

SPATIAL HISTORIES OF OCCUPATION

Colonialism, Conquest and
Foreign Control in Asia

Edited by
David Baillargeon &
Jeremy E. Taylor

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Introduction: Spatial Histories of Foreign Occupation and Colonialism

David Baillargeon and Jeremy E. Taylor

Introduction

As on-going conflicts in the Middle East, South Asia, the Caucasus and elsewhere demonstrate, foreign occupation shapes today's world in innumerable ways. At the same time, and as we are reminded by a vast literature in postcolonial studies – as well as public debates about the physical and institutional residua of imperialism – the legal, political and cultural legacies of colonial rule can still be found in everything from national borders to structural inequalities between the global North and global South. As debates over contested sovereignty in locations as diverse as the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), Kashmir and Western Sahara continue to rage alongside renewed arguments about the after-effects of colonialism more broadly, scholars are now exploring the similarities and continuities between what were long held to be two quite different modes of 'alien rule' (Hechter 2013).

Only a handful of scholarly volumes or monographs have previously brought together studies of foreign occupation, colonialism and related forms of 'foreign control' under a comparative lens (e.g. Moses 2008; Hechter 2013; Dubnov and Robson 2019). There are, of course, a profusion of excellent histories written about specific case studies of 'occupied territories' around the globe – particularly focused on Israel-Palestine (e.g. Weizman 2007), US-occupied Japan and Okinawa (e.g. Koikari 2008) and the Nazi occupation of parts of Europe during the Second World War (e.g. Erlichman and Knowles 2018). However, there is relatively little work on how occupation frameworks and typologies travelled across space and time in the modern period, including within and beyond the construction of the modern nation-state. Similarly, while sociologists such as Cornelius Lammers (2003; 2014) have openly called for 'occupation regimes' and

‘colonial regimes’ to be compared, few historians have been willing to step outside the disciplinary (or nation-state-defined) boundaries provided by subfields such as ‘colonial history’.¹

This is particularly the case with relation to Asia, where the historiography rarely addresses the continuities and ruptures that have existed across the recently constructed regional boundaries of South, Southeast and east Asia (Rafael 1999; Dent 2016; Sadan 2018). Asia was (and still is) a site of numerous occupation regimes. It is also a region that has long been subject to encroachment by competing colonial (and other) empires, as well as by expanding postcolonial nation-states. This region therefore represents a neglected point of comparison for studies of colonialism and occupation (Sidaway et al. 2016) – a fact that this collection seeks to address.

The aim of this volume is to provide a comparative and interdisciplinary history of foreign occupation and colonialism in Asia during the modern period. It does this through an examination of the ways in which different spatial geographies emerged, were adapted and were transformed in the occupation context, and how occupation and colonial rule were shaped, and gave shape to, new interpretations and typologies of ‘space’. A focus on ‘the spatial’, this volume shows, reveals much about the nature and character of occupation *and* colonialism (as well as the similarities and differences between them). Because occupation regimes used similar methodologies and tools in an attempt to manipulate the spatial realm, a study that contrasts how different spaces emerged and were transformed under occupation – whether on a national territorial level or in more localized and transnational spaces – uncovers the commonalities and differences that existed across borders, places and settings.

To elucidate these connections, contributors to this volume examine case studies across South, Southeast and east Asia during the modern period – from the nineteenth century to the present day – using a variety of disciplinary perspectives. This includes thinking about ‘spaces of occupation’ not only in urban and architectural environments, but also in landscapes, in pathways that transgress national and political borders, in cartographic representations and, significantly, in the imagination. With themed sections focused on particular spatial typologies – urban spaces, rural and inland spaces, and island and maritime spaces – the volume ultimately reveals the similarities, entanglements and points of rupture that existed between different spaces of foreign occupation and colonialism in Asia, while also putting these hitherto disparate studies in dialogue with one another. In doing so, the volume shows how a focus on historical geography and space can revise broader categories and

conceptualizations related to foreign control of territory, be that under colonial, postcolonial, wartime or Cold War powers.

Foreign occupation, colonialism and contested sovereignty

'Occupation' is a term that has elicited considerable attention and controversy over the past few decades. This has particularly been the case since the US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003, when questions over the legality of the ongoing American presence in the region became a focal point for international public debate (McCarthy 2005; Roberts 2007; Jackson and Moses 2017). Nonetheless, definitions and theories of occupation have varied greatly over time, including within different academic disciplines. While scholars point to the 1899 and 1907 Hague Conventions as moments when a systemized and rigid conception of 'occupation' was first enshrined in law, many occupation specialists have shown how the codification of this legal apparatus emerged from a long dialogue among European powers about international law and the nature of conquest during the late eighteenth and long nineteenth centuries (van Glahn 1957; Bhuta 2005; Benvenisti 2008; Arai 2009; Benvenisti 2012). In addition, scholars have differentiated between many unique typologies of military occupation, all of which are positioned under the same legal umbrella. Adam Roberts (1984: 260–1), for example, cites seventeen discrete types of occupation, including 'belligerent occupation', 'multilateral occupation' and 'forcible peacetime occupation', amongst others. In doing so, however, Roberts concedes that occupation categories are never 'mutually exclusive' and can overlap and shift in nature and classification over time. Occupation, in other words, is a legally complex and multi-layered category of analysis, with an equally complicated provenance over the modern period.

Roberts' exacting differentiations of occupation hint at the indefinite and shifting nature of the concept. However, most scholars today employ a definition of occupation set out in international law. This view is best and most succinctly articulated by David M. Edelstein (2004: 52), who argues that 'occupation is the temporary control of a territory by another state that claims no right to permanent sovereign control over that territory'. Central to this definition are two important ideas. First, and in contrast to categories such as colonialism, annexation or conquest, occupation denotes impermanence, and not the indefinite occupation of lands and territories over long stretches of time (Bernard 2012: 8–9). While the exact contours and timeline of an occupation can vary,

with some occupations lasting only a few months and others enduring – like, for example, the Israeli occupation of the West Bank – for decades, the idea generally is that an occupation is a temporary arrangement (Roberts 2005). And even though these short-lived occupations often act as a bridge to more permanent measures, such as in the recent Russian occupation and subsequent annexation of Crimea (Coynash and Charron 2019), each category has distinct temporal features.

The second important idea that Edelstein introduces relates to the question of sovereignty, which, like the notion of time and impermanence, is meant to differentiate occupation from related concepts such as ‘colonialism’. If one of the key determinants for the status of ‘occupation’ is that an occupying power does not claim sovereignty over the territory it occupies, then one of the parallel determinants for ‘colonial’ rule is the opposite: in strictly legal terms, a colony is a territory where sovereignty rests with the imperial power that claims such territory as its colony (and not, for example, with some other power that was previously in place prior to the territory being claimed). It is this distinction that has led some scholars to contest the increasing tendency to ‘elide military occupation and colonialism’ (Stirk 2016: 5).

As a growing body of critical legal scholarship has demonstrated, however, this distinction is fundamentally based on nineteenth-century, Eurocentric ideas about sovereignty and the control of territory. ‘Occupation’ as we understand it today was first formulated following the Congress of Vienna in 1815, and ‘was applied exclusively to land wars between European sovereigns’ (Bhuta 2005: 729). As Nehal Bhuta (2005: 729) explains, sovereignty was thought of as a ‘gift of civilization’ and was, almost exclusively, a recognized attribute only of the ‘European family of states’. Hence, ‘occupation’ was often not applied when it involved the conquest of territories beyond Europe, simply because many of the inhabitants or rulers of such territories were not recognized as ‘sovereign’ by nineteenth-century European jurists. When European powers colonized and annexed extra-European territories, they became sovereign rulers of those territories in their own right, and not simply temporary ‘occupiers’ (Mazower 2006; Fitzmaurice 2012). As a result, and as Yutaka Arai-Takahashi (2012: 73) has argued:

behind its facade of innocuous value-neutrality, the law of occupation has long hidden a tacit dichotomy: on the one hand, the application of this normative framework . . . only among ‘civilized’ nations capable of exercising sovereignty in international relations; and, on the other, the system of colonialism imposed upon the vast majority of non-Western nations bereft of sovereignty.

To put it another way, behind the legal framework of 'occupation' lies a conception of sovereignty through which European powers could legitimize their colonization of non-Western states (Anghie 1999, 2004).

The problems with this occupation/colonialism dichotomy were exposed in the process of post-Second World War decolonization and the postcolonial process of nation-building that arose in the second half of the twentieth century. Events that occurred at that time continue to lie at the heart of a number of ongoing controversies today. Consider, for instance, Western Sahara. As Stephen Zunes and Jacob Mundy (2010: xxiii–xxv) demonstrate, Morocco's claims to this disputed territory are at least partly based on the argument that a postcolonial Morocco has the right to claim those territories that were 'severed' from it by European imperial powers; Eurocentric dismissal of Moroccan sovereignty in centuries past can be corrected in the postcolonial present. In contrast, Western Saharan nationalists argue that the Moroccan invasion contravened the basic right of self-determination that other postcolonial communities had been granted (often via referenda), and that, as Western Sahara was a sovereign entity in 1975, Moroccan rule since then constitutes a clear instance of belligerent occupation as per international law. Similar debates surround other 'occupations' that were initiated by postcolonial states in the post-Second World War decades, and which continue at present, such as West Papua (Kirksey 2012).

If debates about sovereignty in sites such as Western Sahara expose the difficulties in distinguishing 'occupation' from 'colonial rule' in a postcolonial world, then the literature around other disputed territories offers a more direct critique of the Eurocentrism inherent in international law itself. In the voluminous scholarship on the OPT, for example, it has now become commonplace to talk not just of 'The Occupation', but also of Israeli 'colonialism' in the West Bank, particularly (though not exclusively) when it comes to sites such as Israeli settlements beyond the borders of Israel itself (Reuveny 2003). Informed by the emerging field of 'settler-colonial studies' – as, indeed, are a number of chapters in this volume – such work looks well beyond the problems of international legal definitions, and instead finds parallels between present-day Israeli policies and the past behaviour of settler-colonial regimes in other parts of the world. Many scholars working in this field stress the actual *control* of territory by settler populations (as opposed to disputed definitions of sovereignty) and the relationship between settlers and Indigenous populations (e.g. Wolfe 2006; Veracini 2019).

While the OPT and Western Sahara represent ongoing disputes over territory, the critical scholarly re-assessment of the occupation/colonialism dichotomy

has inspired a growing list of scholars who are reconsidering historical cases of occupation. In the historiography of wartime Europe, for example, there is a significant body of literature which re-frames the German occupation of central and eastern Europe during the Second World War as a form of 'colonialism'. As David Furber (2004: 542) argues, for instance:

the Nazi occupation of Poland was a colonialist project. In the fantasies of the German colonizers who saw themselves as bearers of German Order to the benighted East of Europe, to the kinds of states that they erected in the conquered territories, going to the East resembled going to colonies elsewhere.

While such literature has stressed the similarities in the very nature of rule that the Nazis practiced in places such as Poland – suggesting that legal definitions of sovereignty are not always the most important aspects of the social or cultural history of occupation – it also undermines the very idea that a neat and clear distinction between 'occupation' and 'colonialism' can always be achieved. In the words of Christine de Matos and Rowena Ward (2012: 3), 'the lines' between different forms of territorial occupations have always been 'more blurred than clear cut'. For scholars such as Jürgen Zimmerer (2005: 200), then, the continued adherence to a strict occupation/colonialism dichotomy '... not only perpetuates a distinction between European and non-European development, but also hinders a useful perspective on both European military history and the history of foreign occupation during the Second World War'.

In addition to such debates, a sizeable critical scholarship has emerged that examines the nature of rule for types of control that fit uncomfortably into the 'colonial' category. For example, an expanding critical literature on '[sovereign] military bases' – exceptional and often vast areas within the boundaries of sovereign states, yet over which a foreign power claims sovereignty and/or exercises complete control, sometimes in perpetuity – is now suggesting that the existing framework we have for 'occupation' – and, indeed, 'empire' – needs to be expanded (Lutz 2009).² Often created or significantly expanded during the Cold War, when superpowers and their allies were reluctant to openly acknowledge their control of foreign territory as acts of 'belligerent occupation' (Bhuti 2005: 734), military bases can still be found across the world – including in some of the very sites that are examined in this volume, such as Okinawa. In addition, scholars have spoken of these spaces in terms that expose the difficulty of defining them – as 'colonialism redivivus' (Clogg 2015) or as new articulations of empire (Lutz 2008). Indeed, in the case of Okinawa, it is the on-going US military presence, continuing well after the formal end of the American occupation in

1972, which continues to fuel a lively and influential body of theoretical literature on foreign occupation more generally (e.g. Tanji and Broudy 2017).

To underline and question the problematic definitions and origins of 'occupation' as a legal category, this volume uses this term in a broad sense. It includes chapters that cover not just cases of 'occupation' that are recognized today as such under international law, but also colonial and other legally adjacent occupation typologies, including annexation, cession and military bases. In doing so, this volume builds on the work of de Matos and Ward (2012), Lammers (2003), and other scholars who have moved beyond a narrowly imagined conceptualization of the term 'occupation'. We adopt this approach not to elide or conflate 'colonialism' and 'occupation', but to underline the difficulty in drawing a clear distinction between the two in light of recent theoretical discussions (cf. Taylor 2021).

Ultimately, then, the goal of this volume is to show how using a broad language of occupation can provide new insights into the relationship between occupation and colonial regimes across time, space and scale. To accomplish this task, this collection not only employs a comparative approach to place studies of colonialism and occupation side-by-side; it also includes research that travels across Asian geographies during the modern period. From colonial case studies in locations as diverse as India, Malaya and Indonesia to the wartime or postwar occupation of places such as China, Japan and Okinawa, and disputed territories such as Indonesian-controlled East Timor, this collection highlights the similarities and differences that exist across occupation and colonial contexts, as well as between areas of Asia that scholars rarely compare.

Nonetheless, the boundary between colonialism and occupation is not the sole focus of the volume. To examine the realities, commonalities and variances that existed across occupation and colonial contexts, the case studies in this collection compare the experiences of occupation through a shared analysis of particular spatial categories, including urban spaces, inland and rural spaces, and island and maritime spaces. This collection reveals how these specific 'spaces of occupation' were transformed under different occupying and colonial regimes, and how the spatial realm shaped and was shaped by the experiences of occupation across modern Asia.

Space, place and occupation

Spatial Histories of Occupation: Colonialism, Conquest and Foreign Control in Asia builds on a large body of interdisciplinary scholarship that examines the

role of space, place and scale in historical perspective. It does so by borrowing from a litany of scholars and disciplinary fields, including key theoretical works on the 'production of space' from theorists such as Henri Lefebvre (1991), Edward Soja (1989), David Harvey (1989) and Derek Gregory (1994), as well as work broadly defined as environmental history (e.g. Ross 2014; Biggs 2018). The volume also exists in dialogue with research concerned with the intersection between space, occupation and power, such as the work of Eyal Weizman (2007, 2011, 2017). Because of this, the contributions in this volume derive their methodological approaches from a variety of subfields, including urban history, anthropology, historical geography and architecture.

While no one typology of 'space' or 'spatiality' is prioritized in this book, the case studies in this volume examine the intersection between space, colonialism and occupation through a shared analysis of three spatial categories: urban spaces, rural and inland spaces, and island and maritime spaces. Because the contributions in the volume employ a diverse set of disciplinary perspectives and the case studies travel across distinct Asian contexts, the use of common spatial categories provides an empirical way of comparing across otherwise unique occupation and colonial environments. As Philippa Levine has argued (2014: 331), while comparative history sometimes serves to reproduce universalist and nation-centred historical narratives, it can also act as a 'bridge-builder' that encourages complex and innovative scholarship that travels across boundaries, borders and the confines of more narrowly defined research agendas. This volume, with its focus on spatial classifications rather than fixed regional or national boundaries, represents one way to compare across geographies, revealing not only the commonalities that existed between and across colonial and occupation contexts but also the significant differences that made each case unique. It is through such comparisons that scholars can better understand the nature and attributes of particular colonial and occupation environments, as well as the connections that may have bound them across time and space.

