestures by migrant traders can cause problems. Their purpose in investing in politics is not to foster social integration but to maintain the socioeconomic distance between migrants and Malukans. My conversations with people living in areas targeted by entrepreneur politicians show that they are aware that the traders entering politics are only enriching themselves. In the public's view, traders enter the world of politics only to make things easier for their businesses through political lobbying. The most visible deliverable for entrepreneur politicians is to expand their procurement projects. Entrepreneur politicians who sit on local legislative councils have a direct link to the Department of Public Works, which funds roads, bridges, and irrigation infrastructure. From local legislative councils, entrepreneur politicians use their own *persekutuan komanditer* (limited partnership) to win project tenders. Partnerships between entrepreneur politicians and the Department of Public Works enable goods for public works projects to be procured from shops owned by the political traders themselves. It is common knowledge in the villages in South Seram, for example, that council members who are also migrant traders are behind almost all the limited partnerships that build bridges, drainage systems, coastal reclamation walls, and roads.

Average citizens are aware that traders' hospitality has a political and economic purpose. Politics is an investment by migrant traders to get bigger profits later. It is generally known that in addition to a wider political network, entrepreneurs who successfully enter politics gain a significant increase in material wealth (Warburton 2014). Various political analyses show that growing numbers of entrepreneurs who became

politicians have facilitated corruption and collusion. Such discussion may be linked further to accounts about the devolution of political power in post-Suharto Indonesia, where the existence of a few groups of oligarchs has led to rising inequality, as a few cliques dominate economic resources (Hadiz 2010; Fukuoka 2012; Warburton 2014). Hospitality, indeed, requires traders to be flexible and adaptable to current social, economic, and political conditions. However, it does not change local communities' view of traders as *orang dagang*. The adaptability and dynamics of migrant traders cannot fully change local conservative views concerning *orang dagang*. Local people still uphold and reproduce the conventional position that a migrant trader's hospitality must be endorsed by local leaders with traditional respectability. In other words, the hospitality offered by traders does not significantly change either the social structure or economic inequality based on ethnic and religious differentiation.

Nonetheless, I believe that despite the limits of hospitality in preventing corruption, let alone economic inequality, it can become a way to maintain the agreement between two parties to live alongside each other without permitting resentment to degenerate into open conflict. In other words, despite hospitality creating ambiguous feelings, it is needed to neutralize the potential hostility between hosts and outsiders. It is needed to stabilize the relationship between the host community and strangers and to prevent expressions of conflict. As guests, migrants are aware that the hospitality they provide contains ambiguous values because their relationship with the host is also filled with tension and anxiety (Marsden 2012, 120–121), especially in Maluku, where the increased social mobility of migrants leads to their control over the political sphere.

## Conclusion

Political science studies reveal that the high cost of politics in Indonesia leads businessmen to get directly involved in politics. However, my original research contributes to the discussion of politician entrepreneurs, where the majority of them in Maluku are seen as strangers with different ethnic backgrounds from the local people. For migrant traders, plunging into politics is a way to handle the anxiety of being constantly treated as outsiders while attempting to expand their networks in accordance with their values. It has become an urgent need for them to practice hospitality, especially after the sectarian conflict of 1999–2004, because many Malukan people do not embrace the idea of reconciliation, even though Muslims and Christians coexist. The two communities continue to live separately, but they have many parallel political agreements and ongoing dialogues (Duncan 2016, 469–470). However, the political hospitality offered

by traders does not necessarily indicate assimilation between migrants and indigenous people. At least through hospitality, migrant traders manage to achieve a sense of belonging without assimilation.

Hospitality cannot fully integrate traders with the local community, but it does mitigate jealousy on the part of the local community. The hospitality offered by migrant traders puts local communities in an ambiguous position. The ambiguous feelings among local people arise due to two contrasting features of hospitality: on the one hand it shows generosity, but on the other it indicates self-interest (Parry and Bloch 1989, 9). The notion of hospitality based on purely altruistic motives is the other side of the coin from the idea of hospitality being a purely utilitarian exchange. In other words, hospitality is practiced due to a combination of the desire to build civic virtue to create a sense of belonging and an effort to build up a kind of savings and investment. Through the demonstration of hospitality, a trader's investment in politics advances their own economic interests and also gains them recognition from the host society.

In the end, rather than traders only bringing in capital from outside, they are also benefiting from the constrained market access and rent seeking enabled by the area's position in the periphery of the state. Without the support of the local leader (*raja*) as a patron, many political entrepreneurs remain purely businessmen. Local people and leaders, therefore, also play an important role in balancing local power with the power of entrepreneur politicians.

Despite the limits of hospitality and the materiality of giving, both parties—traders and local people—need each other to lubricate their sociality. Objects have a “history,” according to Arjun Appadurai (1986), and the same things are framed as gifts and commodities at various periods, depending on the situation and power relations involved. Gregory (1997), in his critique of Appadurai, points out that when two parties are in an unequal relationship, the same object might be viewed as a gift by one party but a commodity by the other. The distinction reflects the different abilities of local people and traders to circulate valuable things in larger markets. This explains why, specifically in the Maluku scenario, transactions motivated by evident pecuniary or political interests are frequently portrayed as “gifts” or “hospitality” by (and occasionally for the benefit of) relatively powerless local people. The latter require chiefs and traders to broker their interactions with markets and the state.

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# Farmers' Reactions to Compulsory Land Acquisition for Urbanization in Central Vietnam

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Land is a means of production, a source of income, a form of valuable property, and a space for life. When land is compulsorily acquired by the state for development purposes, farmers react in different ways to protect their land benefits. This paper relies on resistance theories, combining both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies in order to explore how farmers in Hue's peri-urban areas reacted to the decisions of land acquisition for urban expansion. By exploring the multiple forms and the diverse outcomes of land reaction adopted by the farmers, the study contributes to the literature on responses to land conflicts in Vietnam and elsewhere. The results show that the complaint is a common reaction of many farmers in expressing their attitude toward compulsory land acquisition, while collection resistance or rightful resistance are rare in the studied villages. This might be due to several reasons, but losing land—while still staying in their own social and physical environment, within the more dynamic economic context—has a significant influence on the forms of resistance toward land loss. We argue that the existence of complaints is logical, reflecting social tensions on the ground. They are however not strong enough to influence any fundamental changes in local government decisions.

**Keywords:** urban expansion, land acquisition, compensation, land protest, Vietnam

## Introduction

Economic development and population growth require space to accommodate housing, businesses, services, infrastructure, and other facilities. An early step in the process of providing such facilities is the acquisition of appropriate land (FAO 2008). In order to procure land, when and where needed, governments often use the mechanism of compulsory land acquisition. This process may ultimately bring benefits to society, but is disruptive to the people who are forced to surrender their land; it displaces families from

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their homes and farmers from their fields and income sources. If compulsory acquisition is satisfactorily carried out by the government, people are moved to equivalent situations/lands, while at the same time the intended benefits are still provided to society. If, on the other hand, compulsory acquisition is poorly executed, it may leave people landless, with unequitable compensation, and with no way of earning a livelihood. Not surprisingly, compulsory land acquisitions are often contested and frequently meet with popular resistance in countless parts of the world, as indicated by many studies (Han and Vu 2008; Walker 2008; Schneider 2011; Mamonova 2012). When faced with the prospect of losing land, reactions from individuals vary greatly and range from covert “everyday resistance” to overt “mass social movements,” in order to defend their interests.

In Vietnam, compulsory land acquisition is used by the government as a policy instrument to convert massive amounts of land for urbanization and industrialization (DiGregorio 2011; Pham Thi Nhung *et al.* 2020). It has been estimated that nearly 1 million hectares of agricultural land were transformed for non-agricultural activities between 2001 and 2010 (World Bank 2011); and nearly 630,000 households and 2.5 million people were affected by these processes (Mai Thành 2009). One of the consequences of land loss is social tension and resistance by the affected people (Han and Vu 2008). At the national level, 70 percent of the nearly 700,000 petitions sent to the authorities between 2008 and 2011 related to land deals (Thanh tra Chính phủ 2012). More serious protests, such as mass demonstrations and violence, have taken place in the largest cities. For instance, on the outskirts of Hanoi, Tho Da villagers resorted to violence to press for higher compensation (Han and Vu 2008). Also in the west of Hanoi, Lụa villagers rejected the state’s authority to unilaterally claim their cultivated land or sent their petitions to higher levels through collective protest (Nguyen Thi Thanh Binh 2017). In Hung Yen, a province in the Red River Delta, hundreds of people in the Van Giang District, having lost their land to the Eco-Park new urban project, organized mass demonstrations in Hanoi and Hung Yen (Nguyễn Hưng 2012). Thousands of households affected by the Thu Thiem Peninsula Project in Ho Chi Minh City refused the compensation offered, as it was far below the speculative market price (Hoài Thu 2009).

The above literatures suggest that land has become a burning political issue in Vietnam, especially in the largest cities. Land acquisition for urban expansion or development, and the reaction of farmers to land loss, remain a big concern of scholars from various disciplines. Recently, some works have been done on this topic in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City; however, more can be added to the literature to better understand the social context and the influence of geography, culture, and tradition on the reaction of people to land loss in various communities. Drawing upon the case of Hue—a medium-sized city in Central Vietnam, the study seeks to understand how farmers have

reacted to the decisions of local authorities to acquire their agricultural land for urban expansion.

This article proceeds as follows: after a short review of the literature on the everyday resistance theories, we will outline the research site and data collection methods, followed by an overview of land loss, compensation, and change in livelihoods of affected households, as well as farmers' reaction to land loss found in Hue's peri-urban areas. The last section offers discussions and conclusions.

### Everyday Resistance Theories and Land Protests in Vietnam

Over the last decade, research on resistance has grown within fields that partly overlap; mainly subaltern, feminist, cultural, queer, peasant, and post-structural studies. Since James Scott wrote *Weapons of the Weak* (1985), a significant part of resistance studies has investigated the area of "everyday resistance." This concept is used in this study to understand how farmers in a Hue peri-urban village have reacted to land acquisition for urban expansion.

"Everyday resistance" is a theoretical concept that covers a different kind of resistance; one that is not as dramatic and visible as rebellions, riots, demonstrations, revolutions, civil war, or other such organized, collective, or confrontational articulations of resistance (Scott 1985; 1990). Everyday resistance is *quiet, dispersed, disguised, or otherwise seemingly invisible*; something Scott interchangeably calls "infrapolitics." Scott shows how certain common behavior of subaltern groups (for example, foot-dragging, escape, sarcasm, passivity, laziness, misunderstandings, disloyalty, slander, avoidance, or theft) is not always what it seems to be, but instead resistance. He argues that these activities are tactics that exploited people use in order to both survive and undermine repressive domination; especially in contexts when rebellion is too risky (Vinthagen and Johansson 2013).

Since the introduction of everyday resistance, scholarly works on protests over land have applied this concept to understand the rural politics of peasants. In case of Java, Indonesia, Peluso (1992) used the model of everyday forms of resistance to illustrate the behavior of the Samin movement. The Saminists "refused" to speak to the foresters, or to any officials. They saw the forest officials as obstructions to their inherent right to forest wood and forest land. Some villagers would "lay down" on their land and cry out "Kanggo" or "I own it." In the Philippines, Kerkvliet (1990) stated that villagers discussed, among themselves, various government policies and programs and the legitimacy or illegitimacy of the entire Marcos regime. They also debated access to land, grain,

wages, and credit; how employers treated workers, and about other issues related to the control, allocation, and use of important resources. These are recognized as the political issues that permeate everyday village life (Kerkvliet 1990). Despite the characteristics of being quiet and rarely organized or direct, Scott (1985) argues that everyday resistance is the foundation for large-scale change by constantly foiling policies. It can lead to open and confrontational forms of resistance. Accordingly, farmers' disaffection may be written down or expressed through open protests and organized petitioning (Kerkvliet 2009).