In addition to providing a common point of comparison for the chapters in the collection, this volume focuses on 'the spatial' for a number of important reasons. As the German jurist Carl Schmitt once noted (2006: 205–7), the law of occupation was, in its definition, a conceptual device that European powers crafted to solve the 'spatial problem' of conquest. Any typology of foreign occupation, however, could be thought of as being an exercise in spatial control. Because occupation – whether in its colonial or military guise – entailed the literal and physical occupation and subjugation of a foreign territory, occupation regimes across different geographic and temporal contexts encountered

analogous concerns in regard to the ‘fixing’ and appropriation of occupied space. Although in the colonial setting this often meant transforming local land tenure laws to promote foreign settlement or the economic exploitation of occupied landscapes, the invasion and physical occupation of foreign territory by outside powers occurred across colonial and occupation contexts, both within and outside of Asia. Considering that many well-known cases of ‘military occupation’ have also included dynamics of settlerism – such as in the OPT (Gazit 2015) – as well as significant economic advantages for occupying powers – like petroleum in American-occupied Iraq (Le Billon 2005) or palm oil in Indonesian-occupied West Papua (Chao 2018) – territorialization and the control of land have been central to colonial and military occupations alike. These commonalities make a spatially-focused study particularly revealing about the nature of and relationship between colonial and occupation environments, as well as the role of land, territory and sovereignty within the context of occupation.

While concerns about land control and territory impacted how foreign agents developed occupied space, these occupying forces did so through the use of common instruments of power. To consolidate and organize authority in an occupation setting, in other words, occupying powers deployed similar tools of spatial manipulation to manage the natural and built environments. This included but was not limited to the use of mapping and cartography, the importation of urban planning models, the use of surveillance and curfews, as well as the large-scale construction of roads, railways and other infrastructure. These efforts to make occupied spaces more legible for state interests also operated as a broader application of governmentality, whereby occupying powers used the spatial realm to control the movement and bodies of populations living under occupation (Foucault 1991; Scott 1998; Legg 2011). The fact that occupying regimes used these ‘technologies of power’, as Michel Foucault (1995) labelled them, allows for a more uniform comparison between and across occupation contexts, even when the local experience of occupation may have differed immensely.

Moreover, and as many chapters in this volume show, the ways in which occupying powers imagine and manipulate space often leads to different and unanticipated results in the local setting. To put it another way, the local *mattered* to how an occupation context was built and evolved, and ‘occupied’ populations – through their voices, actions and resistance – had a significant impact on how an occupation took shape. This makes a spatially-centred comparative study of occupation especially revealing. Because occupation policies and legislation had consequences that varied across borders, landscapes and urban centres, studies

attuned to notions of place and scale can show the important differences that existed across occupation contexts, just as they show the similar 'spatial imaginaries' that occupying forces deployed in their pursuit of power (Watkins 2015). As Richard White (1999) has observed, 'the social space' of different scales 'focuses attention on a set of relationships between people and things', with 'each scale reveal[ing] some things while masking others'. This volume – with case studies that move from islands and oceans to mountains and jungles, and from laboratories and households to villages and large cities – shows just how wide ranging and complex the occupation setting could be.

Examining occupation on a broad level means that *Spatial Histories of Occupation: Colonialism, Conquest and Foreign Control in Asia* does not spotlight a singular typology of space. Rather, it examines the experiences of occupation and colonialism by focusing on a number of particular spatial categories. Highlighting a diversity of case studies, we argue, is important. Although recent scholarly work has emphasized the ways in which concepts such as camps (Forth 2017), military bases (Höhn and Moon 2010) and extra-territorial sites of occupation (Press 2013) have travelled across space and time, this collection instead offers a more comprehensive view of what constituted a 'space of occupation' in the modern period. This effort to widen our framework on what a 'site' of occupation is or could be does not aim to minimize the violence that accompanied life under these more extreme spaces of 'exception' (Agamben 2005). Instead, the volume reveals how power and violence imbued many areas of occupation, including those sites less typically studied in the historiographies of colonialism and occupation. Ultimately, this collection shows how power travelled and was remade across varying typologies and environments of occupation, whether in concentration camps or 'everyday' spaces such as ships, mines or city streets.

In addition, and owing to its trans-Asian comparative perspective, this volume aims to move beyond the spatial categories and boundaries that have dominated studies about Asia – and in some cases, the globe – over recent decades. Whether in terms of abstract conceptual designations – such as frontiers (Barfield 1989), borderlands (Hämäläinen and Truett 2011) and networks (Lester 2006) – or 'new regionalisms' – including the Indian Ocean World (Anderson 2012), Pacific studies (Matsuda 2006) or research focused on the concept of 'Zomia' (van Schendel 2002) – this volume eschews these larger spatial classifications in an effort to broaden our comparisons and areas of inquiry across geographies. As Eric Tagliacozzo, Helen F. Siu and Peter C. Perdue (2015: 6) have argued, 'instead of viewing regions, cultures, and peoples as physically bounded units occupying

continents and polities, we need to focus on multilayered, interactive processes that embrace both land and sea routes and incorporate political dynamics of empires, nation-states, neoliberal markets, and postsocialist global engagements at relevant historical junctures'. In drawing on such insights, this collection not only offers a much broader collection of case studies across nation-state contexts, but also reveals the connections and differences that existed between occupation environments in a variety of scales, landscapes and micro-regions. The volume's broader focus does not mean to suggest a criticism of these alternative spatial approaches. Instead, it builds on the existing literature about spatiality and occupation to examine the complex and variegated nature of the occupation environment and, significantly, to think more deeply about the categories and language we use to discuss and position these spaces. In the end, this volume shows how the categories we employ in our research can dramatically alter the narratives we tell about the 'shape' and experience of occupation.

To accomplish this task, the contributions in this collection are divided into three spatially-oriented themes: urban spaces, rural and inland spaces, and island and maritime spaces. In addition to these themes, each section of the volume includes case studies situated within both colonial and occupation contexts, as well as examples of 'occupation' that occurred across Asian regional geographies. This organization not only allows for a dialogue that cuts across different geographically bounded historiographies, but also provides a common point of comparison between the volume's colonial and foreign occupation case studies. In the end, these diverse examples – ranging from contemporary Okinawa to British Burma and the colonial Philippines – are all anchored in a common analytical concern with Asia's urban, rural and maritime spaces, which serve as the different sections of the volume.

The first theme of the volume, which is also the focus of Part One, involves an examination of the city under foreign occupation and colonial rule. This section explores 'the urban' through an analysis of how centralized urban planning proceeded under different occupation and colonial regimes, and how local agents and local resistance re-imagined and re-made cities in new and sometimes surprising ways. With chapters focused on Manila under American colonialism and Indonesian-occupied Dili in East Timor, this section provides a comparative view of how the construction of 'place' shaped and was shaped by the lived experience of foreign occupation, and how urban spaces were transformed in the occupation context. In doing so, this section provides fresh insights into the relationship between and entanglement of urban space and occupation in the modern period, a subject that has garnered significant interest in studies of Asia

over the past few decades (e.g. Yeoh 1996; Legg 2007; Allen 2012; Henry 2014; Roberts 2016; Junaid 2020). In addition, this section introduces readers to theories related to surveillance, local resistance and the production of space, which are themes that resurface throughout the volume.

While Part One focuses on the experiences of occupation and colonialism in urban settings, Part Two moves beyond the city to examine how occupation and colonialism transformed Asia's rural and inland spaces. Although this theme is threaded throughout the volume, Part Two specifically explores the role that knowledge accumulation and the development of 'spatial imaginaries' played in the production of space under different occupying regimes, as well as how plans to rationalize space developed, transformed and oftentimes failed in rural settings. With chapters focused on British colonial mining efforts in Malaya and Burma and the use of cartography and political 're-mapping' in Japanese-occupied China, this section provides a comparative view of the divide between policy and practice in the occupation context, as well as the ways in which such 'imaginaries' shaped occupation at local, regional or national levels. In doing so, this section reveals the ways in which knowledge and power were deeply interwoven in occupation settings, and how concerns over land were central to occupation and colonial projects across modern Asia.

The last key theme of the volume, which is the focus of Part Three, examines maritime and island spaces under foreign occupation and colonial rule. This section specifically engages with debates about the production and fixing of spatial categories under different occupation regimes, as well as the ways in which fluidity, emptiness and 'in-between-ness' impacted the creation and maintenance of boundaries in non-urban settings. The section – which includes chapters focused on British colonial rule in the Andaman Islands, Dutch colonialism in Indonesia and the American military occupation of Japan and Okinawa – also emphasizes the role and agency of occupied peoples in responding to border-making under occupation, similar to Part One's examination of these realities in the urban context. Finally, this section – particularly its final two chapters – reveals the importance of land use and land ownership in the making of occupation and colonial environments, building on a theme that was especially significant in the previous section of the volume.

In sum, the aim of this volume is to open up new avenues of inquiry into the experience and geography of occupation. With its collection of case studies that travel across nations, regions and landscapes, this collection reveals how a trans-Asian study of foreign occupation and colonialism disentangles the links that existed across occupation contexts in modern Asian history. Nevertheless, this

volume is only a starting point. While the contributions in this collection show the value in using a broad comparative methodology, any such comparison is still limited to the specific case studies that are introduced. In addition to the island, urban and rural spaces considered in this volume, one could identify countless other unique sites to study, including those found in different landscapes and ecologies, in other micro- and macro-regions, or in the homes, bodies and imaginations of people. A prolonged examination of these many sites of occupation will only uncover new understandings about the nature and lived experience of occupation, as well as the important ways in which occupations shape and are shaped by the spatial realm.

Sites of occupation

Spatial Histories of Occupation: Colonialism, Conquest and Foreign Control in Asia is organized thematically. Part One, entitled 'Urban Spaces', begins with a chapter by Vannessa Hearman, who examines the history of East Timorese resistance in Indonesian-occupied Dili during the late twentieth century. Drawing on interviews, memoirs and governmental reports, Hearman focuses on the role of the East Timorese youth clandestine movement in resisting Indonesian occupation in the region, and the ways in which the spatial features of Dili's urban landscape played a part in the way people experienced the Indonesian occupation and used the city as an arena of operation. Hearman's chapter shows how the rise of new suburban spaces in Dili acted as 'islands' of East Timorese resistance out of the reach of Indonesian administration, enabling the creation of an embryonic vision of national identity hewn from collective resistance and the social transformation of the city.

In Chapter 2, Ian Morley focuses on the history of urban planning in Manila under American colonial rule. Morley examines the replacement of the Spanish-introduced Laws of the Indies with American architect John Burnham's 1905 plan to redevelop Manila, which used imported 'City Beautiful' planning rationalities. Morley's study not only relates this history in a detailed narrative, but also uses a Digital Humanities approach – in this case, text mining – to appraise Burnham's report on Manila as a literary document, revealing how the text, whether deliberately or not, spoke of/to Philippine cultural advancement. Morley's chapter, which intentionally veers away from traditional structuralist-influenced architectural and spatial historical narratives, serves as a fitting conclusion to the section because it not only shows how the experience of

occupation was unique in the context of the modern city – a common theme in the historiography of spatial history – but also foreshadows a number of other themes present later in the collection, such as the production of space and the importance of ‘spatial imaginaries’.

Chapter 3, which begins Part Two of the collection, brings readers from Asia’s urban centres to the region’s inland and rural spaces. To begin this section, Joanna Lee focuses on how British economic activities in Malaya inspired conflicting perceptions about land usage and, by extension, the type of colonial rule that ‘should’ occur in the region. Lee shows how British administrators imposed disparate meanings onto the peninsula’s landscape and peoples as they struggled to reconcile incompatible social, economic and cultural motivations. Using a mix of colonial-era reports, correspondence and other published texts, Lee reveals how colonial perceptions of mining and agriculture were influenced by prevailing sentiments about what constituted an ‘ideal’ colonial society, as well as what represented its ‘picturesque’ aesthetic. This chapter, which flows neatly from Chapter 2’s focus on spatial imaginaries, reveals how representation and perceptions of ‘ideal’ and ‘picturesque’ space influenced the literal ‘shape’ of occupation. In doing so, it provides a foundation for other contributors’ insights into other typologies of spatial imaginaries, including those related to political economy, colonial science and cartography.

In Chapter 4, Yi Li focuses on the ways in which mining knowledge and expertise travelled within and across the geographic crossroads between Burma, Siam (now Thailand) and Malaya during the late nineteenth century. Li does this through a study of an 1888 visit by colonial officials in Burma to nearby southern Siam and British Malaya, where they learned important lessons about how to develop large-scale tin mining. Upon their return to Burma, however, the mission proved a failure. Although the deposits in southern Burma – specifically at the site known as Maliwun – existed along the same trans-peninsular tin belt as the deposits in Siam and Malaya, differences in the environment and spatiality of the region made it impossible to replicate the dynamics of extraction present elsewhere in Southeast Asia, and commercial agents ultimately abandoned the site. Li’s chapter reveals the ways in which territory-bounded institutional politics and unique local geographies affected economic development under colonial rule, as well as how mining knowledge at one site of extraction did not always map neatly onto others, even within the same geological landscape. While Li’s chapter, similar to the final thematic section on island and maritime spaces, addresses movement across borders and occupation contexts, it also adds to the insights of Lee and Serfass by showing how scientific knowledge about the

natural environment and rural space impacted the shape of occupation contexts, whether through the success – or, in this case, failure – of particular schemes.

In Chapter 5, the final chapter of Part Two, David Serfass focuses on the history of state building in Japanese-occupied China between 1937 and 1945. In particular, Serfass examines how Japanese ‘mapping’ was used to define the spatial configuration of the occupation state in China, with actual maps being only one medium among others used to do so. This chapter shows that far from being the historical anomalies described in Chinese historiography, ‘puppet’ regimes during wartime were an integral part of the *longue durée* of the Chinese state, and efforts to map China to reconcile nominal authority, administrative efficiency and Japanese encroachments were similar in nature to those undertaken by Chinese governments before and after the war. With its insights into the conflicting conceptions of China’s administrative map, Serfass follows Lee’s and Li’s observations about the construction and ‘imaginaries’ of space, while also adding to those chapters by focusing on how occupying states used spatial representations to reconfigure and assert power in the occupation context. In addition, Serfass’s essay, in its building of new and important connections between space and time, hints at new directions in the study of spatiality and movement that are the focus of the final part of the collection.

Chapter 6 marks the start of Part Three of the volume, focusing on maritime spaces and islands under foreign occupation and colonial rule. In this chapter, Vishvajit Pandya and Madhumita Mazumdar examine the British colonization and settlement of the Andaman Islands. The authors particularly focus on the British occupation of strategic spaces on the islands’ coastlines and in their hinterland that aimed to corral, segregate and eventually destroy the pre-colonial island space, including the livelihoods, languages and cosmologies of hunter-gatherer groups. Using both conventional archival records and ethno-historical accounts, this chapter draws attention to the ‘spatial political economy’ and ‘spatial logic’ of occupation, which worked to sever zones of exchange between the islands’ Indigenous communities and to displace, replace and ultimately confine those populations across borders and boundaries. In considering the ‘spatial logic’ of occupation as well as notions related to agency and resistance, this chapter complements the first two thematic sections of the volume while also pushing beyond those concerns to think more deeply about boundary making, confinement and the relationship between space and power. In doing so, the chapter also serves to introduce readers to a new set of ideas and methodological frameworks – particularly those related to boundaries, fluidity and landscapes – that define the essays in the rest of the collection.

With Chapter 7, Kris Alexanderson moves readers from islands to oceanic spaces through an examination of the colonial maritime world and what she refers to as the 'in-between' spaces of empire. Alexanderson focuses on the shipping industry and Dutch colonial rule in Indonesia, revealing how the sea became a realm of surveillance and subversion from the late 1920s until the Japanese occupation in 1942. Alexanderson argues that ships operated as a 'colonial classroom' during this period, with the Dutch government and shipping companies attempting to maintain hegemony outside the geographic confines of the colony and metropole through a web of control, removing anti-colonial struggles from the nation-state and inserting them into the transoceanic arena. This chapter builds on Chapter 6's interventions about the 'spatial logic' of occupation by revealing how occupation moves across borders and boundaries, while also showing how different typologies of occupation existed within and across different nationally-bounded territorial spaces. In doing so, this chapter reveals that colonial rule was not 'fixed' in time and space, speaking to the final two essays in the collection that examine fluidity across environmental boundaries.