Vietnam has, for a long time, been a fertile land for studies on peasant resistance in which theories of moral economy, the rational peasant, or the power of the weak are introduced or elaborated (Nguyen Thi Thanh Binh 2017). Kerkvliet (2005) pointed out that Vietnamese farmers used "everyday forms of resistance" to express their attitude toward the collective farming cooperatives between the 1950s and 1980s. They often "cut corners," doing things that did not comply with what authorities expected of them. In addition, unless a work team, assigned to fertilize planted fields, was closely supervised, they sometimes did the work sloppily to complete the task quickly and easily, rather than taking the job seriously. Whether they worked diligently or not, the farmers reasoned, they received the same number of work points, so they took the easy way out. Consequently, collective properties—such as land, work animals, and tools—were not well cared for, and yields amounted to less than what the country needed within the context of war requirements and rapid population growth. Kerkvliet (2005; 2009) concluded that everyday resistance without social upheaval, without violence, without a change in government, and even without significant organized opposition, nonetheless contributed to authorities rethinking cooperative programs and land policy. A similar effect was also found in communist governments in Laos, China, Eastern European countries, and in the Soviet Union (Kerkvliet 2009).

Despite the characteristics of being quiet and rarely organized or direct, Scott (1985) argues that everyday resistance is the foundation for large-scale change by constantly foiling policies. It can lead to open and confrontational forms of resistance (Kerkvliet 2009). However, certain transformation conditions need to be met for this to actually take place. This, firstly, comprises political circumstances that allow farmers and disadvantaged individuals to express their opinions. For instance, in Vietnam, various laws and regulations (The Land Law 2013, the Grassroots Democracy Decree No. 34/2007) have been promulgated, encouraging social organizations and citizens to participate in formulating, implementing, and monitoring policies at the local level. Secondly, the emergence of individual leaders and groups (e.g. civil social organizations) that are able to band villagers together in order to mold their actions and behaviors into powerful

entities (Kerkvliet 2009). These conditions, as highlighted by Scott (1985) and Kerkvliet (2005; 2009) have changed the forms of farmers' reactions to move from hidden to open forms of resistance (Schneider 2011). Scholarly works on protests over land have moved beyond the everyday resistance model to focus on a contestatory mode of politics—rightful resistance (Labbé 2011; Nguyen Thi Thanh Binh 2017). Rightful resistance, according to O'Brien, is a form of popular contention against the state in which groups of weak peasants use nonviolent methods. However, rightful resisters actively seek the attention of the elites, and their protests are public and open (O'Brien 1996). In China, for instance, people affected by land lost to urbanization expressed their discontent through rightful resistance. These included petitions sent to local authorities or face-to-face meetings with officials (Walker 2008). In peri-urban Hanoi, Labbé (2011) examines the resistance of villagers to land redevelopment projects and found that groups of villagers relied on a strategy of “rightful resistance” embedded in the official discourse of deference, inasmuch as they based their claims on official policies and ethical pronouncements by the Vietnamese party-state itself. Nguyen Thi Thanh Binh (2017) also applies rightful resistance theory to analyze why and how Lua villagers protest. Lua villagers went further by rejecting the state's authority to unilaterally claim their cultivated land. They did it by showing their disagreement on land appropriation, demanding to retain the land to maintain their livelihood, or by not allowing the taking of land.

However, not all the cases of resistance in practice have applied “rightful resistance” to protest about land issues. The difference in socio-economic conditions as well as the extend of land loss between regions or between localities in which resisters live has led to different forms and scales of resistance (Savage 1987). In the studied villages, most forms of reaction to land loss correspond to what the everyday resistance theory describes of villagers reacting to protect their land rights. Therefore, everyday resistance theory is mainly applied in this study to better understand how farmers in Hue's peri-urban areas have reacted to the decisions of local authorities to take their agricultural land for urban expansion. This study is also a valuable contribution to the literature on responses to land acquisition in Vietnam and elsewhere.

## Methods

### *Background: The Research Site*

This study was conducted in Hue, a medium-sized city in central Vietnam. Hue is organized into 29 wards and 7 communes with a total area of 265,99 square kilometers. Due to the restrictions imposed by heritage conservation policy in the north of the city (the



Citadel area), the core of Hue has mainly expanded to the south of city. The south has become the center of administrative bodies for the province and city, for tourism, and for residential areas. As a result, the administrative area of Hue increased from 71.68 km<sup>2</sup> to 265.99 km<sup>2</sup> in 2021 (Ủy Ban Thường vụ Quốc hội 2021). This process has created pressure regarding land use, especially in the peri-urban areas.

The peri-urban area, as defined by Simon *et al.* (2006), is a zone of direct impact—which experiences the immediate impacts of land demands from urban growth, pollution and the like, and a wider market-related zone of influence—recognizable in the handling of agricultural and natural resource products. The urban expansion of Hue has remarkably impacted the socio-economic transformation of peri-urban localities. First, there is the decline of agriculture, particularly planted areas and the production of the main crops such as rice, sweet potatoes, cassava, and vegetables. Second, the improvement of infrastructural systems and institutional innovations has significantly contributed to the establishment of business enterprises in various fields such as commerce, construction, manufacturing, the textile industry, etc. This has brought the local population many employment opportunities in non-farming sectors. Third, the peri-urban localities have become denser in recent years. The main cause of this upward tendency might be the growth of population in this area, the moving of urban citizens into peri-urban villages, and the influx of migrants from other parts of the country.

Land acquisition in Hue's peri-urban areas is characterized mainly by the acquisition of agricultural land, after which the vast majority of affected households have remained

**Table 1** Compulsory Land Acquisition in Hue's Peri-Urban Zones (2000–18)

Localities	Area (ha)	Affected Households (#)
Vy Da	21	175
Xuan Phu	23	180
An Hoa	10	225
Huong So	30	280
An Dong	18	169
An Tay	12	210
Phu Thuong	81	580
Thuy Van	105	515
Thuy Duong	127	496
Total	427	2,830

Source: Computed by author from the reports of local authorities.

Note: The statistical number for land acquisition areas in Thuy Bieu, Huong Long, and Thuy Xuan is not available.

in their original homes and received compensation money, while a limited number of households who lost their housing plots have resettled elsewhere within the same village or surrounding villages. It is estimated that 427 hectares of land in Hue's peri-urban areas (over 80 percent of which was agricultural land) were acquired between 2000 and 2018 (HSO 2018). Nearly 3,000 households have been impacted by land acquisition processes. This process is predicted to expand in the coming years, when the urban development becomes more intensive.

According to the 2013 Land Law, households that have lost part or all of their land to urban expansion were compensated and supported for livelihood reconstruction. In principle, compensation and support for the losses consist of three main components: (i) compensation for land use rights; (ii) compensation for assets on current land; and (iii) monetary support for life stabilization and job change training (Land Law 2013). However, the amount of money paid depends on compensation rates, set yearly by the provincial governments, and depends on the locality in which the land is situated, the size of loss, and when the acquisition took place.

For this study, the author selected four peri-urban sites: Thuy Duong, Thuy Van, Phu Thuong, and Huong So, where most of the agricultural land has been acquired to build new urban developments such as An Cuu City, An Van Duong, Vicoland, Royal Park, Eco Garden Hue, etc.

### *Data Collection and Analysis*

The research was carried out by using both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. For the quantitative component, 170 households were surveyed by questionnaire to investigate the impacts of land loss. The questionnaire addressed three central areas, namely: (i) general household characteristics; (ii) the amount of land lost, the level of participation, and the compensation process; and (iii) changes in livelihood assets, livelihood activities, and livelihood outcomes. The surveys were done in early 2015. Sample households were randomly selected based on the land acquisition decision lists provided by local authorities. These interviews were mostly conducted with one or two household members (usually the husband and/or wife). The data from the household surveys was coded and analyzed using SPSS 22. For the qualitative component, 10 villagers were selected for the in-depth interviews. They were identified from the stories collected during the quantitative interviews that we believed played an important role or were directly involved in the reactions to land acquisition. The villagers were encouraged to share their reactions and participation in the response to land acquisition processes.

## Land Loss, Compensation, and Change in Livelihoods

### *Loss of Land and Compensation*

The household surveys show that the average area of agricultural land has decreased from 2,725 m<sup>2</sup> to 1,500 m<sup>2</sup> per household. In other words, the average household has lost nearly 56 percent of their agricultural land (or 1,225 square meters). Of the total number of households interviewed, 25.3 percent have lost over 70 percent of their agricultural land, 42.4 percent have lost between 30 and 70 percent, and 32.4 percent have lost less than 30 percent of their agricultural land.

According to the 2013 Land Law, households that lost part or all of their land were compensated and supported for livelihood reconstruction. Households received, on average, 26.8 million VND (1 USD=21,828 VND) in compensation. Furthermore, depending on the size of loss, households were supported for vocational training, as well as for funding to assist with occupational change. However, this type of compensation package was only awarded to households that lost between 30 and 70 percent (180 kg of rice per person for six months) and households that lost over 70 percent of their agricultural land (180 kg of rice per person for 12 months). In practice, all support was paid in a single cash payment without rice. Farm workers who lost their land use rights, on average, received between 1.8 and 3 million VND in support to assist with occupational change.

### *Change in Livelihoods*

Looking at the ways in which households have coped with urban expansion and their main income source after land loss, we observed five key livelihood strategies: (i) farming only; (ii) a diversified livelihood where farmers combine casual employment and farming; (iii) a combination of self-employment with farming as a supplementary form of work; (iv) a diversified livelihood based on stable waged labor and farming; and (v) an exit from farming altogether.

**Table 2** Comparison of Agricultural Land before and after Land Loss

Land Loss Groups	Number of Households	Percentage of Households	Before Loss (m <sup>2</sup> )	Lost Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	After Loss (m <sup>2</sup> )
Limited <30%	55	32.4	2,962	541	2,420
Intermediate 30–70%	72	42.3	3,011	1,348	1,662
High >70%	43	25.3	1,944	1,892	51
Whole sample	170	100	2,725	1,225	1,500

Source: Nguyen Quang Phuc *et al.* (2017).

**Table 3** Household Livelihood Strategies before and after Land Loss

Livelihood Strategy	Number of Households		Remaining Land Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Average Number of Members per hh.	Average Number of Labors per hh.	Average Amount of Compensation per hh. (VND million)
	Before	After				
Farming only	22	8	1,680	3.2	1.5	27.2
Casual work and farming	40	42	1,348	5.1	3.3	31.3
Self-employment and farming	59	53	1,672	5.2	3.3	28.1
Wage work and farming	49	47	1,908	5.4	3.8	26.7
Exit from farming	0	20	301	4.5	2.7	13.1
Total	170	170	1,500	5.1	3.3	26.8

Source: Nguyen Quang Phuc *et al.* (2021).