In Chapter 8, Abhishek Nanavati focuses on the spatial history of hydroponic farms in US-occupied Japan. Nanavati's study, which combines military and environmental history with the history of technology, specifically explores how US military bases in Japan – figurative islands of military control in US-occupied Japan – were built partly out of a fear of 'occupied' land itself, as well as the belief that the soil and terrain of the region was contaminated by the colonized subject. Nanavati shows how the subjugation of the Japanese ecosystem, the moulding of it to produce 'pure' vegetables, and the attempt to build an independent biosphere, were exercises of hegemonic power on the part of the American occupiers, bridging military power with that of scientific ideas about hygiene, contamination and race. This focus allows Nanavati to reveal how, in addition to urban planners and architects, experts such as engineers, medical officers, sanitation specialists and nutritionists also played a role in shaping the geography of occupation, all in an effort to influence the everyday provisioning of food in Japanese society. In doing so, this chapter provides an important statement on the importance of race and colonial 'othering' in the production of occupied spaces, while speaking directly to the concerns about the relationship between spatiality and identity raised by Kris Alexanderson and Sayaka Sakuma in the preceding and following chapters, respectively.

In Chapter 9, the concluding chapter of the volume, Sayaka Sakuma examines the history of land use in Okinawa both during and after the US occupation of the

island. In particular, Sakuma focuses on the Yambaru Forest in northern Okinawa, which recently transitioned from a US military space to a site of tourism and conservation. Drawing from government documents, military publications, participant observation and interviews with residents, the chapter reveals how different scales of international, national and local governance constructed the forest anew, whether for economic, ecological or political reasons. In doing so, the chapter challenges the celebratory narrative of 'land return', and further argues that, on the ground, there are lingering concerns over the future of the Yambaru Forest. In taking such an approach, and owing to its more contemporary focus as well as the conclusions it draws regarding the politics of space and place, this chapter provides a fitting final statement on the many themes highlighted in this collection.

Towards a new 'spatial history of occupation'

The temporal and geographic scope of this volume is deliberately ambitious, ranging from colonial Burma to twenty-first century Okinawa. It incorporates various disciplinary approaches, from anthropology to historical geography, and contributors draw from a multitude of source types. The editors have chosen not to favour a single approach to the spaces of occupation; nor have they sought to enforce a particular theoretical or conceptual framework across all chapters.

Nonetheless, all chapters share a number of attributes which we believe are central to the comparative study of foreign occupation and colonialism in Asia from a spatial perspective, and which have the potential to lay the foundation for a wider study of the spatial histories of occupation beyond Asia. The first of these is the need to consider the *longue durée* when examining both the contemporary effects of former periods or on-going cases of 'occupation' in the region today. As contributors to this volume point out, on-going or recent conflicts and disputes have historical roots that can be traced back, in some cases, centuries. Equally, geographic, cartographic and artistic imaginaries in nation-states such as Malaysia, Japan, the People's Republic of China and India today all betray the influence of spatial imaginaries that were first developed under colonial or occupation regimes in earlier decades or centuries.

The second point that virtually all chapters underline is the extent to which the 'spatial turn' in the study of occupation and colonialism should not take attention away from the importance of individuals, communities and institutions. This volume takes readers to a variety of spaces (at different scales): streets and alleyways; town squares and parks; farms and forests; mountains and mines;

military bases and prisons. Yet in all cases, contributors emphasize the agency of both the ‘occupiers’ and ‘occupied’ in shaping, resisting or interacting with such spaces, even when the focus of some contributors is the abstract exercise of place-making (e.g. through the redrawing of boundaries or the re-placement of institutions). In this respect, while we acknowledge the crucial role of tools such as geographic information systems (GIS) in spatial history, the contributors to this volume have sought to highlight the continuing relevance of the human factor (and of methods drawn from fields such as anthropology and oral history) in studying the spatial history of contested territories, conflicts and colonialism across Asia.

In this way, this volume aims to encourage a new scholarly dialogue in which questions of occupation and colonialism can be re-examined via the very *spaces* in which such occupation or colonialism were experienced. It is our hope that *Spatial Histories of Occupation: Colonialism, Conquest and Foreign Control in Asia* might encourage scholars of Asia, but also of other regions, to look afresh at the very terms, ideas and spaces that continue to generate debate and conflict around the world today.

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Notes

- 1 Although, as we shall explore later in this Introduction, this is now starting to change.
- 2 Victoria Reyes (2019) views such bases as part of a broader category which she calls ‘global borderlands’.

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Part One

Urban Spaces

Displacement, Urban Transformations and Resistance in Indonesian-Occupied Dili, East Timor

Vannessa Hearman

Introduction

Dili has in many ways come to resemble a little Jakarta, with its mushrooming kiosks, shanty houses, dense car traffic spewing pollution and a wildcat building boom producing projects with no link to Timorese tradition.

Joliffe 2010: 14

Veteran Australian journalist, Jill Joliffe, is no stranger to Dili.¹ She was one of the few journalists who covered East Timor in the lead up to its declaration of independence on 28 November 1975, just prior to the Indonesian invasion. Banned from returning there by the Indonesian government, Joliffe spent the following decades reporting on East Timor from afar. Joliffe's eventual return to Dili, after the historic United Nations ballot in 1999 in which the East Timorese voted to reject Indonesian rule, prompted reflections on the city she had been evacuated from in 1975. She contrasts the charming backwater she had visited then, with its mixture of thatched roofed, Indigenous houses and whitewashed, Portuguese colonial buildings, to the city that now resembles, in her eyes, a pale reflection of the Indonesian capital, Jakarta. In her recollections of the then capital of Portuguese Timor, Joliffe echoes the views of other foreign visitors. Some Anglophone writers, such as the naturalist, Alfred Wallace who also saw it as a backwater when he visited in 1861, appeared to suggest that Dili's state reflected the underdevelopment they associated with the Portuguese colonization of the eastern part of Timor Island (Wallace 2008: 449; Dunn 2004).

The transformation of Dili under Indonesian rule, in terms of its changing urban space and the governance of that space, has yet to be described and analysed by scholars. Indonesian scholar George Aditjondro (2000) discusses sites and monuments in Dili in a larger chapter on death squads in East Timor, including them in an analysis of the prevailing Indonesian regime of oppression. Extant accounts of Dili are found most commonly in human rights bulletins and newsletters, and in a handful of travellers' accounts. When Indonesia annexed East Timor in December 1975 and closed the territory to visitors until 1989, these accounts came to describe Dili as simply a frightening place under the total control of the Indonesian Army (e.g. Sword and Walsh 1991).

Taking a different approach and drawing on a range of sources in Portuguese, Indonesian, Tetum and English, this chapter analyses East Timorese responses to changes to urban space during the Indonesian era and the use of the city as an arena of struggle by a generation of clandestine youth activists opposed to the Indonesian occupation – an approach that is also adopted for studies of occupation in other parts of Asia by other contributors to this volume. The chapter draws on activist memoirs, the final report of the East Timor Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação Timor Leste, CAVR) and provincial reports in the Indonesian language, as well as observational research in Dili and oral history interviews in Timor-Leste and Australia. Focusing on the lives of five former clandestine activists who sailed to Australia illegally in 1995 as asylum seekers, I examine how the city's layout and construction interacted with clandestine activism. This case study illustrates, in turn, how urban occupation and spatial transformation contributed to the imagining of an embryonic vision of national identity in East Timor.

Dili before the Indonesian invasion

The Portuguese first arrived in Lifau on the island of Timor in what is now the enclave of Oecusse.² They moved their capital to Dili in 1769 where they had earlier established a settlement in 1520. Dili consisted predominantly of swamps and mudflats (Wallace 2008: 450; Forbes 1987). While at first the Portuguese settlement was modest, consisting of a small collection of buildings, such as the governor's palace and the garrison, facing the Wetar Strait, population growth in the twentieth century created demand for land and the rise of commercial districts. The swamps were progressively drained under the Portuguese to make



Figure 1.1 Map of Timor-Leste.

way for construction, to improve sanitation and to prevent floods (Boavida 2011).

Under the Portuguese, Dili assumed the characteristics of a colonial city, taken to mean, following Brenda Yeoh (2003: 1), a place containing 'a diversity of peoples, including colonialists, immigrants and indigenes' in 'a social matrix of newly constituted relations of dominance and dependence', with the European colonial administrators at the top. According to Boavida (2011: 21), however, in Portuguese Timor, there was an even greater and more complex mixing of races than in most Portuguese colonies, with political exiles, troops, mariners, sandalwood traders and officials – including those from the metropole, Goans, Chinese and Malays – intermarrying with local women.

Being the capital of one of Portugal's most far-flung territories, Dili developed only very slowly under the Portuguese (Dunn 2004: 84; Lockwood 1964). It was badly damaged during the Second World War and Dili's population grew subsequently with demand for labour to reconstruct the city. By 1974, the population of Dili had grown to 30,000 from 6,000 in 1954 (Ranck 1977: 126). Military conscription and the expansion of education facilities in Dili also increased the city's population. Children and youth from rural areas stayed with relatives to study in the city.

The fall of the Caetano regime in Portugal with the victory of the Carnation Revolution of 25 April 1974 placed decolonization on the agenda. In preparation for decolonization, the East Timorese formed several political parties, including the ASDT (Timorese Social Democratic Association) that later became Fretilin (Revolutionary Front for Independent East Timor); the pro-Indonesian party, APODETI (Popular Democratic Association of Timor); the monarchist KOTA; and UDT (Timorese Democratic Union) (Leach 2017). Despite forming a coalition in January 1975 to advance the cause of national independence, a brief armed conflict broke out in August between Fretilin and UDT. UDT and APODETI sought assistance from Indonesia, a neighbouring country that made no secret of its designs on East Timor. When the civil war ended in September, Fretilin took over administration and declared independence in Dili on 28 November 1975, with a full-scale invasion by Indonesia imminent.

The invasion of Dili, liberated zones and resettlement camps

On 7 December 1975, Indonesia invaded Dili with a full-scale military attack involving warships, paratroopers, Marines and ground troops (CAVR 2013:

206). By afternoon, the invading forces had gained control of central parts of Dili, while Fretilin and its military forces, Falintil (Forças Armadas de Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste – the Armed Forces for the Liberation of East Timor) controlled the southern parts of Dili and the hills to the west of the city. In the first two days following the invasion, execution of civilians and extensive looting in Dili and its surrounds were recorded (CAVR 2013: 210). While total Indonesian troop numbers are not precisely known, the CAVR estimated that several thousand landed on 7 December and 10 December 1975, with another 10,000 to 20,000 personnel thought to have landed during the following weeks, including a large number on 25 December 1975.

Across a territory of just under 15,000 square kilometres in size, most of the population was displaced as a result of the invasion. To evade the Indonesians, civilians and Falintil forces based themselves in the mountains in the period from 1975 to 1978. The Matebian mountain range in the centre of the territory was one of several mountainous regions where refugees gathered. Matebian's rough terrain held the invading force at bay for some months. Fretilin designated the mountainous resistance bases (*bases de apoio*) in mid-1976 as 'liberated zones' (da Silva 2011: 27), where they implemented a nascent form of popular democracy and health and agricultural programmes, and continued Fretilin's political education and literacy programmes in Tetum and other local languages. However, as the tide of the war began to turn and Indonesian forces gained more territory, the programmes had to be abandoned. Those hiding in the mountains were forced to be constantly on the move, surviving only by eating wild animals and plants. Thousands died from hunger and illness.

By the late 1970s, most mountain bases were destroyed and those who survived were progressively captured or surrendered and were placed in resettlement camps by the Indonesian Army. By early December 1978, army data showed that some 318,921 people – almost half the estimated total pre-invasion population – were in such camps (CAVR 2013: 2217). The East Timorese were relocated to villages under army control or to those which were closer to the main roads to enable easier surveillance. The army also opted to turn some camps into permanent settlements for the displaced. In 1984, the Indonesian government reported that it had built, since 1977, some 2,708 'simple houses in tens of resettlements' (Provincial Government of East Timor 1985: 38). While these 'resettlements', according to the government, were designed to improve crop production and to reunite 'families who had been scattered during the period of strife', life was highly regulated in them, including by the institution of a pass system that enabled residents to leave only during the day to tend land

elsewhere (Budiardjo and Liem 1984: 83). The restriction of access to farmland, designed to break contact between the community and Falintil fighters, led to widespread famine and the gradual abandonment of arable land (Budiardjo and Liem 1984: 80). As a result, food cultivation declined, livelihoods were destroyed and customary rituals were disrupted.

Displacement and its effects

Displacement was an experience widely shared by the East Timorese population across all age categories, and a phenomenon that was an important precursor to the demographic, social and political changes that would be visible in Dili by the late 1980s. The CAVR estimates that, while most forced displacement (55 per cent) was still only within a *posto* (formerly a 'subdistrict' representing the second-tier administrative unit of the territory), displacement was usually for long periods of time, with half of all displacement events lasting more than two years (CAVR 2013: 2217). Longer term displacement also resulted from local land conflicts as well as Portuguese and Indonesian state territorialization policies, involving 'the establishment of formal regulations on land boundaries, property rights, political administration, and population movement' (Thu 2012). Hence, long term colonization, state formation and land control practices entrenched temporary instances of displacement associated with violent conflict.

The trajectories of displacement of the cohort that is the focus of my study – five young men involved in the clandestine movement who then went on to sail illegally to Australia in 1995 as asylum seekers – show that many East Timorese were displaced multiple times following the invasion. The five young men discussed in this chapter, while by no means representative of the clandestine movement in East Timor, share certain characteristics, the most important being the experience of having grown up under Indonesian occupation.³ They were all born in the 1970s, just prior to or just after the Indonesian invasion. Three of the five – Antonio Gouveia, Jose da Costa and Nicolau Fraga – came from families from the district of Baucau, East Timor's second largest city. Gouveia was born in Baucau in 1973, one of three boys; his mother, a sole parent, took all three boys to Dili when Gouveia was only about four years old. They came to Dili, Gouveia recalls, by an Indonesian ship that sailed from Baucau (interview, 26 October 2017). His cousin, Nicolau Fraga, was born in 1972, in Samalari, Baucau (interview, 4 November 2017). Fraga's family stayed in their village and did not take to the mountains in response to the Indonesian invasion. However, they

decided to leave in 1980 for the relative safety of the city of Baucau to avoid the military operations in Samalari. Fraga recalled:

I was born in '72, that time I see a lot of things, bombs, aeroplane dropping [things], destroying the crops, the animals. [At the time of the invasion], we were in a small town they called Samalari in Baucau, close to Quelicai, near Seiçal. Seiçal is on the river and near where [Falintil commander for the eastern region] David Alex was based. We were living in the village, but because of the occupation, our parents said we had to leave, because it was not safe anymore. Kids had nothing to eat. We had to leave the village to move to the city, Baucau.

After about four years in Baucau, in 1984, the Fraga family was allowed to return to Samalari, but only to tend crops and animals on their land, as Indonesian troops were still involved in anti-guerrilla operations in the area.

The last young man from Baucau in this group, Jose da Costa, was born some six months after the invasion, in 1976, while his extended family were on the run from Baucau and sheltering in the neighbouring district of Viqueque (interview, 16 February 2015). Before the invasion, the family had lived and farmed in the village of da Costa's father (Bie Ono), Nambu'u – adjacent to Baucau Airport. During the three years that the family spent on the run, half of da Costa's ten siblings died from malnutrition and illness, and his relatives died from hunger and Indonesian bombardment. Suffering malnutrition and shrapnel injuries, the family was eventually captured and taken by the army to Baucau town. There they were forced to rely on their relatives for food and shelter, before eventually being allowed to return to da Costa's mother's village, Buasare, located some five kilometres away from Nambu'u. Ongoing military operations meant Nambu'u was out of bounds. Ono was only allowed to go to his land during the day to farm as long as he had a valid travel pass.

The other two young men in this cohort, Jose Verdial and Sixto Guterres, came from other parts of East Timor. Verdial was born in 1973 in Aileu, a district bordering Dili to the south (interview, 27 October 2017). Guterres was born in Viqueque, east of Baucau (interview, 20 October 2019). Both their fathers had been separated from their families at the time of the Indonesian invasion and were then recruited as Indonesian Army auxiliaries ('partisans') before being trained and inducted as regular soldiers in Indonesia. The involvement of East Timorese men in the Indonesian Army and militias stemmed often from them being caught up in military operations and then being drafted into the ranks. Starting as 'partisans' (supposedly volunteer forces on the side of the Indonesians), they were then recruited more formally into the Indonesian security apparatus.