Table 3 presents some key characteristics of households, subdivided according to the five livelihood strategies observed. Some of these characteristics are in line with expectations; for instance, households exiting farming altogether are seen to have very little land left. Meanwhile, households continuing a livelihood focused on farming alone have in fact lost slightly more land than other groups. Most of these households, with an average number of 3.2 members, were relatively old, widowed, or no longer healthy enough to move into jobs outside of self-employed farming. The average size of the remaining land after appropriation amounts to 1,680 m<sup>2</sup>—generally not enough to provide an adequate livelihood based purely on farming. As a result, three out of eight households with a sufficient labor force leased additional agricultural land to pursue a strategy of intensification by combining rice cultivation for food supply with vegetable cultivation and livestock for markets.

Households basing on casual work and farming largely depend on casual work (day-labor) as the main income source. Casual work includes roles such as construction workers, motorbike riders, or lottery ticket sellers—these are jobs that are unstable, low-paying, and require little or no education. As a result of both land loss and tourism growth, the number of households applying the strategy of self-employment and farming (knitting, handicrafts, and small-scale trade) has increased from 28 to 41 people. Women often play an important role in this work; this may be due to the fact that self-employment tends to offer a relatively stable source of income that can be combined with other activities, especially work at home. Households pursuing the strategy of wage work and farming are represented by those who have more land than others, even after suffering land loss. The number of wage-laborers after land loss increased from 68 to 92 people. Most wage laborers in households pursuing the strategy of wage labor and farming are young people with marketable educational levels and social networks.

They found work in Thuy Duong textile factories and manufacturing enterprises in Phu Bai industrial zones, as well as in tourism, government offices, and commercial centers.

In terms of household income, the results of the household surveys show that urban growth and land acquisition may not threaten the livelihood of affected households. Of the 170 households interviewed, 84.1 percent increased their income after land loss. The gross household income per household has increased significantly for the vast majority of households affected by land loss, from 64.4 (US\$ 3,066) to 75.1 million VND (US\$ 3,576). It should be noted that this result may be due to many different reasons, particularly job opportunities in an expanding local economy such as Hue, and losing farmland without displacement. Interestingly, while being forced to leave part or almost all of their farmland for urban expansion projects, the important role of farming as an income source is only slightly reduced. Farming income after land loss still contributes 15.3 percent to household income, compared to 26.8 percent before land loss. This indicated that farming appeared as a main source of food supply for household consumption.

### **Farmers' Reactions to Land Acquisition for Urban Expansion**

As stated by Scott (1985), Kerkvliet (2005), and Peluso (1992), everyday resistance involves little or no organization. It is done by individuals or small groups, and often occurs where people live and work. However, Scott (1985) also argues that everyday resistance is the foundation for large-scale change by constantly foiling policies. It can lead to open and confrontational forms of resistance. Looking at how villagers in the studied villages reacted to land loss, we observed four basic forms: (i) adaptation to the land acquisition but with complaint; (ii) acceptance land loss but "false declaration" to get more compensation; (iii) acceptance of land loss but "delaying" reception of compensation money; and (iv) open reaction through petitions and face-to-face questioning. Among these forms of reaction, the complaints took place more frequently than the remaining types of reactions. We now need to take a closer look at the main characteristics of four forms of farmers' reactions to land acquisition.

#### *Adaptation to Land Loss but with Complaint*

We found that complaint is commonly used by almost all affected farmers to express their disagreement about land acquisition processes. "The topic of land loss and compensation appeared in our daily life. We complained to our friends, neighbors, or relatives about whatever we [were] dissatisfied [with]. The complaint took place at the accidental meet-

ings, parties within family, hamlets, or communes. The complaint might not bring any benefit for us. It might only satisfy our discontent” (In-depth interview, male, 65 years, Thuy Van commune). Interestingly, the young people were less likely to care about what was going on. Conversely, the old people paid much attention to the consequences of land loss. Explaining their reasons, a 70-year-old widow in Huong So stated: “They [the young] were no longer attached to farming activities. Most worked in non-farm sectors and their lives were not much changed due to the land loss. They welcomed absolutely investors because they prefer urban lifestyles taking shape in villages. We [the elderly] might face numerous challenges in the life if there is insufficient social security and support from the government and our children.”

With respect to the main reason for complaints, the interviews showed that the inequality in compensation processes has become contentious issues among farmers. Nearly 93 percent of households surveyed contended that the compensation was unequitable and did not account for the increase in land values following the completion of projects. They argued that, when the construction of new urban infrastructure projects is completed, land prices will rapidly increase. None of this gain in value is shared with the people vacating the land in question. Moreover, compensation rates are also deemed unfair by land users due to the inconsistency across projects, administrative boundaries, and over different time periods. For example, one square meter of farm land in Xuan Phu Ward was compensated with 41,000 VND in 2010, while in Thuy Van Commune—a neighboring locality of Xuan Phu—the rate was only 19,000 VND per square meter. Even when projects are located in the same locality, compensation also differs for households who lost land in different time periods. In Thuy Duong, one square meter of farmland was compensated at 1,250 VND in 2004, but ten years later yielded 11 million VND per square meter. Therefore, some households received compensation amounting to tens of millions of VND, while others had to accept a much lower amount, depending on the timing of land conversion.

Additionally, the complaints originated from lacking of participation in the land acquisition process. Local governments usually play a dominant role in the decision-making process while the people who stand to lose their land and livelihoods generally are not part of such discussions. People were allowed to attend all formal meetings organized by the local governments; however their roles in practice were limited: they only listened to announcements and identified the land loss areas. They also did not have right to negotiate about the compensation rates or additional support. For those who are elderly, widowed, or disabled, their participation in the land acquisition process is even more limited.

“I am 79 years old and live alone. I am not strong enough to go to the communal people’s committee to get land acquisition information. I only know summary information provided by Mr. B (a neighbor)—that my family will lose 1,000 square meters of farmland for a new urban area to be built, Dong Nam Thuy An. However, I do not know anything about compensation rates and how to get it. The local authorities also do not invite me to attend the meetings.” (In-depth interview, Female, 79 years, Thuy Duong commune)

Lastly, the complaints also originated from the use of the concept of “public interest” (*lợi ích công cộng*) to justify the taking of land. In theory, the governments have the right to compulsorily acquire land from current land users for public interest and economic development (e.g. construction of public infrastructure, commercial centers, new urban areas, and resettlement areas). Accordingly, all land acquisition projects implemented in Hue’s peri-urban zones relate to public interest. This argument is advanced by governments who state that these projects deliver benefits to the majority of the population. Contrary to the government’s point of view, the majority of respondents question whether or not taking land can be justified as serving public interest. They argue that taking land does not serve the public at large, but rather the interests of investors and businesses. They believe that when the government transfers low-value agricultural land for high-value residential and commercial development, the investors and the state stand to obtain a massive profit from the increase in land prices. Conversely, the affected people are not satisfactorily compensated as they do not share in the increase in land values.

“We (villagers) accept the decision to acquire land for urban development, but we are not satisfied with the benefit-sharing mechanism between the investors and affected people. The fact is that the villagers do not benefit from the My Thuong new urban area. The beneficiaries are the investors. We are only compensated 21,000 VND per square meter for farmland while land then is being advertised in the media as construction land at the rate of 5 million VND per square meter. This is not fair! The state is taking land from the people (poor) to give to elite urban consumers and firms (rich). Is this in the public interest?” (In-depth interview, man, 62 years, Phu Thuong commune)

*Acceptance of Land Acquisition Decisions but Attempt to Exploit Benefit from Compensation Packages through “False Declaration”*

According to the 2013 Land Law, the Board of Compensation, Support, and Resettlement (BCSR) conducted surveys on land size and assets on land before compensation. Farmers were required to declare how much land was acquired, as well as to make a statement about their assets on land such as rice, vegetable, trees, houses, etc. These documents were then sent to the People’s Committee at the commune level and the BCSR for review. The BCSR prepared an overall compensation plan based on the results of the surveys.



The “false declaration” (*khai báo sai*) did not occur in Thuy Duong or Phu Thuong where only agricultural land (land use rights and rice crops) was lost. Conversely, it took place in Thuy Van and Huong So where both agricultural land and other physical assets were dispossessed in particular graves and tombs (*mộ mã*). The main reasons why “false declaration” appeared in Thuy Van and Huong So were: (i) that one grave (*mộ thật*) was compensated with 1.6 million VND which is equivalent to 84.2 times the compensation rate for one square meter of agricultural land; (ii) that local governments did not actually know the number of graves and tombs belonging to each family; and (iii) that the BCSR is not likely to excavate and check the graves, as this would be offensive to local beliefs and customs.

“One new road connecting Pham Van Dong with the Tu Duc—Thuan An Road was constructed in Thuy Van in 2013. Thirty-eight households had to move ‘mộ mã’ (real graves) from the local burial-ground to other places. According to the current land law, graves are recognized as land-related assets. Therefore, affected people have to declare them to local authorities when they are displaced by the land acquisition process. At this stage, some villagers sneak into the local burial-ground (*nghĩa địa*) at night to make fake graves (*mộ giả*), hoping to get more compensation money. Consequently, the declaration of villagers in the survey questionnaires is rather different from the real number of graves they own. Mr. T, the director of the Center for Land Fund Development<sup>1)</sup> of Huong Thuy District (CLFD) said at a meeting that: I cannot imagine! Graves in this locality spring up like mushrooms. More than forty persons die each night. However, the local authorities did not find a suitable solution. Therefore, the BCSR agreed to compensate the ‘fake graves’ created by villagers.” (In-depth interview, man, 56 years, Thuy Van commune)

### *Delaying Reception of Compensation Money*

This form of reaction took place in Thuy Duong and Thuy Van Commune. The main reason for this occurrence was due to the provincial compensation framework, which results in low compensation and resistance. In many cases, the amount of compensation paid was not enough to buy an equivalent parcel of land in the same village (in the case of residential land), or not enough to buy the necessary food to sustain daily living (in the case of land loss in Thuy Duong).

“One square meter of farmland in Thuy Duong was compensated with VND 1,250. Some farmers complain that this is not enough to lease a similar area of land, or to buy a bowl of Hue’s beef noodle soup (*tô bún bò Huế*). Not agreeing with the compensation paid, 15 households affected by land loss for the Dong Nam Thuy An project delayed reception of compensation money (*trì hoãn nhận tiền đền bù*) from the BCSR. Eager to overcome this constraint and push ahead with its

1) The Center for Land Fund Development is established at two levels: province and city/district. It is an important member of BCSR in preparing compensation and resettlement plans. It is responsible for controlling planned land areas for development projects and introducing planned areas for investors.

project, the investor—Investment and Construction Joint Stock Company No. 8 (CIC8), a state-owned company—was very flexible in seeking solutions. CIC8 provided financial incentives and valuable ‘gifts’ (TV, fridge, and electric fan) to land-losing households. In addition, community leaders such as heads of villages tend to ‘campaign’ in favor of land acquisition projects because local authorities receive one-fifth of the benefits from land conversion gained by the public sector. Thus, local authorities spending and community projects, to some extent, depend on revenue from land acquisition. Only after receiving additional benefits from the investor, and under pressure from local leaders, did those who delayed the reception of compensation money finally agree with the compensation rate offered by local governments? Only then could the transaction be concluded and did the BCSR disburse compensation packages.” (In-depth interview, man, 58 years, Thuy Duong commune)

Another reason for delaying reception of compensation money paid is that, the compensation methods in practice do not seem suitable, especially for displacement projects.