With the whereabouts of his father unknown, the two-year-old Jose Verdial, his baby sister and his mother all fled to the mountains following the invasion to join her extended family – Verdial’s maternal uncles were Falintil soldiers based in the mountains. With the hardship of life on the run, his baby sister died and Verdial’s mother decided to surrender, taking along her son Jose. He recalled their time on the run:

The three of us had to flee to the mountains, and from place to place, for almost two years. My mum really couldn’t [handle] it. So, we decided to come down to Aileu town to surrender. That time, my sister had just passed away, because [there was] no food, no medications, so [my mother] was suffering a bit. She decided to surrender in Aileu.

The young Verdial was to move many times, his life constantly disrupted by army operations in different parts of the rural areas. Displacement led to the scattering of the population and fragmentation of the social fabric as families and kinship networks were torn apart. In some instances, family members were, by virtue of Indonesia’s annexation strategies, forcibly placed on different sides of the conflict.

Organizing an occupation: space, architecture and control

In July 1976, East Timor was ‘integrated’ into Indonesia, with Dili as the capital. However, the city remained closed to visitors, with ‘Indonesian media access to Timor-Leste [being] tightly controlled, and international media . . . virtually banned’ (CAVR 2013: 231). There was only very limited access for international agencies such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and official delegations were permitted only on extremely tightly controlled visits. Indonesia assumed control over former Portuguese installations, continuing to use some in much the same way as the Portuguese had done. These included the Comarca Balide (the city’s prison) and the military and police headquarters.

Combat operations continued under the Indonesian military’s Operations Implementation Command (Komando Pelaksana Operasi, Kolakops), while in 1979, a territorial military structure, the Sub-regional Military Command (Korem)¹⁶⁴/Wira Dharma, was established to demonstrate that East Timor was now pacified and was to be administered in the same way as the other provinces (CAVR 2013: 353). Two organic Korem battalions, infantry battalions 744 based in Dili and 745 in Los Palos, were established. These consisted of many East Timorese soldiers in order to ‘Timorize’ the war (Kammen 1999: 63; van Klinken

2005: 120). The Indonesian Army installed military auxiliary groups, mirroring those in place in Indonesia, such as the civilian defence units (*pertahanan sipil, hansip*) and militia groups in support of Indonesian integration. Without denying degrees of free will among some East Timorese who joined such groups, recruitment to them involved various elements of coercion.

The military introduced new security and surveillance systems and operated a number of detention and interrogation sites in police and military headquarters as well as in private buildings that had been seized following the invasion of Dili. For example, the stores and warehouses belonging to Sang Tai Hoo, a Chinese-Timorese-owned commercial company, were used as detention and interrogation sites. Aditjondro (2000: 169) suggests that Indonesia's use of 'private torture arenas' was linked to the involvement of the army's special forces, Kopassus, and its preferred method of operating undercover. The Intelligence Task Force (Satuan Tugas Intelijen, SGI) was a key military intelligence unit over which the Kopassus wielded enormous influence (CAVR 2013: 375). It conducted the torture of East Timorese opponents in an unmarked house in Colmera. The Indonesian intelligence network relied on informants, or *mau'hu* (meaning 'spy' in Tetum), and the CAVR (2013: 376) blames the widespread use of spies under Indonesian rule for the breakdown of trust and the high degree of suspicion amongst the East Timorese. From the 1980s, the army also used 'non regulars', mainly the *preman* (thugs) and black-clad *ninja*, to attack and intimidate its opponents (Kammen 1999: 74).

Although the beginnings of stronger civilian rule sat uneasily alongside ongoing repressive operations and the heightened militarization of East Timorese society, in 1982, the East Timorese participated in the Indonesian national elections for the first time. A forty-member regional parliament and a new governor, Mario Carrascalão, took office in Dili in June and September 1982, respectively (Pemerintah Provinsi Daerah Tingkat I Timor Timur 1986: 24).⁴ New government buildings began to be constructed and basic services such as telecommunications and post resumed, and roads and transport networks reopened (Pemerintah Daerah 1996: 86–7; Provincial Government of East Timor 1985: 27–31). In 1984, it was no longer necessary to possess a travel document (*surat jalan*) to leave Dili (Pinto and Jardine 1997: 100).

The appearance of East Timorese cities during Indonesian rule was influenced by the application of architectural regionalism, a highly important concept in architecture during the Suharto New Order period. Abidin Kusno (2000: 92) defines architectural regionalism as 'largely a movement intended to give local inflection to modernism by advocating sensitivity to the indigenous climate and

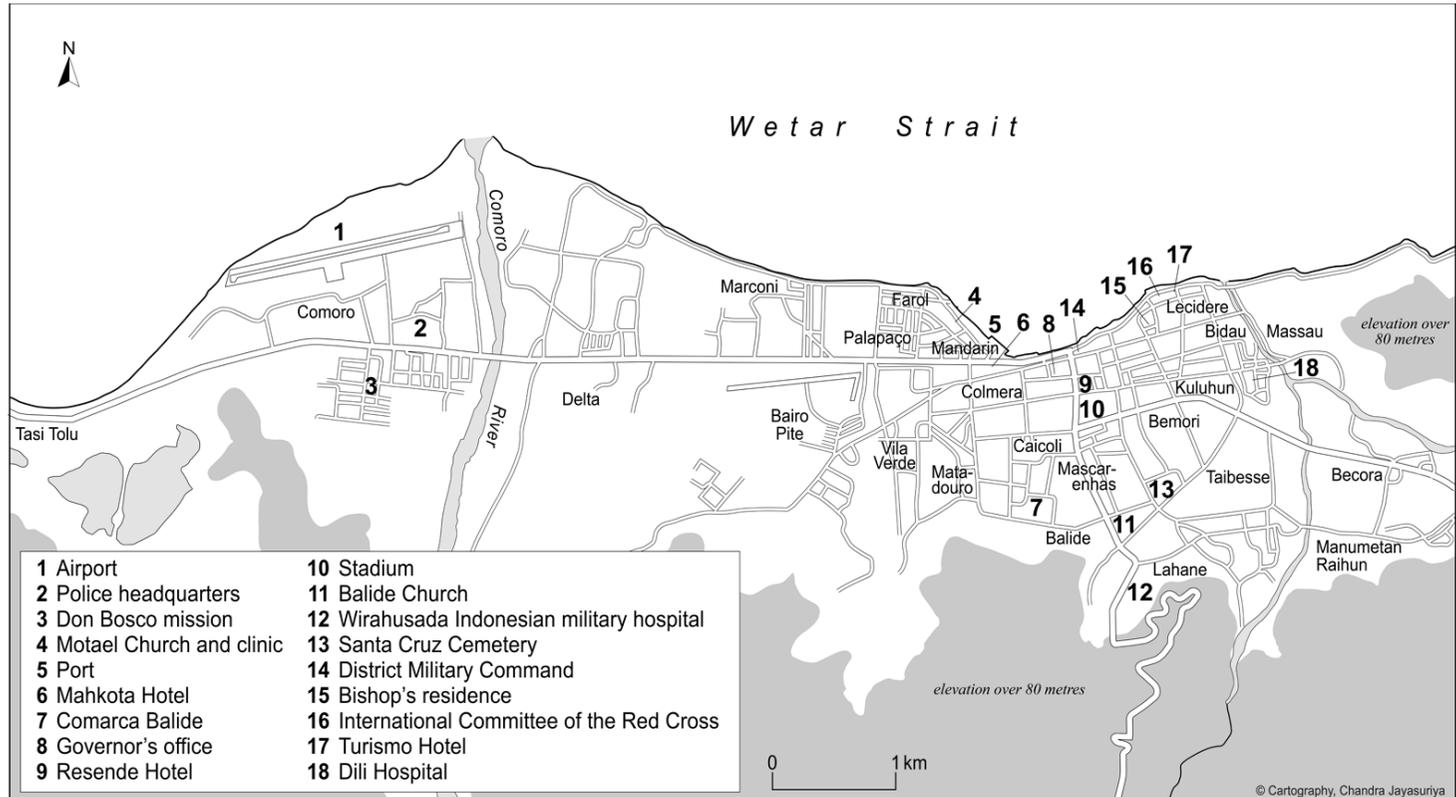


Figure 1.2 Map of Dili.

local materials'. Indonesian architects eschewed the modernist approach that had been favoured by the radical nationalist president Sukarno, who was deposed by Suharto in 1968 (Kusno 2000: 90). In searching for the essence of authentic Indonesian architecture, the profession had moved closer to the approach of Dutch colonial architects, such as Thomas Karsten and Henri Maclaine Pont, who worked in the pre-Second World War era and had formulated 'Indies architecture' as being composed of the noble, spiritual yet modern and powerful aspects of the Indigenous (Kusno 2000: 47). For the Indonesian postcolonial state (that in turn had become a colonizer in East Timor), the practice of architectural regionalism aimed to 'reduce the potential threat of social and political disintegration' across the archipelago by displaying and 'properly represent[ing]' cultural differences (Kusno 2000: 93). Encapsulating this approach on one site is Jakarta's Indonesia in Miniature Park, which was opened in 1971, a 'park' filled with 'traditional' houses and artifacts drawn from across Indonesia.

In East Timor, architectural regionalism led, firstly, to the preservation and maintenance of Portuguese colonial-era buildings, understood as reflecting East Timorese culture. Street and suburb names from the Portuguese era, commemorating colonial governors and municipal leaders, were largely



Figure 1.3 Provincial administration buildings, Dili, 1990. Photo by Gerhard Joren/LightRocket via Getty Images.

preserved, though some names were rewritten in keeping with Indonesian spelling and pronunciation. For example, the Portuguese spelling of the suburbs of Caicoli and Becora was Indonesianized to become Kaikoli and Bekora (Dalton 1995).

Secondly, architectural regionalism led to the incorporation of design elements adopted from regional East Timorese architecture to suggest Indonesian cultural sensitivity to the new members of the nation. One of the most recognizable elements incorporated into Indonesian construction in East Timor was the triangle-shaped roof design of the traditional houses of the Fataluku Indigenous group from the Lautem region. Architects incorporated the Fataluku roof style into buildings erected during the Indonesian era, such as at Dili airport in Comoro, built in 1981. The striking design of the Fataluku traditional house became co-opted as a symbol of East Timor Province more generally, as evidenced by the addition of one such house to the Indonesia in Miniature Park to represent the province (McWilliam 2005: 31).

While the Indonesian administration sought to exploit the importance that the Indigenous East Timorese accorded to their sacred houses (McWilliam 2005), these houses of origin were no mere physical structures to the East Timorese, but also represented a way of organizing sociality. Members of a particular community, orientated around a 'house', usually as a result of marriage alliances, are 'located and identified within a particular cultural landscape in terms of their common relationship to founding ancestors of the group and, by extension, the land to which they claim and assert historico-mythic connection' (McWilliam 2005: 32). By preserving aspects of the past, and including local architectural features in new constructions, the Indonesian government had hoped to convince the East Timorese that becoming part of Indonesia did not lead to their complete cultural and historical erasure. Such a view, however, failed to understand the significance of the sacred house and the mutual obligations and affiliations that exist among members of the house in Indigenous East Timorese society.

Despite intending to promote continuity with the past and recognizing East Timorese culture in spatial design, the Indonesian administration was concerned with the rise of social and economic stratification and its implications for stability, being influenced as they were by Dutch colonial-era architects such as Karsten, who had identified stratification as a key feature of European colonial towns (Brand 1958: 66). Aiming to tackle stratification, Indonesian architects transferred supposedly authentic Indonesian architecture (itself a Dutch colonial construct) to East Timor, thereby altering the appearance of East Timorese cities and towns.

Buildings not dissimilar to those erected in New Order Indonesia sprung up, including whitewashed, low-cost housing for public servants, and government buildings that underpinned Indonesian claims of bringing development to the territory. For example, low-cost housing using standard designs was built by the early 1980s in Dili and its then-outer suburb of Comoro (Provincial Government of East Timor 1985: 38). Although much of Dili's layout and many of its buildings survived into the Indonesian occupation, the transplantation of Indonesian-style architecture in such development schemes contributed to the sense that Dili appeared to mimic Jakarta or other Indonesian cities.

While maintaining the presence of Portuguese-era buildings, such as markets and meeting halls in the old part of town, the Indonesian administration constructed new buildings in areas designated as 'new towns' or specific suburbs to host clusters of government buildings. Natural swamps in Dili's Caicoli were progressively drained to make way for construction. In combining a superficial deference to the pre-existing built environment with the transfer of supposedly authentic Indonesian architecture to East Timor, Indonesian building practices in the territory reflected what Homi Bhabha (2003: 154) describes as the ambivalence of colonial discourse in moving between recognizing difference between the colonizer and the colonized, and also disavowing it.

Colonization brought an influx of Indonesians into the territory. This created friction and the government's much dreaded stratification. Population data in 1999 showed that there were 105,000 non-East Timorese in the territory out of a total population of 900,000, with most of these being voluntary migrants, such as public servants and Bugis traders from South Sulawesi (Fitzpatrick 2002: 27). Indonesia's transmigration programmes – internal resettlement programmes to reduce population density – brought in involuntary migrants. Between 1982 and 1999, some 25,000 transmigrants were settled in East Timor, with most of these being from Java and Bali. In 1985, the East Timorese provincial government described Indonesians arriving in East Timor as those answering 'the call from their countrymen' to assist with development efforts (Provincial Government of East Timor 1985: 43).

However, Commander of the Falintil armed resistance, Jose Alexandre 'Xanana' Gusmão, condemned Dili as a city stratified by race, social status and origin, not dissimilar to Karsten's reflections of the stratification of a European colonial town. Writing in 1992, he described Dili as a city where 'Indonesians and integrationists' occupied the top rung, followed by a 'lower minority of Timorese who, one way or another, succeed apparently in living a life without setbacks', referring to a handful of East Timorese elites who were relatively protected as a result of their wealth and

status (Niner 2000: 172). They were then followed in the third tier by the security and intelligence forces, consisting of both Indonesian and Timorese, with Indonesian civilians among them 'having the mission of observing and informing' (Niner 2000: 172). In this sense, the East Timorese inhabitants of Dili on the lowest rungs were being marginalized and excluded from their own city – physically, economically and socially. When asked to discuss life during the occupation, interviewee Jose Verdial said, 'A lot of immigrants came and occupied [East Timor], most of the government employees were immigrants, all the business and markets controlled by them.' Far from bringing the East Timorese closer to Indonesians, the influx of Indonesians of different ethnicities, religions and economic status deepened the perception of living under an occupation.

East Timorese perceptions of being colonized also resulted from certain, wholly new, spatial features generated by the Indonesian administration, such as monuments to celebrate East Timor's integration into Indonesia designed to create a new collective memory. These monuments were built in Dili and in other cities, such as the western town of Balibo, near the Indonesian border. They have common features, such as the statue of an East Timorese man dressed in traditional costume mounted on a marble plinth, breaking free from what could be presumed to be colonial shackles binding his wrists. The monument in Dili, built in 1981, was, according to one newspaper report, to honour the 'sacrifices of the partisans,' East Timorese volunteers who had fought on the side of the Indonesians 'against troublemakers' (*perusuh*) (*Kompas* 2017). New memorials to non-East Timorese were also constructed with the creation of 'heroes cemeteries,' the largest one being the Seroja (Lotus) Heroes' Cemetery in Balide, Dili, to accommodate the war dead. Based on data from the Indonesian Military History Centre, van Klinken (2005: 121) estimates that there were 3,600 deaths in combat on the Indonesian side in East Timor from 1975 to 1999. Buried in heroes' cemeteries in East Timor were mainly Indonesian soldiers whose remains were not flown back and buried in Indonesia. These attempts to foster a new collective memory, through monuments and Indonesian cemeteries in East Timorese cities, only reminded residents of the recent violent conflict and the contested status of colonial history, and commit what Aditjondro (2000: 179) refers to as 'symbolic violence'.