“Fifty-two households affected by an infrastructure project did not agree to move to the resettlement area. Although they accepted the land acquisition decisions, they delayed to get compensation packages from the BCSR due to two reasons: (i) almost all people preferred to relocate within the old locality, Xuan Hoa Village, where they lived for many years, and enjoyed good relationships with their neighbors; (ii) each household was allocated between 90 to 120 square meters to build new houses. This size, according to the villagers, is not enough for a new house and a vegetable garden, as they had before. Therefore, the people in question continue to wait for the provincial government to provide a suitable solution.” (In-depth interview, man, 47 years, Thuy Van commune)

### *Open Reaction through Petitions and Face-To-Face Questioning*

A review of literature indicates that an increased number of petitions are being sent to the local authorities in recent years. It is rather difficult to obtain systematic information from the local authorities about the number or nature of such forms of popular reaction. The fact is that information related to “reaction,” “petition,” “complaint,” or “resistance” is often sensitive in the political system of Vietnam.

In the villages studied, the local annual reports showed that 120 petitions had been sent to the local authorities between 2010 and 2013 by households. Approximately 15 percent of the petitions (18 petitions) deal with land disputes, compensation, and resettlement. On average, there were five petitions related to land issues sent annually to the local authorities. With respect to the outcomes of open reactions, the local reports and interviews indicate that around 20 percent of the petitions (mainly relating to low compensation and unsuitable resettlement policy) have not yet been answered by those responsible for the land acquisition process. This is not surprising; the compensation framework is annually fixed by the provincial government; therefore, local leaders may not be in a position to directly answer the petitions or questions raised in meetings. For

a final answer, farmers and local authorities have to wait for decisions from the higher levels of government.

Another type of open reaction is face-to-face questioning. This often occurs at meetings: (i) between the BCSR and households affected by land loss when they discuss the compensation plan; and (ii) between people and people's councils which are organized twice a year at the communal level (*Tiếp xúc cử tri*). These meetings are perceived as important forums for local people to raise their concerns. However, face-to-face questioning is a rare practice in rural communities. Mr. H, a retired man in the commune of Phu Thuong who has participated in numerous meetings, explains this as follows: "people are often allowed to join the meetings but their role is relatively limited: attending and listening to announcements. A limited number of participants can raise questions. These questions mainly come from those who have a good educational background or access to relevant information."

These above analyses illustrate that farmers in the studied villages have used different forms of resistance to respond to compulsory land acquisition. While some people satisfy their discontent through complaints, others might obtain extra economic benefits through false declarations and delaying reception of compensation money or through petitions. Although everyday resistance is a more common form of reaction and is low-profile in nature, it has also created losses for investors and governments at the local levels (e.g., the time is not used towards solving problems, increases in compensation expenditure, and delayed projects).

## Discussion and Conclusion

The case of Hue's peri-urban areas allows us to draw a few key discussions and conclusions about farmers' reactions to compulsory land acquisition. First, the result shows that complaint is a common reaction by many farmers in expressing their attitude toward land acquisition. The complaint is a safe method, flexible, and quite natural in everyday village life, where villagers can express their views and attitudes at any time. For those who want to seek safety first, the complaint is a safe choice. This trend is consistent with the findings found in other post-communist countries and in various post-Soviet countries, where power is controlled by a single party-state, where a process of institutional reform is happening, and where the role of rural associations is limited (Kerkvliet 2009).

However, the so-called "everyday forms of resistance" of farmers found in the villages studied did not have much effect on changing the decisions of local governments.

In the short term, they may only serve as an outlet for farmer to vent, and/or only bring immediate benefits to a limited number of farmers in the community—increases in compensation benefits through “false declaration” or by creating immediate losses for investors (e.g. increase in compensation expenditures or delayed projects) due to “delaying” the reception of compensation money. In the long term, we argue that everyday resistance may no longer be just a “weapon of the weak” for social demand-making. The existence of this form of resistance in everyday life is logical, reflecting social tensions on the ground. They cannot result in changes in the decisions of the local governments. This finding differs from conclusions offered by previous studies which showed that everyday forms of resistance of villagers in Vietnam, Laos, China, Thailand, and other countries influenced government policy (Stuart-Fox 1996; Kerkvliet 2005; 2009). In this sense, we argue that the compelling pressures for the change in the decision-making process in Hue or elsewhere might not come from everyday resistance, but from open resistance through collective actions such as those which took recently in Hanoi, Hung Yen, and Ho Chi Minh City.

The weakness of the farmers’ reaction in Hue’s peri-urban zones might stem from several reasons. First, the employment opportunities derived from urban growth in a medium-sized city like Hue may be relatively accessible to local people, even more so since the improvement of infrastructure, particularly the roads in the peri-urban areas, enables daily commuting between villages to city and industrial zones. Without this dynamic economic context, the livelihood options of the research population would have been far less positive (and of course, there would also have been less land conversion). It is the creation of alternative income sources, especially outside of agriculture, i.e., the demand for labor in the regional economy (construction, handicrafts for tourism, small-scale trade, textile factories, and manufacturing enterprises in industrial zones) that has enabled the successful reconstruction of the livelihoods for almost all of surveyed households. Livelihood outcomes after land loss are, overall, relatively positive, as evidenced by the fact that most of the affected households have been able to restore their pre-land-loss income levels. Second, the lost area per household is quite small—more than half of their agricultural land. Most of households still pursue diversified livelihoods after losing land by combining farming with non-farming activities as before urban expansion. In other word, peri-urban villages are no longer agricultural communities, though most households do value their link to farming. The ability to produce food for household consumption is viewed as a safeguard for the vagaries of the market, protecting one against outside risk. In this case, farming is considered not only as a “livelihood insurance” of the rural population, but it also makes households less vulnerable to urban expansion. As a result, the farmers affected by urban expansion easily accept the land

loss. Third, the final reason in explaining the weakness of farmers' reactions to land loss might come from historical, social, and cultural dimensions. Indeed, social life and characteristics of Hue people are profoundly affected by the ideology of feudal system under the Nguyen Dynasty (1802–1945) as well as the spirit of Buddhism. Accordingly, honesty, hospitality, and temperateness are salient features of people in Hue. They are often self-controlled people, and do not engage in intense conflict (Phùng Đình Mẫn 2008; Trương Tiến Dũng 2016). This is also why the complaint is a common form of reaction used by farmers in expressing their attitude toward land acquisition.

Whether everyday resistance or rightful resistance, the nature of farmers' reaction is the first sign of social tension and might imply a failure of the top-down approach in land acquisition processes. This is a challenge in land governance for equitable and sustainable development. It can be tackled by strengthening institutions, enhancing the responsibility of local governments and investors in policy implementation, and in better involvement of affected people during decision-making processes.

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*Conceptualizing the Malay World: Colonialism and Pan-Malay Identity in Malaya*

SODA NAOKI

Kyoto: Kyoto University Press; Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2020.

Soda Naoki's dissertation-turned-book titled *Conceptualizing the Malay World* is one of the few works in English on the thoughts of Ibrahim Yaakob (1911–79), a Malay nationalist and founding-leader of the left-wing Kesatuan Melayu Muda (KMM, Young Malay Association).<sup>1)</sup> Ibrahim Yaakob's ideas, borne from the volume's sub-title, *Colonialism and Pan-Malay Identity in Malaya*, succinctly presents his notion and design of a wider configuration of Malay identity, their sense of belonging, and a reconvening of a past all encapsulated in the term *Indonesia Raya* or *Melayu Raya*—the latter seemed more appropriate in the present context (review). The term simply translates as Greater Indonesia or Greater Malay, respectively. It is a geopolitical concept of resurrecting the pre-colonial Malay world, that is bringing together people of the so-called Malay race across all the territories where they have settled, namely what had become consequent of Western imperialism and colonialism: the Netherlands East Indies, Portuguese Timor, British Malaya, and British Borneo. Besides the entity of Portuguese Timor which was established in 1702, British and Dutch colonial territories were the outcome of the Treaty of London (1824) which arbitrarily drew a plumb line along the Straits of Melaka wherein Britain arbitrarily claimed as its sphere of influence all lands and seas northwards, and the Netherlands, southwards. With this proverbial stroke of the pen, what was then the realm of the Malay race, or regarded as the Malay World which coincides with the greater part of insular Southeast Asia, was split between the Western imperial powers, each respectively follow the drumbeat of their colonial masters.

In present-day terms, Ibrahim Yaakob visualized a united realm referred to as *Melayu Raya*

1) Another work in English on Ibrahim Yaakob *per se*, see Cheah (1979), and similarly in Malay specifically focused on him, see Khoo (1979), Abdul Latiff (1981), and Bachtiar (1985). Undeniably, there are scores of studies on Malay left-wing radicals in both English and Malay; for more recent works, see Aljuneid (2015), Ahmat Adam (2013), Rustam A. Sani (2008), and Ramlah Adam (2004).

comprising Indonesia (Netherlands East Indies), Timore Leste (Portuguese Timor), Malaysia (British Malaya without Singapore, and British Borneo), and Singapore (once part of British Malaya). Ambitious in scope, but a vain vision where subsequent geopolitical events and developments overtook its realization.

Interestingly, Ibrahim Yaakob's *Melayu Raya* was in fact "realized" to a certain extent when Imperial Japan imposed its military occupation during the Pacific War (1941–45) of what subsequently became the region we recognized as Southeast Asia with the notable exception of Thailand.<sup>2)</sup> The Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) administered the pre-war territories of British Malaya (present-day Peninsular/West Malaysia and Singapore) and Sumatra (a part of today's Indonesia) from its administrative headquarters at Shōnantō (Singapore). Imperial Japan literally turned back the clock, a rational and logical configuration of administrative division, viz. British Malaya and Sumatra (IJA); Java (IJA); British Borneo (IJA); Dutch Borneo, Sulawesi, Maluku to Papua (Imperial Japanese Navy, IJN) (Ooi 2011).

Ibrahim Yaakob himself published three book-length works, viz. *Melihat tanah air* (Observations on the motherland) (1941; 2nd ed. 1975); *Nusa dan bangsa Melayu* (Motherland and Malay nation) (1951); and *Sekitar Malaya merdeka* (On free Malaya) (1957) wherein his ideas of *Melayu Raya* were expounded. There is in fact another book that he wrote, *Sedjarah dan perjuangannya di Malaya* (The history and struggle in Malaya) (1948), but under an alias, IK Agastja, which was published in Indonesia while he was in exile. After the war, in order to avoid detention by the British colonial authorities, Ibrahim Yaakob fled to Indonesia where he remained until his passing in 1979.

In *Melihat tanah air*, he lamented the dire economic and political condition and situation of the Malay peasantry: the common people or *rakyat* (masses), viz.

Sesungguhnya akibat membuka Negeri Melayu ini telah mendatangkan berbagai kesan yang membawa bencana kepada kehidupan Bangsa Melayu, oleh sebab desakan modal dan buruh daripada luar itu. Jadinya bagi umat Melayu negerinya meskipun dibuka akan tetapi oleh beberapa sebab yang tertentu tidaklah dapat mereka merasai nikmat tanahairnya sendiri. Diantara sebab-sebabnya ialah (1) Orang Melayu tidak mengerti cara-cara pentadbiran modal, (2) Orang Melayu tidak faham akan muslihat-muslihat yang datang dari luar, ialah oleh sebab mereka telah lebih lima ratus tahun ditindih di bawah kezaliman Kerajaan Raja-Raja dengan peperangan sama mereka sendiri. (Ibrahim 1941, 48)

Indeed, as a result of the opening up of the Malay State, it has brought various devastating effects to the lives of the Malay Nation consequent of the pressure of capital and labour from without.

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2) Treaty between Thailand and Japan Concerning the Continuance of Friendly Relations and the Mutual Respect of Each Other's Territorial Integrity ensured that Thailand was spared invasion and occupation, and at the same time Imperial Japanese forces were allowed passage for the invasion of British Malaya. This Japanese–Thai agreement was signed in Tokyo on June 12, 1940 prior to the outbreak of hostilities.

Therefore, for the Malays of the country, even though it was opened to all, but due to some specific reasons, they could not experience the blessings of their own homeland. Among the reasons are (1) The Malays were unable to grasp and understand the ways and means of the financial administration of capital, (2) The Malays do not understand the tricks and deceptions of outsiders, because they have been oppressed for more than five hundred years under the tyrannous governance of their rulers who fought among themselves.

He did not mince his words when he placed the onus on the Malay rulers of the past for the oppression of the Malay peasantry, and in subtle fashion, the former in current collaboration with the British colonialist, were responsible for the dire straits of the *rakyat* owing to the influx and machinations of foreign capital and immigrant labor.

But more revealing for the present purpose is his conclusion-cum-resolution following his travels throughout his homeland during which he had witnessed the plight of the *rakyat*.

Pada masa yang akhir-akhir ini iaitu lepas daripada lima ratus tahun lamanya mereka (orang Malaya) menghadapi peperangan saudara bingga Semenanjung Tanah Melayu ini terbagi kepada beberapa puak yang bernegeri dan berlawanan diantaranya sendiri, maka pada masa ini mulailah datang cita-cita hendak bersekutu semula. Bukanlah sahaja di antara umat-umat Malaya dua juta di Tanah Melayu ini, tetapi dengan umat (rumpun) Melayu di Indonesia seramai enam puluh lima juta itu. Mereka ingin hendak bersatu berkerjasama menggerakkan ikatan kebangsaan bersama menuju Indonesia Raya. Tetapi hari ini hanyalah satu perasaan sahaja baru dan sebahagian ramai dari pihak kaum pertuanan atau darah Raja-Raja yang masih memegang teguh dengan perasaan lamanya sangatlah menentang perasaan-perasaan baru hendak mempersatukan umat (rumpun) Melayu semuanya itu. (Ibrahim 1941, 20)

In recent times, after more than five hundred years, they (the Malays) faced internecine wars until the Malay Peninsula was divided into several independent factions/states that opposed one another, so at this time, the desire and sentiment to be reunited has emerged. Among not only the two million Malays in Malaya, but with the sixty-five million Malay brethren in Indonesia. They intend to unite and work together to foster a national bond towards the pursuit of Greater Indonesia. But today it is just a new feeling and many from the ruling elite or the nobility who still hold fast to their conservative beliefs are very much against the new sentiments to unite the Malay people.

In his writings, Ibrahim Yaakob is explicit in expounding his ideas as a panacea to the plight of the Malay masses.

Soda, on his part, “examines the interrelations between the indigenization of ‘colonial knowledge,’ by which [he] mean[s] ‘the colonizer’s knowledge of the colonized,’ and the quest for a pan-Malay identity in Malaya [Peninsular Malaysia]” (p. 1). What is more, “In what way, to what extent and for what purpose did the colonized accept, modify and adapt the colonizer’s worldview?” (p. 1).

How did Soda intend to undertake his study?

Education played a vital role in knowledge transmission and identity construction in British Malaya. [Hence] [t]his research focuses primarily on Malay-medium education in Malaya. . . . it explores the transmission of knowledge at a central training college for male Malay-school teachers, namely the Sultan Idris Training College (SITC). (p. 1)

Furthermore,

Despite the significance of colonial education, we cannot assume that the Malays unquestioningly absorbed the new framework of knowledge brought by British colonialists. Malays could also transform and reconstitute the modern concept of ‘Malayness,’ which means the condition of being Malay or the set of characteristics that are used to define Malay. We must understand why and how colonial education substantially contributed to bringing about an ‘unintended result’ for the colonizer, that is, the growth of ethno-national feeling among the colonized. (pp. 1–2)

Hence, in “investigating the indigenization of colonial knowledge,” Soda utilized Ibrahim Yaakob’s intellectual history as “*an ideal case*,” hence “*The single most important figure in this study*” (p. 2, emphasis added). But why focus on a notion that has not been realized, or to put it more bluntly, has been a failure?

Yet, [Ibrahim Yaakob’s] advocacy of *Melayu Raya* can be considered as a catalyst for the postwar development of pan-Malayness in Malaya. Furthermore, a case study of Ibrahim’s conceptualization of a pan-Malay nation provides a clue for understanding the broader definition of Malayness, the officialization of the concept of *bumiputera* (lit. sons of the soil) and the authorization of the *bumiputera* policy in Malaysia. (p. 2)

Specifically, Soda “concentrates on the impact of British colonialism on the formation of pan-Malay identity in British Malaya,” where he argued, “exercised a very powerful intellectual hegemony over the local [Malay] population” through government Malay-medium schools in general and SITC in particular. He “concentrates on formal school education, in particular the teaching of history and geography of the Malay world” as was undertaken at SITC (p. 4).

Nonetheless, admittedly there are limitations to his study, and Soda identified the caveats, namely influences and impacts from other sources including Indonesian nationalism, Islamic reformism, wartime occupation by Imperial Japan, acquisition of knowledge and information from non-formal schooling, and other contemporary school systems such as English-medium education and Islamic religious education (pp. 3–4).

Besides the Introduction and Conclusion, five chapters form the core content of his study wherein each are given self-explanatory titles: Malay Vernacular Education in British Malaya (chapter 2), Knowledge and Experience: The Case of the Sultan Idris Training College (chapter 3), The Malay World in Textbooks: The Transmission of Colonial Knowledge (chapter 4), Ibrahim Haji Yaacob and Pan-Malayism: The Appropriation of Colonial Knowledge (chapter 5), and *Melayu*

*Raya* and Malaysia: Contested Pan-Malayism (chapter 6).

“To sum up,” Soda concludes, “although British colonizers imposed new forms of knowledge about the Malay world on the local ‘Malay’ populace in colonial Malaya, it was not uncommon for the locals, evidenced by Ibrahim, to *appropriate and reorganize colonial knowledge for their own claims*, even for anti-colonial and trans-colonial pan-Malayism” (p. 152, emphasis added).

Moreover,

While nationalist thinking and action in other countries, especially in the Netherlands East Indies or Indonesia, were important influences in formulating pan-Malayism in British Malaya, British colonialism played an equally important, if unintended, role in the formation of pan-Malay identity. (p. 152)

The onus is placed on British colonialism, hence the book’s sub-title, *Colonialism and Pan-Malay Identity in Malaya*.

The begging question, then, is: what do we learn from the outcome and findings of Soda’s research and analysis? Is a pan-Malay identity consequent of the notion of a *Melayu Raya*, since literally buried by London and Kuala Lumpur in 1963, and Jakarta three years later; does it still have any relevancy and/or even potency? Or is it all mere past history, a recollection of sentiments, or simply a romanticizing of the “What if”?

Soda argues that the relevancy of pan-Malayism in the 1970s has taken on “as a form of trans-national regionalism” in Malaysia as expressed by movements such as *Dunia Melayu* (Malay World) and *Dunia Melayu Dunia Islam* (DMDI) (Malay and Islamic World) that sought “solidarity and cooperation,” and were “more interested in socio-cultural and economic spheres” rather than “explicitly political matters” (pp. 153–154). Pan-Malayism was appropriated and tied to the concept of *bumiputera*, and in turn, to the affirmative policies implemented from the 1970s through the 1990s (pp. 154–156). In the post-NEP (New Economic Policy) era, pan-Malayism was related to new concepts including *Bangsa Malaysia*, the notion of belonging to one nation Malaysia; *Bangsa Melayu Baru* and *Bumiputera Baru*, or *nouveau* Malay/Bumiputera referring to Malay capitalists and Malay middle class; and the “1Malaysia” concept which espouses the notion of “unity in diversity” in Malaysia’s multi-ethnic society (pp. 156–158).

Whether we agree, or hold other viewpoints with Soda’s appropriation of pan-Malayism that has been re-interpreted and reconstructed in the aforesaid movements and/or invented concepts of Malaysia’s ruling elite, his advice that we “*continue to analyze* not only the production of new concepts and forms of knowledge but also their transmission, localization, transformation, reproduction and reconstruction,” should be given ample consideration (p. 158, emphasis added).

Devoid of conspicuous grammatical infelicities, the reader-friendly narrative and clear analysis are satisfying to both specialists and lay readers. This 206-page handsome volume is recom-

mended to those interested in the creation and formation of identity, whether ethnic, political, socio-cultural, or religious.

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## *The US Volunteers in the Southern Philippines: Counterinsurgency, Pacification, and Collaboration, 1899–1901*

JOHN SCOTT REED

Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2020.

John Scott Reed's 302-page book outlines the achievements of the United States Volunteers (USV) during the Philippine-American War of 1899–1902, America's most successful counterinsurgency (COIN) campaign waged outside the Western Hemisphere. The USVs, comprised of 25 volunteer



regiments, made a decisive contribution to the war. The USVs were recruited from 1899 to 1901 to replace the state militias who first fought in the conflict, and they served until they were relieved by a reconstituted regular army.

The book consists of a preface, an introduction, ten chapters, a conclusion, and three appendices. The book has 75 pages of references (with an average of 92 references per chapter), from page 203 to page 278; a 20 page bibliography, from page 279 to page 298; and a four page index, from page 299–302. Reed begins by describing how the opposition of Filipino nationalists to American annexation of the Philippines was an insurgency and the opposing US military effort was a counterinsurgency. The American counterinsurgency campaign was based on both attraction (through civic actions such as public health initiatives and education) and coercion (through tactical missions against guerrilla base camps and prosecutions of guerrillas under military law). Reed argues that between late 1899 and the spring of 1901, the USV practiced a regulated economy of violence targeting armed opponents and their clandestine elite supporters, while leaving non-resistant villagers unmolested. He asserts that the benign treatment of the general populace by USV troops was due to the standards of American military law, noting that while most USV soldiers were “ethnocentric white supremacists deeply dismissive of Filipino culture” (p. xii), these views were controlled by a military justice system that prevented individual beliefs from determining the collective conduct of the US pacification effort.

The USV regiments outnumbered regular Army regiments in 11 of the archipelago’s 18 military districts, particularly throughout the Visayas and northern Mindanao, which Reed refers to as the “southern Philippines.” The book examines USV combat and garrison life on Samar, Leyte, Panay, and Northern Mindanao. On each island, the USVs had five main tasks: securing population centers and transportation modes; purging guerrilla sympathizers from local governments; coercing members of the upper class to abandon the revolution; isolating armed guerrillas from food sources; and penetrating their sanctuaries and destroying their bases. These tasks were achieved without firepower and mobility advantages by using an optimal balance of violence and coercion while (by and large) respecting the human rights of Filipinos. (The infamous “water cure,” a form of torture used in interrogations, was only practiced on Panay by regular Army troops, not by the USVs.)