Being young in the new city

East Timorese youth was an important target audience in the creation of these new memorials and forms of remembrance. In analysing official Indonesian

publications, it is apparent that the administration had hopes that the younger generation would come to accept Indonesian rule. To appeal to and remake the young generation, the government invested in education by constructing hundreds of new schools in the territory (Pemerintah Provinsi 1986: 56). Branches of Indonesian patriotic and nationalist youth groups in East Timor, such as the Pancasila Youth (Pemuda Pancasila)⁵ and the National Committee of Indonesian Youth (Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia, KNPI) were opened in East Timor (Pemerintah Daerah 1996: 243). These organizations sponsored study tours to Indonesia for young East Timorese so they could become familiar with the country (Pinto and Jardine 1997: 89).

East Timorese youth who had dropped out of school, such as Gouveia and da Costa, were not as exposed to Indonesian influence. Interviewee Jose Verdial (interview, 27 October 2017) did acknowledge that the expansion of education was a positive aspect of the occupation:

I was able to go to school with some of my friends and to finish high school, as I know by the stories of the older people that in [Portuguese] colonial times not everyone had a chance to go to school; I could see that, because there were a lot of illiterate women and men, even my mum, her sisters and brother did not have a chance to go to school.

Despite the curriculum and the medium of instruction all being geared towards assimilating young East Timorese, education for the East Timorese 'contributed to their political awareness and fanned their nationalism', argues van Klinken (2012: 18).

The East Timorese clandestine movement's origins can be traced back to the destruction of the liberated zones, and over time, the rebuilding of resistance in an underground form based in the cities and villages. As growing numbers of East Timorese moved to Dili, an urban-based clandestine movement grew. This relied on the capacity of the city and its inhabitants to hide, protect and shelter activists. Youth formed a strong component of this movement. They acted as couriers and messengers, and obtained supplies in the cities and villages for the armed resistance in the forest. Mobility between the city and the countryside was a cornerstone of this clandestine movement. Despite the repressiveness of life in the city, Dili residents remained connected to their roots in the rural areas by virtue of their relationship with their villages of origin and kinship networks. City-based youths were expected to travel to rural areas as couriers and in other roles and relied on their kinship ties to facilitate their work. Along with the diplomatic front abroad, resistance to Indonesian rule was relatively widespread by the 1990s.

Due to the high degree of secrecy, many aspects of the resistance and its intricate structures inside the territory remain understudied, including the lived experiences of clandestine activists in Dili and their relationship with the spatial environment. The involvement of university lecturers, public servants and nuns and clergy of the Catholic Church in secretly opposing Indonesian rule also led to a complex landscape of resistance. Historian Peter Carey (2003) writes of how the voices of the East Timorese themselves, particularly members of the younger generation, have been absent in much of the scholarship about the Indonesian occupation, though this situation has begun to change with growing efforts at history writing in East Timor and the publication of activist accounts (e.g. Gomes 1995; Rei 2007; Conway 2009; da Silva 2011; Hearman 2019).

Displacement and voluntary migration into Dili created new opportunities for East Timorese to interact closely with those from other regions of East Timor. Many East Timorese decided to migrate to larger cities like Dili and Baucau, as well as abroad, to escape the violence of the hinterland, and to seek a more stable life or try to find their missing loved ones, thus continuing the cycle of displacement. The link with the villages of origin was maintained, however, as a result of kinship networks that are transferred to the city and relationship to 'houses of origin' (*uma lulik*).

It was to Dili from Baucau that Antonio Gouveia's mother took her three sons in the late 1970s. In Dili, the family lived in Vila Verde, a suburb that became a hub of pro-independence supporters. Gouveia reached grade six in primary school before starting to work in a mechanic's workshop. Although da Costa and Fraga arrived in Dili some five years apart, their reasons for relocating can also be traced to the effects of the occupation. In 1984, da Costa's father, Bie Ono, was killed by the Indonesian Army as a suspected Fretilin sympathizer. Da Costa recounted his move to Dili thus:

After the death of my father, I became restless and I got into a lot of trouble at school, sometimes I got into fighting with my school friends and I had very strong sense of anger towards the children whose father worked for the Indonesians. At the same time, I learnt how to survive, when after school I sold flavoured ice cubes. It was in 1987 [that] I ran away to Dili; it was difficult because I was only 11 years old. In 1988, I started working for a Chinese family helping to look after their shop as well as working in the warehouse. Over time I got to know other young people in the area, in Bidau Tahularan, and the sentiment against the Indonesians was very strong amongst the young people.

His new friends asked him to take malaria tablets and cigarettes from the warehouse to be given to the guerrillas. Da Costa's involvement was initially very much tied to the suburb in which he lived in Dili and the activist youths there. At some stage in the 1980s, from Viqueque, Sixto Guterres and his mother joined his soldier father who was based in Dili, and completed his schooling there. The youths' arrival in Dili exposed them to an urban setting and to new opportunities to contribute to the resistance effort.

Youths were involved in a range of clandestine activities. They became involved by creating new cells of resistance as well as infiltrating institutions such as the Catholic Scouts (*escuteiros*), and Indonesian youth organizations such as OSIS (Organisasi Siswa Intra-Sekolah, or Intra-High School Students' Organization) (CAVR 2013: 505). Each cell consisted of a small number of people often connected by family and kinship ties and based in a particular suburb, with a liaison person who dealt with other cells. Higher population density, resulting from inward migration, contributed to the city's chaotic layout once one left the main roads. This layout enabled clandestine activists to traverse the city's back alleys unnoticed, and to carry out tasks such as couriering letters, cassettes and photographs between the armed resistance and Dili. Money was collected from trusted sources in the city to be sent to Falintil guerrillas (Pinto and Jardine 1997: 101)

Dili's unplanned growth and complicated network of alleys and laneways also enabled the secreting of guerrilla leaders, such as Xanana Gusmão, in safe houses (Pinto and Jardine 1997; Rei 2007). The operation of safe houses in Dili also attested to the close connection between the city and rural areas. Clandestine activists brought guerrillas into Dili in secret, relying on well-connected, powerful and, at times, wealthy allies who had the desired resources and facilities to support such work (Pinto and Jardine 1997: 159). They also hid fellow clandestine activists who were sought by the authorities in safe houses.

The existence of 'islands' – institutions and communities that were relatively remote from the reach of the Indonesian administration – provided an alternative space, mentally and physically, in which to organize and to foster different ideas to those of the occupiers. Institutions that were relatively free from Indonesian control included the Catholic Church and certain schools in Dili which were used as organizing centres, such as the Externato de São José High School. During the occupation, the relationship between the Catholic Church in East Timor and in Indonesia was left deliberately vague by the Vatican, and East Timorese Monsignor Carlos Ximenes Belo, as apostolic administrator, reported to the papal nuncio in Jakarta, rather than to the Indonesian Church (Deakin



Figure 1.4 A street in Colmera, Dili, 1990. Photo by Gerhard Joren/LightRocket via Getty Images.

2017: 114). The São José School was still permitted to use the Portuguese language, and all teachers there were East Timorese except for those teaching Indonesian language and history. These island institutions within the city were physical spaces that protected youth activists and their charges, such as Falintil guerrilla leaders visiting the city. Some of these islands, such as Dili's Motael Church and Monsignor Carlos Ximenes Belo (the bishop)'s residence, were enlisted as safe havens that the Indonesian military would hesitate to breach.

Opening up new forms of struggle

Dili was opened to foreign visitors in 1989 to promote the legitimacy of Indonesian rule and to earn revenue from tourism. This coincided with the founding, in September of that year, of an East Timorese non-partisan, umbrella organization to coordinate the campaign to overthrow Indonesian rule: the National Council for Maubere Resistance (CNRM) (Pinto and Jardine 1997: 122). The opening up provided opportunities for new contact between East Timorese activists and visitors, which led to open street protests and more brazen activities such as bringing foreign visitors from Dili to meet guerrillas.

On 12 October 1989, a demonstration in favour of independence was held during Pope John Paul II's visit on the outskirts of Dili, in Tibar. On 17 January 1990, dozens of youths went to the Turismo Hotel in Lecidere to convey their aspirations for independence to the American diplomat John Monjo. Their protest and subsequent beatings by police were witnessed and documented by Australian tourists at the hotel. The road upon which the hotel was located was strategic for protesters, as the ICRC, the bishop's residence and several tourist hotels were all located on that road. Australian activist Robert Domm, who carried out the first ever extended interview with Gusmão in September 1990, related how his stay in Dili and subsequent trip to the mountains were organized and carried out with the involvement of possibly dozens of clandestine activists (Domm 1990: 16). To coordinate the clandestine youth groups that had sprung up, youth activists including Constancio Pinto, Donaciano Gomes and José Manuel established the CNRM Executive Committee of the Clandestine Front at a secret meeting at the São José School in July 1990 (Pinto and Jardine 1997: 126; da Silva 2011: 264). In other words, with Dili's opening up, urban space was being reconfigured, and new challenges emerged for the authorities as to how they would police and secure the city.

By the time they were in their teens, the five young men interviewed had dabbled in clandestine work in Dili and in regional areas. In the suburb of Vila Verde, Gouveia and his family were part of a network receiving and passing on goods and messages, as well as hiding and couriering people, on behalf of the Falintil forces. He traced his participation in these activities to his mother's own clandestine work: 'I was only helping my mother in the beginning,' he explained. From there, Gouveia became interested in the activities of the older youths in the suburb, who were harassing and bullying Indonesian youth and 'pro-integration' East Timorese. He began to follow these youth activists to meetings at the São José School and to participate in their activities, such as the 4 September 1990 demonstration in Lecidere marking the fiftieth anniversary of the Dili Catholic Archdiocese, and at the Paulus VI High School where a riot broke out over denigrating remarks made against East Timorese students by an Indonesian teacher.

Due to his participation at protests, the military started to identify Gouveia. He escaped to Baucau to stay with his relatives for a year. During his stay in Baucau, he met Falintil commander David Alex. Gouveia recounted, 'We met David Alex twice. He gave us advice, he said, you all should go back to Dili, don't stay here, go there resume your work and share information with other youths.' From his encounter with the commander, Gouveia and his group of nine other

activists began collecting shoes, clothing, rice, coffee and medicine to send to the guerrillas. 'We started from there, from [meeting David Alex], started from that connection we had,' explained Gouveia.

When Gouveia returned to Dili, he found he was still being watched, and the Indonesian Army was stepping up repression to prepare for the arrival of a Portuguese parliamentary delegation, an event enthusiastically awaited by the East Timorese. Given the situation, Gouveia chose to shelter in the Motael Church with about thirty other youths. On 28 October 1991, one of these youths, Sebastião Gomes, was shot and killed by Indonesian soldiers and militias. An East Timorese intelligence officer working for the Indonesians, Afonso, was also killed. The killing of Gomes had breached an unspoken rule that church grounds were out of bounds to security forces.

The 1991 Dili Massacre

The opening up of Dili led to urban space becoming much more explicitly an arena of struggle. No event illustrates this as much as the Dili Massacre of 12 November 1991, a major turning point in East Timorese history. Youths had become emboldened by the opening up policy. They wanted to communicate their struggles to visitors, such as the Portuguese parliamentary delegation that then cancelled their visit when Indonesia refused to allow journalist Jill Joliffe to accompany the delegation. The youths chose another event instead. A Mass was held at the Motael Church two weeks after Gomes' death, and those who attended then departed for the Santa Cruz Cemetery to lay flowers at his grave. The morning procession, which transformed into a protest march of thousands featuring slogans and banners against Indonesian rule, wound its way through the Dili streets gathering more people as it went along. As the marchers arrived at the cemetery, the Indonesian Army asserted their control of a space that was associated with the daily life and rituals of mourning by the East Timorese by shooting into the crowd and killing an estimated 271 people.

That morning, then, the security forces pushed back against attempts by the East Timorese to use the city's streets as theirs, and reasserted Indonesian control of the city through the massacre. Interviewee Jose Verdial lived near the cemetery in Mascarenhas, from where he conducted his clandestine work. He did not attend the protest because he was studying for his exams, but as his house was near the cemetery, he and his friends secretly approached the cemetery after they heard gunshots and saw people running in their direction. In hiding, they

witnessed the shooting by Indonesian forces of New Zealand student and activist Kamal Bamadhaj, the only foreigner killed in the massacre that day. They helped load his body into a Red Cross ambulance but refused to get into the vehicle despite the pleadings of the driver for their assistance. Police roadblocks prevented the ambulance from getting Bamadhaj to hospital in time.

The Indonesian military stepped up its efforts to break the East Timorese opposition, even as the shootings brought international attention to its actions in East Timor. Youths continued to be targeted in the hospitals, prisons and police and army installations after the massacre. It was alleged that the army killed survivors of the massacre by injecting them with or forcing them to ingest poisonous chemicals in the city's hospitals. Youths detained were subjected to electrocution, beatings, immersion in water and sewage tanks, sensory deprivation in dark cells, and physical mutilation, such as being cut with razors and having fingernails and toenails extracted, and skin burnt with lit cigarettes (Rei 2006).

Aged fifteen, interviewee Jose da Costa had escaped the massacre by running away into the maze of alleyways around the cemetery as soon as the shooting started, but he was captured about three days later during the police's round-up operations. At the Comoro Police Headquarters, he was severely beaten and tortured, and his face mutilated with a razor blade. His case attracted the attention of the ICRC and he was released after two weeks.

While Indonesia held a commission of inquiry into the massacre and replaced high ranking officers in Dili, the pressure against the clandestine movement continued. In December 1991, the education department and the military moved to close the Externato de São José High School (*Tempo* 1991). By early 1992, thirty-seven people, mainly youths in their late teens and early twenties, awaited trial in East Timor for organizing the Santa Cruz protest, and twenty-two East Timorese were to be tried in Indonesia for protesting the shootings (TAPOL 1992a: 1, 11 and TAPOL 1992b: 12). In 1992, Nicolau Fraga left Baucau for Dili to avoid being captured by the army for his clandestine activities. In the same year, following his arrest for couriering cassettes containing messages from Falintil leaders, Gouveia was detained in a cell in Dili's Balide Prison for two months before being transferred to Baucau Prison.

The arrest of Xanana Gusmão and the dismantling of his support networks in November 1992 also took its toll. From February 1991, Gusmão had used several safe houses in the city to attend meetings and make arrangements regarding the conduct of the resistance (Centro Nacional Chega! 2019). One of these was a house in Lahane, a southern suburb of Dili, belonging to East Timorese police

officer Augusto Pereira (Special Broadcasting Service 2011). Pereira was the husband of Aliança de Araújo, the sister of the Fretilin founder Abílio de Araújo. He had used his credentials as a police officer to circumvent army roadblocks to bring Gusmão to Dili from rural Ainaro. Their cover was blown, however, and on 20 November 1992, the Indonesian Army arrested Gusmão in an underground bunker in Pereira's home. Although the general practice of using safe houses resumed, Gusmão's capture was a setback.

By the mid-1990s, persecution of pro-independence youths increased. In 1994, Gouveia was arrested again while accompanying foreign journalists Jill Joliffe and Irene Slegt to Baucau to meet the Falintil commander Nino Konis Santana. Kopassus officers threatened to kill him if they caught him again. Da Costa recalled that, in 1993–4, independence supporters like him carried weapons and took turns keeping nightly watch around their houses as the army deployed *ninja* – black clad men – to attack them. The experiences of torture and imprisonment were also shared by other youths who joined Gouveia and da Costa on their boat voyage to Australia (Daly 1995: 13). One of them, Jacob da Silva, had served a two-year prison sentence in Indonesia in connection with the Motael Church Incident in October 1991. The youths' seizure of the streets and suburbs of Dili as venues for protests following the opening up policy required, in turn, a reassertion of the authority of the Indonesian security forces.

Conclusion

After the Indonesian invasion, Dili became an important meeting and organizing point for youths from all over East Timor who were interested in making their mark on the national liberation struggle. The demographic changes in and spatial transformation of Dili under Indonesian rule helped form and sustain youth clandestine cells. The Indonesian administration allowed old and new spatial features to coexist in the city, thereby never completely eliminating memories embedded in the city's buildings and streets. Clashing with these memories, however, were the rise of new settlements, institutions, detention sites and memorials which led the inhabitants of Dili to question and resist the occupation. The five activists who recounted in this chapter their experiences of living in Dili in the 1980s and 1990s show that being in the city led them to becoming exposed to new politics, most commonly through relatives and friends who were involved in campaigning for independence. East Timor's opening up to the outside world in 1989 enabled the possibility of new witnessing of the

struggles of the East Timorese, and emboldened youths to lay claim to the city in ways they had not done before, such as by conducting street demonstrations and open protests. Through what Crane (2015: 407) terms their ‘temporary spatial appropriations’, East Timorese youths produced what she refers to as ‘a conjectural space, one in which it became possible to envision a different future.’