Chapter One first provides a strategic outline of the conflict from the 1896 revolution to the outbreak of hostilities between American and Filipino forces on February 4, 1899. The United States aimed to defeat the insurgency quickly at the lowest possible level of violence. The campaign therefore used both attractive and coercive tactics, providing civic actions and destroying insurgents. Coercive actions provided security for the attractive services, which over time diminished the need for coercive pacification. Reed notes that the American emphasis on separating the insurgents from the population foreshadowed counterinsurgency theory and practice developed during the 1960s, such as that of David Galula.

After reviewing the formation of the USVs, Chapter Two discusses the importance of the unit of the company in the US pacification effort. With so many small units scattered across the archipelago (69,161 officers and troops across 502 posts), COIN success hinged largely on the skill and judgment of junior officers, captains, and lieutenants, who were acting almost autonomously. Lacking overwhelming firepower, company officers concentrated on acquiring intelligence, patrolling, and ensuring troop discipline. Most company-grade officers previously held commissions as state volunteers, and many had learned sufficient Spanish to communicate in the Philippines while serving in the American Southwest and Cuba. “The USVs,” wrote Reed, “arrived in the islands well trained, well officered, and ready for service in difficult pacification districts” (p. 37).

Chapter Three explores the values that motivated the USV troops, which centered on the ideal of an aggressive but self-controlled masculinity in service to civilization’s expansion. The synthesis of an idealized masculinity allied with a near universal belief in American exceptionalism constituted the USV’s moral terrain.

Chapter Four follows the progress of operations on each island, focusing on the strategy of population control, which prioritized denying the insurgents money, food, recruits, and intelligence, rather than killing them. The Americans also concentrated on persuading elites that collaboration with them entailed fewer risks than continued support for the insurgents.

Chapter Five traces the development of counterinsurgency tactics. Offensive operations centered on “hikes,” or long-range patrols. These missions barred insurgents from urban areas, seized their food supplies, and gradually destroyed their bases, thus wearing them down. Intelligence was gathered from documents captured on hikes and, particularly on Panay, information was passed to troops in the field through telegraph lines. Although the USV troops were trained for conventional warfare, these tactics allowed them to further innovate for rapid long-range movements in the absence of firepower-based solutions.

Chapter Six analyzes USV combat losses. Being assigned to the archipelago’s most dangerous districts, USV troops suffered higher casualties than regular Army forces. Roughly six percent of the USV force was lost through combat, misadventure, and disease. Chapter Seven segues to an extensive discussion of medicine at the turn of the twentieth century, appraising how the Army protected soldier health. Although disease killed more soldiers than combat in the Philippine-American War, the Army was successful in institutionalizing preventative health measures. To Reed, “this may have been the *single most critical factor* in the tactical success of the USV force during its second campaign season of 1900–1901” (p. 129).

Chapter Eight examines the logistical support given to USV troops, which comprised the bare minimum necessary to keep them in the field. The austerity of their garrisons minimized cultural disruption in adjacent communities, thus supporting the pacification campaign (because poorly behaved COIN soldiers drive the population into the insurgency). This light cultural footprint could

have been negated had the behavior of USV troops not been controlled by their officers. Such internal discipline is the subject of Chapter Nine. Based on archival research, Reed demonstrates that the USVs incurred fewer disciplinary proceedings than either the state militias that preceded them or the regular Army soldiers that followed them. The USV troops were better disciplined because they were better trained, had better officers, and were deployed to places with less inducements to criminal behavior.

Chapter Ten examines to what extent USV officers were able to protect the rights of Filipino citizens under American military law. Citing authors such as Miller (1982) and Welch (1974), Reed discusses how much scholarship “portrays the pacification campaign as virtually genocidal in its effects on the Filipino people” (p. 182). To Reed, however, the crucial question is whether USV soldiers were “permitted, without punishment, to *collectively* violate the protections granted Filipino non-combatants” (p. 182). Reed concludes that USV troops were held to a higher standard of behavior than most recent historians of the conflict have understood. Troops committing criminal acts against Filipinos were systematically punished. To Reed, this was essential, because punishment of Americans who violated the laws of war reinforced the legitimacy of the occupation. An important component of how the USV troops behaved was their treatment of captured guerillas, who were either released or held as prisoners of war. This undermined the insurgency’s legitimacy and encouraged further surrenders, by contrasting the amiability and patience of the Americans with guerrilla reprisals. One of the conflict’s most notorious aspects was the use of the water cure to torture Filipinos into divulging information, particularly on Panay. However, none of the brutal interrogations documented during the US Senate hearings were committed by USV troops. During the COIN campaign, the appearance of justice was as important, if not more, than its reality. The behavior of USV troops and the willingness of USV officers to punish their men for abusing civilians was therefore critical to the archipelago’s pacification.

Reed concludes that the American counterinsurgency campaign succeeded because of a realistic pacification strategy implemented through sound operational decisions, discipline, tactical skills, and an improved Army medical system. Hikes by USV troops isolated insurgent leaders from elites, who were then recruited into a web of collaboration. American commanders understood that their primary objective was to control the population and deny resources to any insurgents remaining in the field.

The book deftly deals with several common themes in the COIN literature, such as the importance of junior officers and troop quality (see Thompson 1966; United States Army and Marine Corps 2007), intelligence (see Nagl 2005), and separating insurgents from the population (see Galula 1964; Kilcullen 2010). Yet, when discussing how the USV troops drew local elites into a web of collaboration, Reed fails to analyze how this perpetuated an oligarchy that continues to dominate Filipino society. While the United States provided social services for the population (what Reed calls attractive pacification), it did nothing to address Filipino society’s deep-seated

problems, such as landlessness. Indeed, as Linn (2000) notes, in ending resistance to their rule, the Americans sought pragmatic, sensible objectives, providing immediate benefits while leaving the archipelago's deep social problems unaddressed. Karnow also offers a strong critique, writing, "The Americans coddled the elite while disregarding the appalling plight of the peasants, thus perpetuating a feudal oligarchy that widened the gap between rich and poor" (1989, 198). This omission by Reed, may, however, be excused as his book's principal purpose is to discuss how the USV troops contributed to the Philippine-American War, not to analyze the role of American colonialism in Philippine history.

Overall, *The US Volunteers in the Southern Philippines* is well written, well researched, and provides an excellent discussion of the contribution of the USV troops to the Philippine-American War. It should be of interest not only to historians of that conflict, but also to those studying counterinsurgency warfare in general.

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*The Phantom World of Digul: Policing as Politics in Colonial Indonesia, 1926–1941*

TAKASHI SHIRAISHI

Singapore: NUS Press in association with Kyoto University Press, 2021.

**Policing the Phantom or Phantomizing the Police? The Political in the Age of Digul**

Shiraishi Takashi's *The Phantom World of Digul*, whose title was adapted from the subsection "The Phantom World of the Dark Continent" in Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, was originally conceived as "A Time of Normalcy." Combining these layers of meanings, the title embodies the related colonial processes that 1) invent the phantom of race to justify violent interferences (a phenomenon exposed by Arendt) and 2) establish normalcy under a strict law and order regime self-styled as an apolitical administrative polity (examined in depth by Shiraishi). Shiraishi's specific timeframe spans the communist-led Prambanan insurrections of 1926–27 to the Japanese Occupation in 1942. The Dutch were so haunted by memories of the 1926–27 disturbances that they shifted their policy from constructive engagement with Indonesian nationalist intellectuals to containment during the following two decades (pp. 6, 241). It was during this time—generally understood in world history as the late colonial period—that the Dutch built and operated Digul, the mass internment camp at the easternmost fringe of the Dutch East Indies, to contain the "wild and ungovernable natives." Shiraishi calls this period the Age of Digul (p. 62), a time capturing the revolutionary defeat and imperial consolidation that reversed the historical trajectory anticipated by Indonesia's early twentieth century radicals.<sup>1)</sup> Central to the late Dutch colonial dynamic—and here is both the book's argument and unique contribution—was a governing practice called political policing.

The heart of the book is in its analysis of state governance and repression in Indonesia through a historical comparison of Suharto's New Order and the late Dutch East Indies. While both regimes repressed dissident forces (primarily the communists), and are habitually conceived as continuous, *The Phantom World* cautions that if we consider the "peace and order" of the two regimes as one and the same, we overlook particular mechanisms, techniques, and meanings of late colonial governance. Whereas the New Order unapologetically killed political dissidents (hence, the equation state=death) (p. 26), the late Dutch East Indies government established a field of surveillance to police them (hence, the equation police=politics) (p. 27). In other words, while the military state kills and destroys, the police state surveils and rehabilitates (p. 8). A lazy observation would frame this comparison between the two regimes in moral terms, judging one regime more humane and civilized than the other, or the lesser of two evils, so to speak. To shatter this myth of colonial benevolence once and for all, Shiraishi points to the large-scale killing and repression predating

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1) Studied by Shiraishi in his 1990 book *An Age in Motion: Popular Radicalism in Java, 1912–1926*.

the late colonial era as its violent preconditions (p. 27). Against the moralistic framework, *The Phantom* instead systematically examines “how the Dutch Indies government achieved and maintained ‘peace and order’ in the post-communist revolt years of the late 1920s and 1930s” (p. 26). In doing this, Shiraishi historicizes the term police=politics, taken from the renowned writer Pramoedya Ananta Toer’s short story “Kemudian lahirlah dia” (And then he was born), which consciously reflects on policing as the only mode of politicking in late colonialism. In this way, the book follows Cornell’s tradition of interdisciplinary investigation that does not place a strict boundary between the literary and the historical.

The seemingly disproportionate one chapter allocated to Digul may seem perplexing, given that the 7-chapter book is titled after it. However, when considering the book as a whole, it becomes apparent that Shiraishi aims to present Digul as, in his word, a “metaphor” for the East Indies and the late colonial regime (p. 31). What is so complex about Digul is its status as an “internment camp” where internees were allowed to live apparently normal but insulated lives under colonial surveillance, unlike abusive penal colonies or murderous concentration camps that destroy prisoners sense of normal living (pp. 29–31). As a political form, Digul was meant to be both governmental and pedagogical—a ground for *africhting*, or “training” (pp. 30, 158). Digul reformed the attitudes of its internees while simultaneously teaching all other Indonesians to self-police. In other words, it trained Indonesians to behave and thus cooperate with the colonial government (p. 41).

Normalcy in Digul, however, was not as normal as it seemed. Drawing from Rudolf Mrazek, *The Phantom* contends that Digul’s “normalcy” was profoundly perverted and deeply politicized (p. 51). The colonial government created this perverted normalcy—Digul—to establish relative normalcy and, resultantly, the colonial order in the Indies (p. 59). Shiraishi writes: “Life in Digul was perverted in a profoundly politicized way, and it is in the mirror of its pervertedness where we can see the perverted normal order in the Indies reflected” (p. 60). From many genealogies of the phantom in intellectual history, Shiraishi seems to use it most frequently to capture this sense of pervertedness. But Digul resembled the Indies in another important way: it classified political subjects into cooperationists, moderates, and recalcitrant. Digul thus carries two significances as a metaphor of the Dutch regime’s political policing and governing techniques. Whereas perverted normalcy demarcated the territories for policing, social classification kept the population under surveillance (p. 62). Chapters 3 to 5 precisely examine the operations of Digul, the prototype of perverted normalcy in the Indies, in policing the Moscow-affiliated political underground, the above-ground revolutionary nationalist movement, and the cooperative educational and religious institutions in rural areas.