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Interviews

Antonio Gouveia, 26 October 2017

Jose da Costa, 16 February 2015

Jose Verdial, 27 October 2017

Nicolau Fraga, 4 November 2017

Sixto Guterres, 20 October 2019

Notes

- 1 Since 2002, Dili has served as the capital of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, a country of 1.2 million people. It is both a city and a district. The district of Dili consists of six administrative posts (*postos*) including the island of Atauro in the Savu Sea to the north, and occupies an area of about 225 square kilometres. The 2015 census showed the city’s population in the six *postos* to be 277,279 (*Dili em Números* 2018: 21). Dili is bordered by the district of Liquiça to the west, Manatuto to the east and Aileu to the south.
- 2 Oecusse is an administrative district of East Timor in the western half of the island of Timor, surrounded on all sides by Indonesian territory. The western half of the island of Timor was controlled by the Dutch (and is today controlled by Indonesia).
- 3 The asylum seeker group consisted mainly of men, with only two women out of the eighteen prepared to sail across the ocean.

- 4 Previous governors Arnaldo dos Reis and Guilherme Gonçalves had been appointed directly by President Suharto.
- 5 The *Pancasila* are the five principles contained in Indonesia's state ideology.

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Displacing the Laws of the Indies with the City Beautiful: Daniel Burnham's 1905 Plan for Manila

Ian Morley

Introduction

From 1565 to 1946, Philippine society was subject to foreign colonial rule. As part of the colonization process, urban planning practices were introduced: under Spanish annexation, given the ratification of the Laws of the Indies in 1573, new urban communities arranged around church-lined central plazas were established. After 1898, as a basic component of American colonial governance, the grand City Beautiful planning model was applied. Whilst there has been much descriptive explanation as to the physical character of colonial built fabrics in the Philippine Islands before and after 1898 in the existing literature, much detailed analytical data is still absent. What, for instance, inspired the American colonizers to radically redesign Philippine towns and cities, e.g. the capital city of Manila? Where did their inspiration come from? Why did they consider it imperative to fundamentally alter both the physical form *and* meaning of the local urban environment?

To answer such questions, and to place modern American city planning within the frame of the evolution of Philippine civilization after 1898, this chapter will focus on three issues. First, it will consider the architect-planner Daniel Burnham (1846–1912) who, after visiting the Philippines in late 1904 and early 1905, imported City Beautiful planning rationality into the Philippines. As part of this analysis, the chapter will examine Burnham's 1905 plan for Manila – the American colonial government's first attempt to refashion a Philippine urban settlement. Secondly, with direct reference to Digital Humanities tools, the work will appraise Burnham's Manila report as a literary document. This will

help to identify how the text, whether intentionally or not, spoke of Philippine cultural advancement. Given that cultural theorists such as Theodor Adorno have argued that to think of societal administration is to think of cultural change, and that to think of cultural change is to think of societal administration, such a line of reasoning has pertinence given that Burnham's report was written to help facilitate the modernization of Philippine society *and* the implementation of efficient governance in conjunction with the display of the esteem of the American colonial regime. Finally, the chapter will draw attention to the environmental features constructed by the Americans in accordance with Burnham's 1905 report, namely the impressive boulevards with their monumental vistas, new green public spaces and monuments. Ultimately, offering a fresh understanding of how Burnham's Manila project articulated the development of Philippine society, the chapter seeks to broaden the discourse on the Philippine colonial urban form within the wider discussion about urban space under colonialism in Asia – a discussion that is addressed by a number of other contributors to this volume. Accordingly, this chapter intentionally veers away from traditional, structuralist-influenced architectural and spatial historical narratives so as to analyse and explicate Burnham's grand planning scheme.

Spanish Manila

The history of the Philippines as a colonized territory commences in 1565. From that time until 1898, the Philippine Islands were under the control of the Spanish settlers who, as part of their quest to develop local civilization, promoted Christian conversion, cultural change and the economic exploitation of the Indigenous peoples (*indios*). However, fundamental to Spanish colonization of the Philippines was the bringing of the *indios* 'under the bells' via the establishment of new urban settlements. Developed in accordance with the Laws of the Indies (*Leyes de Indias*), passed by King Philip II in June 1573, more than 1,000 new urban communities had been formed by 1898. Designed to be both beautiful and utilitarian, the Spanish colonial urban form was dominated by a central plaza (*plaza mayor*) from which a grid plan of roadways was arranged (Mundigo and Crouch 1977: 248–9). Lined by a church (which occupied its own block of land) (Nuttall 1921: 744) as well as other public edifices and the homes of the local colonial elites, the construction of plazas along with grid plans had, by 1898, left an impressive physical imprint on Philippine society. Yet, as important as the Laws of the Indies had been to the development of

Philippine society before the fall of the Spanish Empire in 1898, by the early 1900s a new urban design model was being instigated. Devised by the American architect-planner Daniel Burnham, this new urban planning paradigm was to profoundly affect the spatial morphology of the Philippines' largest city, Manila.

To come to terms fully with why, after the fall of the Spanish in the Philippines, the American colonizers sought to redefine the character and meaning of urban places there, it is first necessary to know what the Laws of the Indies sought to accomplish, as well as to grasp American perceptions of their new colony *c.* 1898. It must be acknowledged that, from the 1570s, the Laws of the Indies had an impact on life in the Philippines in a number of ways. First, land was confiscated from the *indios* and redistributed to Spanish colonists. Second, to bring the 'natives' into new settlements, the Spanish enacted a forced resettlement policy (known as *reducción*). Third, new settlements were designed in accordance with a *traza* (plan). And fourth, a hierarchical system of settlement was enacted so that those of the highest social standing could reside at the core of colonial settlements. Towards the urban fringe, in outlying districts known as *arrabales*, people of the lowest social orders were to be found.

In the case of Manila, where the Laws of the Indies were applied following a major conflagration in the early 1580s, reconstruction afforded an opportunity to effect the imagery of what an ideal Spanish colonial capital city in Asia should be (Morley 2018: 35–6). Hence, by the end of the sixteenth century, Manila, with its 2-kilometre-long stone perimeter walls and new buildings of brick, stone and tile, differed significantly from the collection of wooden edifices and *nipa* (plant leaf, wood, thatch) huts that had comprised the settlement up to 1571 (when Manila was granted the status of Spanish colonial capital city of the Philippine Islands). As I have argued elsewhere, owing to the Spanish developing Manila as a major trading hub within their transcontinental empire, the local population rapidly grew in terms of both size and racial composition from about 2,000 people during the mid-1570s to, by about 1600, almost 30,000 people. 'The establishment of the walled city, surrounded by a substantial moat, in visual terms epitomized the evolution of Manila following the onset of Spanish colonization' (Morley 2018: 36).

To the Spanish, the walled city known as Intramuros ('within the walls') held great symbolic meaning. Its imposing outer walls, its fort, its public buildings and its plazas verified the presence and might of Spanish colonial rule in Asia. As the seat of Spain's colonial government in the Philippines, Intramuros was also the nucleus of the Catholic Church in the Philippine Archipelago, an exclusive residential district, and a military stronghold. By the seventeenth century, it was one of the most important urban centres in Spain's enormous, geographically



Figure 2.1 Entrance to Intramuros, Manila, 1906. Photo by Smith Collection/Gado/Getty Images.

dispersed empire. However, the Indigenous population, as well as the Chinese and Japanese who comprised the vast majority of people in Manila by 1600, resided in land surrounding Intramuros known as Extramuros ('outside the walls'). This area, at least to the Spanish, represented a place where lesser civilization was found. Even though these outlying districts were associated with cultures of a lower status, within them important mercantile activities that were critical to the sustainability of Manila occurred. Furthermore, in the Extramuros, where people were ethnically segregated for the purpose of Spanish military control and cultural transformation, a distinct urban morphology was established. As with Intramuros, central plazas with churches were laid out, and streets were arranged in accordance with grid plans. As I have noted elsewhere (Morley 2018: 39), in this context 'the prominence of churches was not just about establishing architectural monuments to God's glory. The presence of churches at the heart of new urban communities framed Catholicism directly within the milieu of colonial power.'

By the end of the 1800s, numerous Philippine towns and cities had a reputation for insanitary living. Writing in 1899, for example, Joseph Stickney noted the widespread presence of disease. Manila in particular, noted G.J. Younghusband (1899), had a reputation for filth, squalor and contagion. Crucially, however, such perceptions were confirmed by American surveys of the city and country at the

outset of American colonial rule. By way of illustration, *A Pronouncing Gazetteer and Geographical Dictionary of the Philippine Islands* (1902) identified a host of sicknesses plaguing urban life and noted that of the nearly 18,500 buildings that comprised Manila's urban environment at the start of the twentieth century, more than 12,100 were described as 'shacks' with an additional 1,100 being labelled 'bad'. Moreover, the first United States census of the Philippines in 1903 noted that the average life expectancy in Manila – allegedly the most advanced of all urban places in the Philippines Islands – was just 20.8 years. This reality was to leave a deep imprint on the Americans when it came to the management and development of Manila in the early 1900s.

Daniel Burnham and the renewal of Manila

Broadly speaking, the literature on the American colonial era in the Philippines gives the impression that in June 1905 the greatest American city planner of the late-1800s and early-1900s tendered a monumental city plan to assist the colonial government to show off its authority and prestige as a 'great civilizer' (e.g. Hines 1974; Klassen 1986; Lico 2010; Ebro 2013). Whilst it is undeniable that the 1905 Manila Plan by Daniel Burnham (with assistance from Peirce Anderson) certainly contained elements that enabled the American colonial regime to glorify its alleged capacity to 'uplift' local people and their civilization, to merely reduce the planning proposal to this undermines the true nature of it. The scheme, formally known as the 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' (published by the US Bureau of Insular Affairs), explicitly revealed what Manila as a modern colonial capital city should be. Two questions must therefore be asked: what did the 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' actually say? And why did it say what it did?

It is easy to state from reading the 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' that Burnham merely sought to establish a new type of urban layout in Manila, one in the guise of the City Beautiful exemplar that had already been implemented in American cities such as Washington, DC, Cleveland and Chicago (Wilson 1980: 171). Yet such a statement misses much of the bigger picture as to why the Americans in the early 1900s sought to reform the Philippine capital as – to reference the aims of this very volume – a 'space of occupation'. It also gives little indication as to the nature of the wording of the 1905 report. With this in mind, this chapter seeks to provide a fresh overview of the document via textual analysis, and by doing so open a new window through

which to rethink the purpose of American colonial city planning in the Philippines' most important urban centre.

Nine pages in length and comprising seven main sections that contain almost 7,000 words, Burnham and Anderson's 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' offers a textual occasion to breakdown the physical and symbolic structure of Manila as the American colonial capital in Asia. Providing a frame for the expediting of efficient governance, the 1905 report also sought to convert Manila into a spatial laboratory so that cultural, economic and political advancement in the nation at large could transpire in the future. However, to comprehend the meaning of Burnham and Anderson's city plan, three broad points must be acknowledged. These matters, in my view, affected what Manila post-1905 was physically to become, and hence what the restructured urban environment was to signify. Firstly, American colonial governance was formed to implement social betterment by both education and example: Manila after 1905 was to be an environmental exemplar of 'progress'. Secondly, the use of urban planning as an instrument of colonial administration was by no means accidental. In the early 1900s, the Americans were discussing means to elevate the environmental condition of the Philippine capital (Morley 2018: 54). Thirdly, in alliance with the two above points, Burnham purposefully intended to use his Manila plan as an urban design template. Based on city planning and landscape architecture already undertaken in the United States, the Manila scheme thus was to act as the model for future colonial construction in both the Philippine capital and in the colony at large.

From 1901, the Americans oversaw a number of environmental transitions within Manila. These included improving the quality of local roadways, developing the port, expanding the water and electricity supply systems, constructing new market buildings and tenements, introducing new regulations to control outbreaks of fire and disease, and beautifying the city. Given President William McKinley's 'Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation' (21 December 1898) with its ambition to 'uplift' and 'civilize' the Filipinos, if wide-ranging societal transformation were to come about then the environmental nature of urban places had to be radically altered. To be precise, Philippine towns and cities had to shift away from the plazas and churches that glorified Catholicism to new public edifices and spaces that, in contrast, promoted civic secularism. Burnham's 1905 city plan was to play a vital role in accomplishing this end. It was to help free Filipinos from their allegedly 'uncivilized' state of being, unify them into a single cultural collective, and to convey that the American colonizers were genuine in their responsibilities as 'civilizers'. More to the point, the 1905 plan

would be a means to modify not just the condition of the capital but the nation as well: as Manila was the hub of Philippine society, the American colonizers believed that to impart 'advancement' within it would inspire change/'progress' within the provinces. In environmental terms, 'New Manila' was to be defined no more by Intramuros and the physically separated *arrabales* in Extramuros, but rather by a new civic core, new public buildings, parks, parkways and statuary, as well as a new road system that would present the city as a site united across the Pasig River that had turned its back on the past, openly embracing the 'modern' and 'progressive'.

With regard to its vocabulary, the most commonly-used environmental, design and planning-related words in the 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' are 'city' (used fifty-two times), 'Manila' (thirty-nine), 'street' (twenty-five), 'buildings' (twenty-three), 'center' (twenty-two), 'river' (twenty-one), 'water' (twenty-one), 'building' (twenty) and 'parks' (nineteen). The use of such words emphasized Burnham and Anderson's effort to establish a City Beautiful urban fabric lined with green spaces and playfields, to lay out new thoroughfares to tie together hitherto detached districts situated north and south of the Pasig River, and at the urban core to construct a range of public building types. They were all to be sited against the backdrop of an outstanding natural tropical environment which included Manila Bay and the Pasig River and its estuarine inlets. Significantly too, when noticing where such words are sited within the 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' it becomes possible to identify word trends.

With regard to the issue of lexicon connections when identifying the location of words such as 'park' within the 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' it is possible to observe words that include 'location', 'located', 'parkways' and 'boulevards': new tree-lined roadways were to perform the function of not only tying downtown and suburban districts together but also to supply easy access to new green spaces laid out throughout the city. Moreover, as Figure 2.2 demonstrates, when the word 'building' is employed in the 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' it is typically used in conjunction with words such as 'beautiful', 'sites' and 'group', i.e. this articulated the planners' attention to the grouping of public edifices for the outcome of obtaining visual beauty. For this reason, to comprehensively decipher the meaning of Burnham and Anderson's 1905 document, there is a need to go beyond being mindful of their design recommendations. It is also necessary to comprehend how the vocabulary used in their report was exercised and to recognize the origins of their city plan. To this end it is important to break down the history and nature of City Beautiful urbanism in the United States.

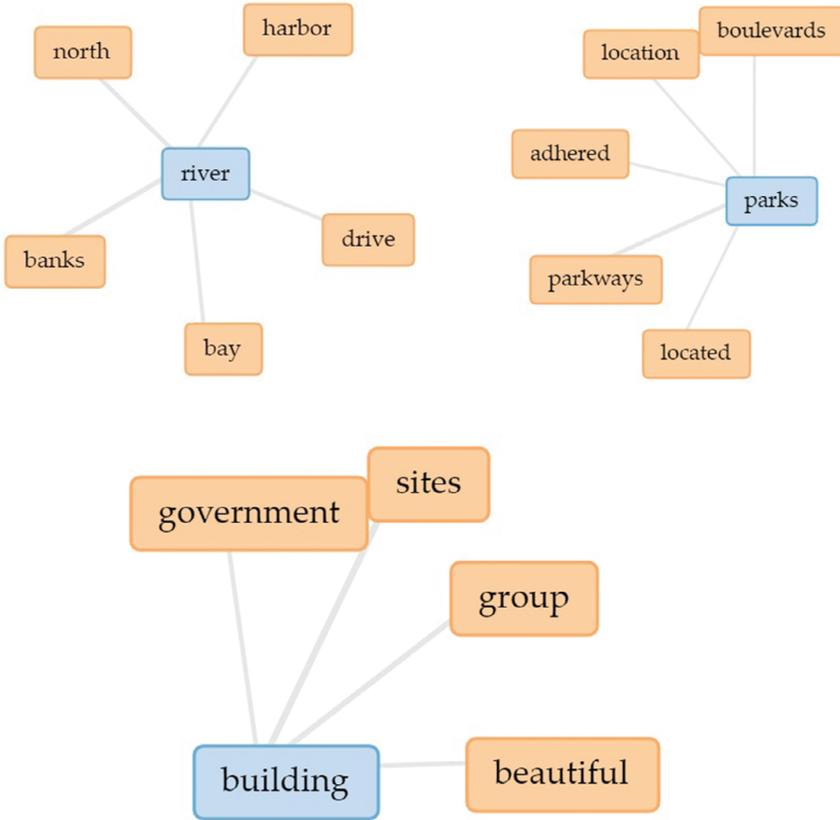


Figure 2.2 Lexicon associations for the words ‘river’, ‘parks’ and ‘building’ in the ‘Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila.’ By the author.

In widespread use by 1900 (Wilson 1980: 170), the phrase ‘City Beautiful’ related to a complex ideology that encouraged Americans to see urban beauty as much more than the mere adornment of public spaces and buildings. Encouraging architects to develop groups of public or semi-public edifices from the 1890s onwards, City Beautiful planning came to affect the appearance, configuration and meaning of the large-sized American city. Inspired by French Beaux Arts design practices and placing great value upon monumentality and orderly-formed civic districts, City Beautiful planning bequeathed a new urban image for American society. This new vision for US cities was largely defined by the concepts and practices of one person – Daniel Burnham.

As the City Beautiful movement had developed during an age of rapid, unregulated urban growth that resulted in American cities being characterized

by poverty, corrupt local governments, overcrowding and poor housing, its proponents (such as Burnham) aspired to implant environmental dignity and civil and moral order into the American built fabric. Making use of classical architecture and planning forms to counteract the perceived ugliness and moral deficiency of contemporary American cities, Burnham's schemes for the World's Fair (Chicago, 1893) and Washington, DC, in 1901–2 demonstrated to the American public the effectiveness of grouping buildings and open spaces in orderly relation to each other. As scholars such as John Reys (1965: 24) have indicated, the beauty of the World's Fair layout and the impressive monumentality of the renewed American capital city enriched the American public. Transpiring at a time of rising American economic power and international political importance, Burnham's grand plans as much as offering a means to solve existing urban predicaments conjured the nation's ambitions and newly-found imperial image: the Mall in Washington, DC – a wide, long, tree-lined lawn offering vistas to the Capitol Building, Washington Monument and White House. The Mall, more than any other environmental feature in the city, epitomized the beauty/urban improvement now sought by Americans. Such a green space, subsequently copied across the country in cities such as Cleveland (Hines 1972), led to the rise of a perception that equated urban beauty in the form of orderly sequences of classical buildings and symmetrically-formed open spaces with an elevated form of citizenry (Morley 2010: 237). As such, Burnham's planning model for Manila could not only stimulate social progress but additionally abet social harmony. Such a role was critical in Manila given that the application of the Laws of the Indies had resulted in different ethnic groups living in spatial isolation from each other.

Returning to Burnham and Anderson's 1905 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila,' attention can now turn to breaking down its structural form and thematic content and discussing the report's references to the historical context. Without doing this, the subsequent textual analysis in this chapter will simply present itself as unsystematic and, as a result, will be detached from the reality in 1905 of the nature of colonial governance instituted by the Americans.

The opening section of the 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila,' comprising 500 or so words, refers to the founding of Manila as the Spanish colonial capital (in 1571), the nature of Manila's topography, and the political conditions in the city at about the time in which Burnham and Anderson had composed the document. In addition, the text lays bare the purpose of the 1905 city plan and report. Described by William E. Parsons (1915: 14) as an American guide for Manila's future development, Burnham and Anderson's report recommended five basic environmental transitions:

1. The laying out of new parks and parkways;
2. The establishment of a new street system;
3. The development of the waterfront;
4. The creation of suburban resorts; and
5. The use of the Pasig River and *esteros* (estuarine inlets) for transportation.

The majority of the 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' – approximately 5,500 words in all – discusses the five environmental features and how they might be implemented, with each environmental component being an individual section of the report. In consequence, when examining the document, there is the potential to simply describe what Burnham and Anderson suggest for Manila's future growth and environmental transformation. As a point of illustration, one may simply state that for the section entitled '(2) Street Systems', Burnham and Anderson advise that Intramuros' entrances must be widened or that the new road system throughout Manila will have the effect of reducing traffic congestion as well as linking together previously detached urban districts. However, in putting forward such descriptions, the actual meaning of the planners' recommendations for the future management of the city might be missed. With respect to the matter of widening the city wall entrances, for example, whilst traffic flow evidently was to be enhanced by the entry points being enlarged, it is also vital to note that airflow was to be improved. This was viewed in early-twentieth-century Philippine society as assisting in elevating public health conditions in the capital. Furthermore, with respect to the section of the report labelled '(1) Development of Water Front, Parks, and Parkways', it could be argued that Burnham and Anderson simply recommended the erection of new public buildings, which were to be grouped together, and the laying out of green spaces throughout the built fabric. This, one might suggest, was simply a tactic by the American colonial regime to visually embellish Manila in City Beautiful fashion and thus to demonstrate its capacity to fundamentally alter the city, e.g. by creating new public spaces. However, new open spaces such as parks, the river-side drive along the Pasig River, and playfields were to have numerous functions: first, open space was to be used to dignify important buildings; second, green spaces were to enable the populace to have new sites to engage in leisure activities; third, open spaces provided sites for statuary and fountains; fourth, fountains were to be used to help form micro climates so that the local population could have new opportunities to take refuge from the intense tropical climate; and, fifth, new open space was to be created by, for instance, filling in the insanitary Intramuros moat. As to the importance of this particular point, two

matters deserve attention: by the time of the commencement of American colonization, the moat had a reputation for being a source of local disease; and, by establishing lawns at the foot of the city walls, the structural objects of Spanish imperial might would be devalued. No longer were such sites to be seen or read as icons of Spanish authority within Manila. Now, in contrast, they would be sites for breathing in the sea breeze and taking leisurely walks (Morley 2021: 294) or, in the context of City Beautiful, sites for different social classes to come together and interact. Motivated by the success of establishing playfields in the southern districts of Chicago, Burnham and Anderson in their report (1906: 629) remark that such open spaces would positively contribute to the development of civic life because people would have locations in which to come together. With a rise in community sentiment and in conjunction with the augmentation of civic pride it was believed that the crime rate would therefore drop (as it had done in Chicago).

The 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' argues that for life within Manila to improve new infrastructure would be required, e.g. the port and train system needed to be enlarged, and new bridges had to be built. Nonetheless, to understand why infrastructure development was so fundamental to the reform of Manila, it is imperative to understand the nature of life in the city *c.* 1900 and also the nature of American colonial governance in the Philippines. As starting points, it must be remembered that by the time of the fall of the Spanish Empire, Manila dominated political, cultural and economic activities in the Philippines. Its demographic scale was many times larger than other cities in the country, and what transpired within Manila had national ramifications. As the urban settlement ranked first in the Philippines in terms of both size and importance (Brown 1900: 47) to activate reform in the capital meant showing the capacity to influence conditions of life within the Philippines more broadly. In addition, as touched upon earlier, Manila in 1898 was perceived by the Americans as being beset by 'backwardness' and a generic lack of 'advancement'. According to President McKinley's Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation (which emphasized the American colonial aim of uplifting Filipinos and 'civilizing' their society) the American colonizers had not only to change existing cultural and economic structures but also the physical environments in which Filipinos lived to thoroughly enrich the well-being of their colonial subjects. Accordingly, the new road layout in Manila was to do more than just enhance traffic circulation: the new roads, constructed from asphalt instead of the mud and stone highways that had characterized the roads built during the Spanish colonial era – i.e. thoroughfares that, during the wet season, were impassable – were to aid people

to move more freely and comfortably around the city. This, clearly, had benefits for citizens and businesspeople. Likewise, the estuarian inlets (*esteros*), which by the early-1900s comprised a mix of stagnant and polluted mud and water, were to be dredged, widened and cleaned up after 1905, and their banks were to be rebuilt. 'So treated,' remarked Burnham and Anderson in their 1905 report, 'they will offer an economical and unobjectionable means of freight handling that will greatly contribute to the prosperity of the city' (1906: 634).

Then again, to comprehensively grasp the American quest to grant social and economic betterment, cognizance of the historical context is needed. For example, it must not be neglected that Burnham and Anderson's Manila improvement report was completed shortly after the Americans had introduced the *tranvia*, an electric-powered form of transport said to show off the modernization of Manila under American control (Pante 2014: 863). The introduction of such new forms of public and private transport were to articulate the transition borne from the colonial handover from Spain to the United States in the late 1890s.

A basic feature of Manila's new road system was tree-lined boulevards. Linking downtown districts with the outer quarters of the city, these thoroughfares were to also provide grand vistas. As to why new sightlines were weighty in the frame of Manila's transformation/modernization, it must be remembered that



Figure 2.3 *Tranvia* in Manila, early 1900s. Photo by Vintage Images/Getty Images.

Burnham and Anderson recommended the building of a new civic core that was to be sited in Extramuros. Helping render Intramuros politically obsolete, Extramuros, as the heart of a 'new nation', showcased the upgrading of the city as a true site of 'advanced civilization'. Notably also in this milieu, where pre-1898 Spanish colonial rule in the Philippines had a reputation for authoritarianism, corruption and oppression, the Americans aspired to show their brand of governance as being in polarity. Importantly, however, the Americans also sought to demonstrate that they were in the Philippines not to exploit the country or to remain there forever. Instead, they had come to Asia on moral grounds – to impart 'progress' so that, ultimately, the Filipinos would be able to successfully take on the responsibilities of self-rule. As I have discussed elsewhere, Manila from 1905 was to purposefully have a spatial form and appearance that diverged with what it had pre-1898: 'The creation of long, straight, and sometimes broad thoroughfares, and the integration of landscape architecture with the man-made environment, was a major component of this transition' (Morley 2018: 62–3). Boulevards permitting the public to see sometimes long distances towards prominent public edifices, such as the Capitol, enabled all Filipinos (irrespective of age, social standing or life experiences) to individually and collectively observe governmental institutions operating on their behalf (Morley 2018: 78).

On this point, three matters need to be accentuated. First, establishing views to prominent urban features permits the local community to 'own' (in abstract terms) what they see. Second, a design that enables seeing new environmental features accentuates that what you see is not only real but belongs to the now. Finally, by everyone having the capacity to see architectural objects and use public spaces within the new built fabric there is no racial discrimination as to who the viewers are as 'Filipinos'. Consequently, the Indigenous population, as well as the Japanese, Chinese and other groups, all of whom had, under the Spanish *reducción* policy, been separated into their own quarters in Extramuros, were now all able to freely live and move about the city given that the American colonial regime identified them all as citizens of Manila. In this political-cultural setting, the new design of Manila was critical to helping the Americans promote a paradigmatic form of modernity – a brand of societal modernization that, amongst other things, enabled Filipinos to see and understand that the Spanish colonial era and all its negative connotations had been banished to the past forever.

Commonly viewed as a planning document, the 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' discusses, via the means of environmental reform, social engineering. The implementation of the City Beautiful paradigm informs

how American colonial rule intended to take life away from the 'lesser civilization' associated with the Spanish colonial era. With its symbolic meanings and pragmatic intentions, Burnham and Anderson's environmental renewal scheme sought to establish transitions that would help to embolden Filipinos to see themselves for the first time as an 'us'. This bonding, following the implementation of the 1905 improvement report, was enhanced by the placement of statuary in newly created public spaces, e.g. in the Washington, DC-esque Mall (today's Rizal Park, situated immediately to the west of the proposed Capitol Building's site).

The erection of statuary revealed how the Americans were prepared to associate the colonial-built environment's restructuring, and hence society's post-Spanish evolution, to notions of 'Filipinism'. With the erection of a monument to the Filipino national hero José Rizal (1861–96) in the most important public space in 'New Manila' in 1913, the colonizers purposefully manufactured a rallying point for the local population *and* founded a site to help literally and metaphorically sustain Rizal's belief that Filipinos belonged to a single political-ethnic collective. Additionally, to recognize why a statue of Rizal in the centre of 'New Manila' took on so much value to the Filipinos (and to the Americans), one must consider in the post-1898 context the grasp of government people held: for the Americans, the purpose of democratic administration, both in North America and the Philippines, was to protect citizens, give them security

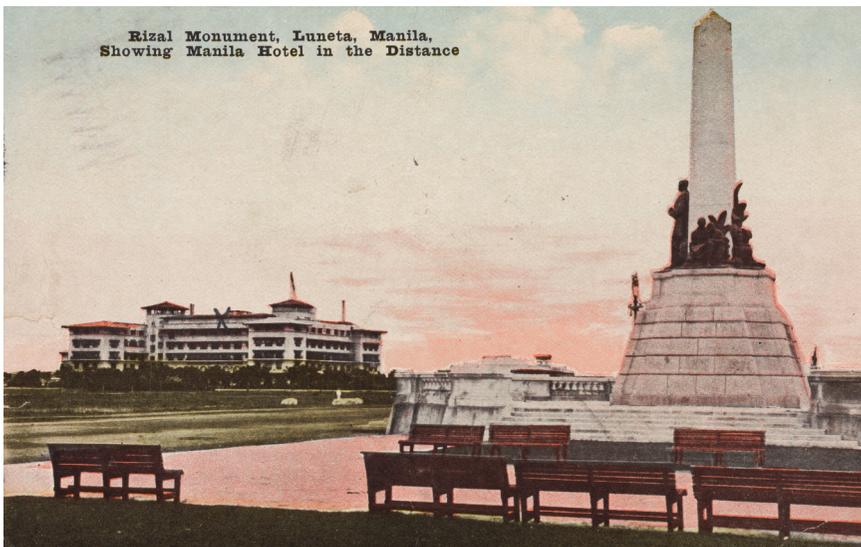


Figure 2.4 Rizal Monument, Manila, 1922. Photo by Smith Collection/Gado/Getty Images.

and grant social benefits which, for instance, were previously unimaginable to Filipinos. For Filipinos, government should be formed so that it provides welfare and civil rights for people (Malcolm 1916: 21–2). To accomplish these goals, bureaucrats must, as a rule, listen to the views of the public and then follow their suggestions, because citizens are best qualified to comprehend society's wider wants and needs.

Social progress and the theory of culture

In being able to comprehend the meaning of environmental and cultural developments as an outcome of governmental change, the theory of culture has great pertinence and value. Thanks to the use of theory, new insights into societal evolution can be forged because it is important to appreciate that culture and administration exist in proximity to each other. As a result of this reality, if a government employs city planning to assist in bringing about cultural change/development, a dialectic can emerge that endorses the perception that social justice cannot transpire unless formerly unregulated environmental elements in society become, in literal terms, planned. Considering that Burnham and Anderson's 1905 document described environmental conditions at that time alongside their 'obvious possibilities' as to the advancement of Philippine society (1906: 635), and that during the early 1900s there was 'the opportunity to create a unified city equal to the greatest of the Western world, with unparalleled and priceless addition of a tropical setting' (1906: 635), it is impractical to assess the 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' without coming to terms with what Burnham and Anderson wanted Manila to physically become. As textual analysis from software such as Voyant Tools discloses, architecture in 'New Manila' was to not cast off Spanish traditions established long before 1898. Tiles, mentioned six times in the short section 'Future Building Materials', for instance, were still to be used for roofing, and small window openings and overhanging upper floor levels were still to be a basic element of building design. In respect of why Burnham and Anderson made such recommendations, it is important to consider issues not only of aesthetics or the low cost of widely-used building materials but also the need for buildings to have protection from the hot tropical climate. Hence, if adhering to the viewpoint that as the Americans after 1898 were seeking to instigate wholesale changes within Philippine society and that this had to equate, with respect to architecture, to the use of modern materials extensively used in the United States, one might immediately misread what the

'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' is actually about. One might assume that, as 'great civilizers,' the Americans would introduce building materials such as iron, steel and concrete (those modern materials used in the industrial urban centres of North America). However, as already noted, Burnham and Anderson understood the role/significance of climate and the cost of materials in the Philippines. As a result, their report ventured to encourage an economic and efficient system of architectural and urban development, not one grounded in the heavy use of materials that were fashionable in the United States at the time (that is materials wholly unsuited to conditions – climatic and economic – existent in Southeast Asia).