*The Phantom World of Digul* is highly concerned with the political, as suggested not only by the book’s central concept of political policing, but also by the conceptualization of normalcy as a political fabrication. Shiraishi’s fascination with the political stems from the perceived apoliticism

of the late colonial state, presented by Harry Benda as its essential attribute in his notion of the *Beamtenstaat*, or the bureaucratic state (p. 14). Shiraishi, however, offers an entirely different understanding of *Beamtenstaat*'s apoliticism. By taking into account the anticommunist suppression and counter-insurgency methods subsequently developed to control non-cooperative subversives (p. 64), he reveals how political policing was first and foremost devised as an anticommunist practice and technique (p. 104). The greatest insight of this book comes from its treatment of this apoliticism as teeming with *political* contradictions. On the one hand, as Chapter 2 tells us, apoliticism was achieved through effective political policing across the archipelago to the point that politics was reduced to policing, and policing was normalized into a commonly held apolitical sense in a time of normalcy (*zaman normal*) (p. 20). On the other hand, as Chapter 6 illustrates, a shapeless network of ungovernable "wild forces" influenced from outside and operating underground—another phantom—continued to disrupt the seemingly formidable surveillance. As Shiraishi notes, "it was precisely this time of normalcy that incubated the revolutionary generation of 1945" (p. 24).

We learn from colonial studies literature, specifically by Ann Stoler, that the imagined antithesis of the colonial peace and order regime is a wilderness whose disruptive, mysterious, and ungovernable forces must be controlled at all costs (pp. 19–20, 84, 105). Because this was as much a fantasy as a reality, the practice of political policing often projected anxious imaginaries of these wild forces onto anything deemed subversive in the actual world, thereby creating a phantom (in a second sense, different from but related to the first sense of pervertedness) that mirrored their own fantasy (pp. 149, 237). Hence, in the logic of political policing, "anything that might lead to disturbance was revolutionary, and in this respect revolutionary/evolutionary, cooperation/non-cooperation, mala fide/bona fide, radical/moderate did not make much difference" (p. 241). In addition to the two senses of the phantom that the colonial government projected onto the colonized milieu and subjects, there emerges the third phantom: colonial apoliticism itself. While the first sense of the phantom describes the perverted normalcy imposed by Digul and the second, the phantomized "wild forces," the third sense, to deploy Shiraishi's oft-used word, *mirrors* the phantom back to the colonial government.

Colonial apoliticism was phantasmic in three ways. First, counter to colonial self-understanding, its apoliticism was never real—a perversion *par excellence*. Counter-revolutionary suppression and political policing, which was normalized through time, produced, and continued to condition, apoliticism. Second, as a colonial mode of governance, apoliticism was more aspirational than actual. It was a projection of an ideal political situation where the Dutch colonial government fully controlled the Indies and eliminated all "wild" forces. Third, this phantasm was built upon phantasm. The police intelligence reporting, itself a congregate of fantasies, became the colonial government's chief source of policy. Consequently, political policing dominated the government's understanding of the native movement, thereby reducing the question of anticolonial nationalism to a question of policing and denying all forms of Indonesian popular politics (pp. 97–98, 237–238).



Shiraishi observes that “the government was as much a hostage of its own political intelligence as the Indies population, . . . the [police reporting] . . . provided the government with its only way of mapping the terrain and guided it in formulating its policy to the native movement” (p. 237). Arriving at this conclusion makes one wonder what would have happened to the Indonesian popular movements if the colonial government had been unhinged from political policing.

Since there is only a handful of dedicated Indonesianists who can archivally evaluate and single-handedly create a new periodization for an entire subperiod of twentieth-century Indonesia (in this case, the Age of Digul), anything that Shiraishi Takashi publishes is guaranteed for its intellectual and historiographical contributions. However, Shiraishi discusses the global and regional conditions of Dutch political policing, including global policing (p. 7), the interwar British hegemony in Southeast Asia, Dutch neutrality (p. 21), white supremacy (p. 27), and carceral archipelago (p. 31), only in passing. If scholars of any discipline further pursue these questions, more contributions could be made to the fields of comparative colonialism, police studies, racial capitalism, and abolition geography from the Indonesian standpoint. Quite undeveloped also is the question, posed by the author himself both in the book and the blurb, of the relationship between political and economic crises—the prospect of war and the Great Depression—and the conservative turn to consolidate imperial power (p. 15). In addition to the psychoanalysis-derived approach (exemplified by ideas of phantom, perversion, haunting, and mirroring) and comparative historical colonialism (comparing and contrasting the Dutch East Indies to French Indochina, British India and Malaya, and American Philippines), a political-economic analysis of empire and trans-imperialism may be able to shed light on the interrelations between the conjunctural forces—global, regional, national, and local—conditioning the Dutch empire to resort to political policing amidst the interwar crises. All these questions for further research aside, this long-awaited sequel opens new and innovative ways of understanding late colonial Indonesia through political policing and all the contradictions therein.

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### ***The Sovereign Trickster: Death and Laughter in the Age of Duterte***

VICENTE L. RAFAEL

Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2022.

Vicente L. Rafael begins his most recent book, *The Sovereign Trickster*, with a personal story about once meeting the former Philippine President, and subject of the book, Rodrigo Duterte. It is a fascinating testimony, both for what it says about the celebrity-like status held by the firebrand

leader, even among those with wealth and status, and for the reminder that those like Rafael who write scholarly work about the Philippines are often tangled up (through family ties) in its elite society. Rafael is deeply reflective about the encounter, describing feelings of complicity and even contamination upon shaking Duterte's hand. The pages that follow are an attempt, Rafael says, to distance himself from those who would celebrate, or even acquiesce, to Rodrigo Duterte's authority.

The complexity of this intimate moment is an apt and engaging way to begin what is, in essence, a complex and careful interdisciplinary reckoning with the man himself—his characteristics and behaviors, as well as the magnetism of his persona. After all, Duterte sustained a Teflon-like appeal that cut across almost all intersections (class, gender, age, sexuality, religion) of Philippine society during the six years of his presidency from 2016 to 2022. Pushing aside the compulsion other scholars have felt to label or define Duterte and his politics (whether as populist, fascist, or strongman style), Rafael runs headlong and with determination into the contradictions and dialectics that best capture the self-professing mass murderer turned national leader.

The contradictions that characterize Duterte are both near impossible to understand and yet crucial to any credible explanations of the sustained appeal of his rule. Even the title of the book alludes to the permanence of such contradictions in the world of Duterte. He had, as is a loose organizing metaphor in Rafael's notes, "an impossible, because split, subjectivity": he was the "vengeful sovereign" who conjures fear while being the "irascible trickster" who makes people laugh (p. 56). Exuding benevolence, he exacted a "barbarian notion of justice," deciding for himself who must die for others to live (p. 71). Even his mostly vulgar and obscene stories were simultaneously boastful and self-deprecating (p. 5).

Rafael asks how Duterte's murderous ways can be so widely accepted. How has he succeeded in persuading people that the means to secure life is death? In its whole, the book presents a complex description of pathology that draws heavily on the co-dependence of two regimes of power to describe what is at the core of Duterte's governing logic: Foucault's (2010) concept of "*biopower*," or power over life, and what Mbembe (2003) calls "*necropower*," or power over death. In short, Duterte claimed the legitimate authority to separate the population into those deserving life and those who must be put to death.

For a treatise on politics, the structure of the book is unconventional, though perhaps not surprising to readers familiar with Rafael's previous works. An introduction, conclusion, and five longer essays form the bones of the book. These are interspersed with extracts taken from social media posts and online news pieces that Rafael penned in response to the various events unfolding during Duterte's term. In this way, the book weaves historical-structural analysis with rich empirical details and vivid description, all while referencing critical social theory. Undoubtedly, this zigzagging gives the book a unique flair, not to mention Rafael's exemplary writing skill. In the author's own words of the essays and intermingled sketches in the book: "Both come across as

bits and pieces of an assemblage whose parts do not necessarily amount to a unified whole . . . more like shards awaiting excavation in the future to help puzzle through this current moment” (p. 4). It should be said, however, that such excavation work might not be a welcome task for some readers, who may find the lack of sequential explanations of the central themes potentially frustrating.

The first substantive chapter presents content that is not new but important context in answering the question of how a figure such as Duterte could be elected in the Philippines. Importantly, and in sharp relief to other accounts that make Duterte and his style of politics appear exotic in the lineage of Philippine leaders, the chapter connects Duterte to the nation’s long colonial history, including the bastardisation of elections under both the Spanish and Americans, as well as to the electoral dystopia of the post-Martial Law era. By situating Duterte in the reality of Janus-faced elections, the book depicts his rise to power not necessarily as an inevitable outcome, but certainly an unsurprising one.

The book’s second chapter essentially pits the rise of Duterte against a simplistic narrative of the restoration of liberal democracy in the post-1986 “People Power” era. Rafael connects the governing logic of the late President Marcos to Duterte’s playbook, particularly usage of the security/insecurity dialectic—that “the need for discipline required security, which in turn, required the creation of insecurity in order to justify its operation” (p. 25). He further connects this to the power relations established in the era of neoliberal governance, and its associated dichotomy of “deserving” and “undeserving” citizens—precisely the reasoning that Duterte applied to drug addicts and drug pushers, and which helped him rise to national prominence.

The next chapter moves away from structural and historical-cultural elements that make sense of Duterte’s rise to focus on the aesthetics of his authority and his rhetorical practices, which were heavily reliant on obscenities and vulgarity. It was Duterte’s “obsession” (p. 42) to put his penis at the center of his stories, whether he was addressing the country’s wealthiest businessmen at the Makati Business Club or audiences at local campaign stops around the nation. The book details how Duterte’s “phallogocentric politics” (p. 47) and shameless use of violent misogyny propelled his popularity in both contexts. As opposed to simply decrying this, the chapter intelligently considers the narrative structure of Duterte’s jokes, pointing out how laughter was used to shadow violence and fear.

Diving deeper into the literature on “*biopower*” (Foucault) and “*necropower*” (Mbembe), the fourth chapter provides an analytical scaffolding to help make sense of the Duterte phenomenon—both the figure and the regime—as something other than native. Perhaps it comes too late in the book, as an earlier introduction to this theoretical literature would have helped to decipher previous references to it. Nonetheless, Rafael frames both Duterte’s macabre stories and jokes, as well as the “war on drugs,” through these two regimes of power. Ultimately, the framework explains how Duterte’s insistence on exterminating drug users—a barbarism that lies at the heart of his authoritarianism—was both an assertion of complete sovereignty, and a performance of the power

to put to death. Aware that the former alluded him, he became obsessed with the latter.

The book's final chapter takes us into the bloody and gruesome details of the drug war by considering the role that photographs of the dead played in sustaining and opposing the regime, and the very personal and existential crisis faced by those behind the cameras. The book ends as it begins, with the puzzle of Duterte's popularity. How is it that a mass murderer could gain and maintain such widespread appeal? And why were the forces opposing his authoritarianism so ineffective and weak?

The strength of the book lies in its painstaking diagnosis of Duterte's pathology. Rafael uses the term "authoritarian imaginary" to assemble the book's insights into what is its primary focus—the mindset of Rodrigo Duterte and what Rafael calls the "political aesthetic of Duterte's rule" (p. 5). What is it that "at once repels and attracts his followers and detractors alike" (p. 5)? The book's answer is ultimately ambiguous, and there is no clear and unified argument about Duterte's regime being an "instance of" something found in political analysts' repertoire. Indeed, the dialectics and dichotomies at the center of the book's account are not resolved. This epistemic depth, and the enigma of the account, is at the heart of the book's intelligence.

Notwithstanding, a criticism of the book may be its conflation of the analysis of Duterte's own "necessary fictions" (how he imagines himself in relation to others p. 147), with analysis of the collective imaginary of a receptive Philippine populace. The book uses the term "authoritarian imaginary" to refer to both. Helpfully, Rafael links the global rise of authoritarianism to an imaginary of the nation, not as a community of anonymous members held together by fictions of equality and inclusion (an "imagined community," as in Benedict Anderson's seminal work on nationalism), but rather as a site of struggle between good and evil, insiders and outsiders, law abiding citizens deserving of justice versus those against whom violence is justified (pp. 135–136). Yet it would seem important to bracket this discussion, of why and how the Philippine polity found Duterte and his regime necessary and legitimate, from analysis of how Duterte thinks about himself. Otherwise, the account risks overstating the co-opting power of Duterte himself at the expense of attention to the agency and negotiated reasoning of ordinary citizens.

In conclusion, for those searching for a carefully contextualized and empirically rich account of the Duterte phenomenon, this book is essential reading. Rafael's grasp of multidisciplinary theory, his skill in rhetoric, together with his commitment to history, make this a rare, if sometimes graphic interrogation into the charisma of a man much of the world is satisfied to label a vulgar tyrant.

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*Angkor Wat: A Transcultural History of Heritage, Volume 1 Angkor in France. From Plaster Casts to Exhibition Pavilions*  
*Angkor Wat: A Transcultural History of Heritage, Volume 2 Angkor in Cambodia. From Jungle Find to Global Icon*

MICHAEL FALSER

Boston: De Gruyter Art & Architecture, 2019.

The Angkor ruins in Cambodia were inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1992, and today they have become a national icon of Cambodia as well as a symbolic image of world cultural heritage. As is well known, the ruins of Angkor were “rediscovered” by Westerners in the mid-nineteenth century. This was followed by archaeological research conducted by the French, the results of which were disseminated throughout the world. During the colonial period, the ruins of Angkor were used to tout the success of France's colonial endeavor. Michael Falser's two-volume study describes “the 150-year transcultural heritage trajectory” of the Angkor monuments.

Four years after its publication, the work has already received numerous reviews and is highly appreciated. Readers will be overwhelmed by the magnitude of the volumes, which contain 1,000 pages of text, more than 1,200 illustrations, and a lavish 80-page appendix of photographs and illustrations. This is an unprecedented “reception history” of the Angkor Remains rich with literary documents and visual materials. It is also a result of the dramatic increase in digital material databases since the 2010s.

Falser's achievement is more than just a collection of documents, however. The greatest feature of the work is its constructive structure and underlying concept. The author divides the modern history of the Angkor monuments into the two “topos” of Europe and Cambodia, and discusses reception of the monuments in each cultural and political context. Volume I describes the process by which the colonized Angkor monuments were incorporated into the complex framework of the colonizers' cultural heritage in Europe, while Volume II reveals the process by which they became the new national cultural heritage of post-colonial Cambodia. The author then interprets the two histories as a single contiguous and transcultural one. Although reception in France and in Cambodia have been studied separately, this work is the first attempt to synthesize the receptions as one continuous history, rather than opposing, or distinct, phenomena. In this respect,

it can be highly evaluated as an original study.

This transcultural historiography is supported not only by a vast body of material, but also the application of contemporary cultural research theory. It employs postcolonial theories such as the concept of Foucault's "heterotopia" (p. 46), comparative analysis of "transfer" and "translation," analysis of "the contact zone as a space of intercolonial encounter," and so on. The work can thus also be described as a theoretical postcolonial study of the representations of the Angkor Remains.

The first volume tells the history of the reception of the Angkor monuments in Europe and the United States from the 1850s to about 1950. From the writings of Henri Mouhot, who "rediscovered" the site, and the pre-modern nineteenth century museography in which replicas of the site and original statues are intermingled, to the colonial representations at the 1937 International Exposition in Paris, this volume is an elaborate analysis of historical events without omission. The examples taken up are exhaustive: there is A. Lenoir's French Monuments Museum, the Industrial and Ethnographic Pavilions at the Expositions Universelles, a replica and cast made as the "ideal" reconstruction by Louis Delaporte, the Comparative Sculpture Museum of Viollet-le-Duc, Pavilions at the 1922 Colonial Exposition in Marseilles, and the representation of "the most beautiful aesthetic conquest of colonialism" at the 1931 International Colonial Exposition in Paris, to name only some. The volume also notably surveys and deeply analyzes even smaller national expositions in France, such as those in Lyon (1894), Bordeaux (1895), and Rouen (1896), which have not been explored in previous studies (p. 226). Through these specific examples, the book describes the transcultural process by which the Angkor Remains, and Angkor Wat in particular, became iconic international heritage in Europe.

In addition to being a rich historiography, the work also provides the perspective of an architectural expert, specifically in its examination of the questions surrounding "complete restoration" by anastylosis and analysis of unpublished documents detailing the plans for the construction of the pavilion at the 1931 International Colonial Exposition (p. 299).

Yet the heart of the work remains in its historical interrogation. Falser criticizes previous studies that have considered the history of Angkor representations exclusively as a history of French colonialism, and proposes a more international, universally comparative history of Angkor's representation. He explores comparisons that have not been highlighted before, such as British exhibitions of Indian art, the influential relationship between Delaporte and Fargasson (p. 144), replicas in the Ethnomuseum in Copenhagen (p. 100), Berlin (p. 176), and the South Kensington Museum in England (p. 247), to rethink the process by which Angkor was represented in Europe within the context of academic competition among Britain, Germany, and France. Falser both critiques former studies that have been confined to France alone and opens the study of Angkor representations to a global perspective.

Despite this depth, however, the work does lack comparative study in Asia. For example,

Angkor Wat became a symbol of Japan's "Greater East Asia Co-prosperity" ideology during the Pacific War (1941–45), especially after Japan marched into French Indochina. This is something I explore in my own book on Angkor, *オリエンタリストの憂鬱 (Orientalisuto no yuutsu)* [Orientalist melancholy], in Japanese, (2008). Such representations made by the Japanese, and those across Asia, are also important case studies to consider. It should also be noted that there are some rather cumbersome considerations and analyses scattered throughout both volumes. For example, while it is true that the museographic analysis of museum and exposition representations made with a Michel Foucault-like nineteenth century epistemology is interesting, ten pages of museology and exposition history with no direct connection to Cambodian monuments seems excessive (pages 135–143 for comparative museums, 189–200 for the 1889 World's Fair).

In Volume II, the analysis shifts from European museums and expositions to the Parc archéologique d'Angkor of Cambodia, where the Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) has been conducting archaeological research and restoration since 1900. The author reinterprets the local archaeological site as a combination of cultural, social, and political products, and analyzes the complex history of its formation. Here, the practices of archaeology and conservation/restoration are read as "elements of (post)colonial intellectual history."

Even in the post-colonial period after Cambodia's independence, the Parc archéologique d'Angkor continued to be maintained by the French. According to the author, "The Francophile king, Norodom Sihanouk, (became) the perfect intermediary or 'cultural broker'" [for the French] and "prolonged the French monopolistic grasp over Angkor." The author considers that "this French regime even survived the first Republican years until the early 1970s" (Vol. 2, pp. 1–4).

The discussion begins with the process of "mapping" the Angkor Remains during the colonial period, followed by an analysis of the archaeological practices by the Conservateurs d'Angkor of EFEO to make the ruins a "picture-perfect site." The archaeological method of anastylosis, which they subsequently practiced to achieve "complete restoration," is reinterpreted as an inevitable consequence of this process. Falser emphasizes that the adoption of anastylosis in the 1930s led to a paradigm shift in the EFEO's thought and activity, from "conservation to reconstitution," and he analyzes the political, historical, and cultural significance of this shift. Although Falser mentions the Banteay Srei temple, which was first restored using the anastylosis method, oddly enough, he does not discuss the famous case of André Malraux, who attempted to steal the reliefs at this temple. In my opinion, the Malraux case is an important one that prompted the paradigm shift from "conservation to reconstitution," and it should be revisited from this perspective.

To my knowledge, there has been little academic research of the influence and significance of the Angkor monuments on the buildings constructed in Cambodia after independence. The study of Cambodian architecture in Falser's work will guide future research. The author analyzes the Independence Monument erected in Phnom Penh in 1962 (p. 195), the construction of the National Sports Complex in 1964 (p. 198), and the sound and light show during the visit of French



President De Gaulle to Angkor in 1966 (p. 126). He brilliantly interprets these as examples of “back-translation to the real spots,” calling them “déjà-vu” of the spectacle of the 1931 International Colonial Exposition held in Paris.

According to the author, Sihanouk, who became the head of state in 1960, appropriated the salvage paradigm used by the French during the colonial period into postcolonial national ideals: he inherited the discourses of “Khmer Revival” and “Cambodian Renaissance,” as embodied in Angkor Wat, and read them into the notion of the “continuity of the actual dynasty within the historic tradition of Angkor’s ancient kings.” The ideal of French colonialism, he argues, was transposed directly into the “Khmer national conscience” and thus, a transcultural and hybrid representation of Angkor was formed between independent Cambodia and postcolonial France.

The author also notes that the historical research by French researchers at the EFEO on the Angkor dynasty’s “mastering of water” and the image they formed of King Jayavarman VII greatly influenced Sihanouk’s “Buddhist socialist” political philosophy, helping to justify state intervention in agriculture and flood control projects. I am not competent to evaluate the validity of the author’s perspective and analysis in finding “continuity” in Cambodian political thought from the colonial period to post-independence. Historically speaking, however, continuity between the colonial and independence eras may have been mediated by the Japanese ideal of Asianism during the Pacific War. Here we see a lost opportunity in the work: to examine the significance of Angkor Wat as a symbol of Asianism prior to becoming a symbol of Cambodian nationalism after independence.

The meaning and significance of historical monuments not only change in response to changes in political and cultural regimes of domination, but also accumulate in layers as they are repeatedly passed on and/or broken off. The Angkor monuments are not only the memory of the colonial and postcolonial periods, but also the Khmer Rouge period and the post-1990s international protection regime that continues to this day. Today, the Angkor monuments have been granted the status of a heritage icon for all humanity, beyond a common heritage for France and Cambodia.

Since the turn of this century, the transcultural image of Angkor Wat that was formed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries seems to be undergoing a further, significant transformation. Poor replicas of Angkor Wat and the Bayon temple continue to be built in tourist hotels in Siem Reap, and fantastic replicas of Angkor ruins are being constructed in entertainment parks around the world (in Spain, China, Vietnam, and so on). Tokyo Disneyland has created a Jungle Cruise modeled after the representation of the Angkor ruins in the American movie *Apocalypse Now*. These appear to be nothing more than empty playground equipment that do not reflect Cambodia’s history. But we will need to continue to think about these Angkorian imaginaries today and in the future, based on the rich historical knowledge and interpretive theories that this book provides.

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