Claiming a new destiny for *Manileños*, Burnham and Anderson's 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' was, to paraphrase Hartmut Rosa (2015), to inspire 'cultural acceleration.' However, as indicated with respect to the theme of architectural design, American colonial governance did not operate in such a fashion whereby it rejected all things Spanish and promoted all things American. This is why social change and modernization in the Philippines from 1898 was an amalgam of gradualistic and paradigmatic components although there was great propaganda value to the implementation of social reform for the American colonizers. Cultural, political, economic and environmental development helped present the Americans as 'doers'. And through the introduction of 'advancement', such as in the form of urban environmental layouts devised from City Beautiful planning concepts and practices, it presented them as cultural 'victors' who could present and entrench modernity. Using new public buildings, lounging in new green spaces, seeing new vistas, living a longer, healthier life and using new forms of transport, all expressed societal evolution because, as de Certeau has indicated (cited in Buchanan 2000), the enacting of a new spatial system creates a discontinuity: the 'consuming' of the new city through means of new transport types, new leisure facilities, greater social class intermingling and new vistas, actualizes the fact that the past has – literally and metaphorically – gone, and a new direction for society's present and future has emerged.

David Harvey (2010) argues that the enactment of modernity needs to be fathomed in reaction to the crisis-ridden experiences of space and time. Given that in 1898, when the Americans first acquired political control of the Philippines, the new colonizers perceived Manila as a place defined by 'backwardness', so the instigation of democratic politics, the application of new transport technologies, the expansion of the economy and the restructuring of the built fabric were used to accelerate metamorphosis so that 'primitiveness' could be eliminated. So, as scholars such as Fritz Reheis (1999) argue, because

culture is continually developing – albeit at different times and at different speeds (due to the varying impacts of technological and organizational innovation) – change within society must always be viewed through two contrasting yet complementary lenses: the psychological and the environmental. Shifting the nature of one, states Reheis, will have an impact on the other. For this reason, to simply describe the contents of the ‘Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila’ misses what it is truly saying. Without reading the report as its authors intended it to be read means downplaying what it is actually saying from the American colonial governmental standpoint.

Conclusion

As the first urban planning-related document exclusively dedicated to Manila and its environmental form, the ‘Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila’ sought to establish a cityscape far removed from the one that had existed during the Spanish colonial era. After 1905, and thanks to the recommendations of Daniel Burnham and Peirce Anderson, Manila was to be characterized by long, straight roadways, impressive vistas towards civic edifices and large green public spaces. Yet as a much-referenced document/city plan, the 1905 report still has much to inform. Through the application of textual analysis tools, new information about Manila as a space of colonial occupation can be gleamed. The report can reveal itself in ways hitherto not seen. Consequently, textual tools can offer a new window through which to consider both the form and meaning of ‘New Manila’ – what it structurally was to become, and what that structure in the setting of cultural evolution represented. It also provides new opportunities to rethink the urban variable, this being the concept within the field of urban history that seeks to explore and explain the relationship that cities and civilizations have upon each other. Put simply, a modern Philippine nation was to emanate from its modern, planned capital city. One could not exist without the other.

As shown in this chapter, the ‘Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila’ exhibited the need for a new spatial character within the Philippine capital. Accordingly, it provided a sense of environmental separation between Spanish-era Manila and the American-regulated city. Of course, for the American colonizers, the physical changes that Burnham and Anderson recommended held meaning as to the removal of ‘primitiveness’ and its replacement with modernity. Whereas pre-1898 Manila was viewed by the Americans as archaic

and filled with socio-economic problems and environmental challenges, post-1905 Manila was a site where ‘progress’ – cultural, economic and environmental – as well as civil freedoms unattainable under Spanish colonial authority could be enjoyed. More to the point, as the Americans perceived the Spanish colonial era as being a time characterized by backwardness and oppression, through Burnham and Anderson’s strategy to reform Manila’s built environment, civilization for Filipinos was to be upgraded. But what was the upgrading? As cultural theorists like Theodor Adorno (1991) have explained, to know language is to know culture, and to know culture is to know societal administration. With this perspective in mind, time and attention must be given to comprehensively grasping the language, structure and meaning of the report. Without doing so, any explanation of Manila’s City Beautiful urban form will not be as thorough as it should be, and Manila, as a ‘space of occupation’, will not be appreciated in a manner becoming of its history and evolution in the lead-up to independence in 1946.

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Part Two

Inland and Rural Spaces

Conflicting Modes of Colonial Occupation in British Malaya, 1874–95

Joanna Lee

Introduction

In the existing literature on colonial Malaya during the late nineteenth century, most authors have focused on the economic and political motivations behind colonial intervention or highlighted how the British used the region's natural resources (Parkinson 1960; Cowan 1962; Chew 1965; Webster 1998). In this chapter, however, I examine administrative writings on Malaya from the period between 1874 and 1895 to foreground how colonial perceptions and understandings of the environment of the Malay States factored into policies surrounding its usage – particularly in the realms of tin mining and agriculture. Despite being motivated by economic gain, British officials did not single-mindedly set out to extract natural resources from the Malay States. Rather, they approached the region with a slew of economic, social and aesthetic motivations in mind, thereby resulting in a somewhat ambivalent approach to land use and colonial governance.

Notably, this situation was not unique to the Malay States. As demonstrated by David Arnold in his 2005 work on the 'travelling gaze' in nineteenth-century British India, colonial officials applied various economic, moral, aesthetic and scientific lenses to their environmental interactions. Expanding on this theme, other scholars such as Susie Protschky (2011) and Sean P. Smith (2019) have interrogated how landscape paintings of the Dutch East Indies and travelogues of British Burma, respectively, could capture a myriad of viewpoints about colonized environments, these ranging from the socioeconomic to the political. Just as colonists across varying locales viewed their surroundings through a plethora of



Figure 3.1 Map of the Malay Peninsula (c. 1902), published in H.C. Belfield (1904), *Handbook of the Federated Malay States*, London: Edward Stanford.

different perceptions, so too did their counterparts in the Malay States use a range of understandings to make sense of how best to use this newly occupied space.

While it is certainly true that other parties such as British businesses and foreign traders might have held similarly complicated views about these activities, this chapter is specifically concerned with the approach of British

administrators on the Malay Peninsula, as they were often the main stakeholders driving change across the region. As I contend, this change was by no means straightforward or even particularly well-planned. The reality of the situation was that official British approaches to economic development in the Malay States were fraught with conflict and contradiction. This is because they were rooted in irreconcilable views. Tin mines, with their unsightly pits (as was particularly the case in seemingly ‘unscientific’ open-cast mining) and ‘unruly’ Chinese coolies were required for economic advancement, but these undesirable aesthetic and social aspects did not fit comfortably with colonial ideals of a beautiful and stable environment. Agriculture, on the other hand, had the potential to offer what mining could not – neat, picturesque villages and a settled population.

With the first Malayan rubber plantations only being established in the mid-1890s (Tate 1996: 206; Drabble 1973: 19), it is important to note that this period preceded the expansion of the rubber industry in this region. At this point, rubber was not yet the money-making behemoth that it would later become and agriculture in the Malay States was still largely focused on crops such as sugar, coffee (Lees 2017: 32, 175–6) and rice (Cheng 1969). Agriculture during this time was thereby simply nowhere near as lucrative as tin mining. Nonetheless, as will be demonstrated, British administrators who were driven by visions of an ‘ideal’ colonial society and its associated environment still agitated for agricultural development over mining, despite the latter’s considerable economic remuneration.

In making this argument, I highlight how British colonial rule Malaya was not merely a matter of acquiring and occupying new spaces, as colonial officials also had to grapple with the pressing question of what to *do* with such spaces. Given that there was no central, homogenous approach in place, administrators struggled to articulate what this colony *could* and *should* be. This confusion was linked to the very administrative structure of British rule in Malaya, which was a cobbled-together amalgamation of direct and indirect rule. On the ground, this meant that while some officials might have had clear materialist intentions for these colonial spaces, others were instead more aware of the social and aesthetic effects that their actions would have on the land itself. Colonial representations and perceptions of space were thus often out of step with their intended usages, as officials tried to determine which economic activities would best serve their myriad interests.

With reference to the presence of these multiple colonial projects, this chapter examines how British administrators approached tin mining and agriculture

through two specific lenses: a socially engineered colonial society and the picturesque aesthetic. Racial stereotypes led British officials to believe that Chinese miners would be an undesirable type of colonial settler, while the picturesque aesthetic suggested an idealization of a social landscape that harkened back to a pre-industrial Britain. Given this imposition of British frameworks of understanding on the Malay States, this chapter also builds on David Cannadine's thesis in *Ornamentalism* (2001), wherein he argues that colonists 'understood their empire *on their own terms*' (10) – which is to say, the British transported their own societal structures to their colonies. It is worth noting, however, that colonial administrators did not merely assume that certain colonized communities were similar to their own domestic structures. In some cases, these foreign societies were even deemed superior to the metropolis of an increasingly urbanized British home (Cannadine 2001: xix). The export and implementation of these social hierarchies from Britain to the periphery of empire were essential to what Cannadine describes as the 'spectacle of empire' (2001: 122–3), as the British organized their colonies according to the familiar differences of rank, status and race. Stratifying their empire as such, the British imagined that they still occupied a more traditional social hierarchy, one that was contingent on agriculture, land ownership and feudal relationships. Consequently, the centrality of these structures to British colonialism meant that the empire was 'about land and agriculture and the countryside' (Cannadine 2001: 130–1).

Applied to the context of the Malay States in the late nineteenth century, I show how agriculture was the vehicle through which British administrators tried to create what they believed to be an 'ideal' colonial environment in Malaya. While Chinese miners were thought to be troublesome and difficult to control, indentured Indian agricultural labourers were cast as more docile and amenable to British rule. Simultaneously, the picturesque qualities of agriculture also promised a return to the feudalism of British landed estates, though in the context of the Malay States, it was the Malays themselves who occupied the role of the yeoman peasantry. Through the process of engineering and controlling these relationships, British colonial rule could ultimately be entrenched at the apex of this social hierarchy. This was therefore no simple case of the British merely occupying a space with physical structures and warm bodies. Oft-conflicting perceptions, beliefs and imagined ideals, too, were woven into the very foundations of these more tangible products of colonial rule.

Tin for the taking

When the British began administering the Malay States in the late nineteenth century, it was with the confident knowledge that the region held vast mineral reserves. Deposits of gold, coal, iron and other types of ore were scattered across the Malay Peninsula (Yuen 1974; Dodge 1977; Carstens 1980; Kaur 1990). Tin, however, was by far the most common and remunerative of these mineral reserves due to its high demand – a topic that is covered in Yi Li’s chapter in this volume. Mining interests in the region had primarily been controlled by the Chinese since the mid-1700s (Reid 2011), though by the mining boom of the early-twentieth century, European companies had started to corner an increasingly large share of the market until the monopoly on production rested in their hands instead.

The importance of tin to the British administration of the Malay States was helped along by the convenient fact that colonial intervention in this region had coincided with the onset of increased industrialization – a period in which various parties were clamouring for more ready supplies of this particular metal. Incorporated into broader imperial circuits of trade and consumption in this manner, tin prices in the Malay States spiked. While one *pikul* (approximately 60 kilograms) cost \$20 (Straits dollars) during the 1850s, this rose to more than \$30 (Straits dollars) per *pikul* in the latter half of the nineteenth century (Yip 1969: 62; Chiang 1966).¹ In response, export duties on tin soon constituted the highest source of revenue for the colonial Malayan government, earning them a staggering \$25 million (Straits dollars) between 1875 and 1896. In contrast, the second most lucrative source of income for the colonial government was railways, at a mere \$6.7 million (Straits dollars). Land revenue was, in turn, another half of that at \$3.5 million (Straits dollars) – all meagre sums when seen in comparison to tin (Raja 2018: 22). As such, tin mining and its near astronomical returns rapidly became the bedrock upon which the British colonial government of the Malay States was raised.

To encapsulate how British officials described the benefits of tin mining, we can first look to the words of W.E. Maxwell, whose long and distinguished career in both the Malay States and the Straits Settlements spanned from 1865 to 1895 (Pakri 2011: 33–7). Addressing the Royal Colonial Institute in 1891, Maxwell asserted: ‘Our hopes, of course, rest almost entirely on the tin-industry.’ Cultivation of cash crops such as pepper or tapioca could be hoped for, but even then, it would not come close to the results of a ‘successful mining rush’. For

Maxwell, tin mining was the perfect vehicle for colonial development. With the Malay States 'supported by splendid mineral resources', the British would be able to entice both migrant labour and capital to the region, thereby helping to drive up excise revenue as lands and houses subsequently increased in price (Maxwell [1891] 1983: 151).

Nonetheless, tin mining came with its own issues, as an overreliance on this particular commodity subjected the rest of the colonial economy to the effects of price fluctuations. Take, for instance, the onset of low tin prices in the late 1870s, which led the Resident of Selangor, William Bloomfield Douglas, to complain that the centrality of tin to the economy meant that every other industry was being affected (*Papers Relating to the Protected Malay States, C.-3095* 1880/1881: 12). Similarly, the governor of the Straits Settlements, Frederick Weld, wrote to the colonial secretary in 1880 to describe how the revenues of Sungai Ujong, a district of Negeri Sembilan, were mainly derived from tin royalties and excise duties. Given the influx of planters into the region, however, he harboured reasonable hopes that the region's future would 'rest on a firmer basis than the fluctuating value of tin' (*Papers Relating to the Protected Malay States, C.-3095* 1880/1881: 4). With tin as an economic cornerstone, weakened prices could very well endanger the rest of the colonial economy.

Nevertheless, diversifying economic development was not the only issue that troubled British administrators as many of them also indicated a great desire for a settled population in Malaya. This was due to mining forming part of what Corey Ross calls the 'commodity frontier', where boundaries of extraction were moved ever further to exploit and exhaust available resources. Given that speculators adopted a utilitarian approach to land, these 'windfalls' of resources tended to draw transitory populations (Ross 2014: 457). In practice, this meant that once a place was utterly divested of all that could be extracted from it, these communities would pack up and move on, thereby pushing the frontier further out again. Subsequently, Ross argues that the temporary nature of these populations, lack of political consequence and accompanying assumption of practically infinite resources led to transient and destructive modes of extracting mineral wealth in Southeast Asia (Ross 2017).

In comparison, agriculture promised the far more desirable possibility of settled populations and continuous revenue, making it a better long-term alternative. As per the investigations of James C. Jackson (1968: 223–4), Paul Kratoska (1985) and Lim Teck Ghee (1976: 88–9, 101–12), the administrative tendency to agitate for increased agriculture was generally fuelled by a desire to see the Malay States settled with permanent populations that could also

contribute lasting revenue. To achieve this aim, the British colonial government implemented a variety of policies to encourage the spread of agriculture, including rent remissions for new settlers, the distribution of plants and seeds to enterprising cultivators, and judicious loans – all of which were offered to both subsistence and commercial planters (Sadka 1968: 357–60).

These beliefs in the benefits of agriculture were held by various administrators. Take, for example, William Bloomfield Douglas's 1880 missive to the secretary of the Straits Settlements, which expressed hopes for a time when, at the expiration of their work contracts, immigrant miners would turn to other industries and settle down permanently. It was, as Douglas claimed, not 'a healthy state of things' when the country's main population was made up of 'large employers and labour and their rude uncivilized labourers', rendering the country 'a vast jungle yielding nothing in ... agricultural produce', or even any rice (*Papers Relating to the Protected Malay States, C.-3095 1880/1881*: 36).

Nevertheless, matters had improved by 1882 when the superintendent of public works and surveys, D.D. Daly, spoke to the Royal Geographical Society. Addressing his audience, Daly described how Selangor's revenues prior to British intervention depended entirely on tin exports, which were 'always a precarious



Figure 3.2 Liberian coffee on a Malayan plantation. Photograph possibly by C.J. Kleingrothe (c. 1910). Courtesy of the Leiden University Library (KITLV, Image 79941, Collection A360).

and fluctuating source'. With the onset of British rule, however, their presence in the region had caused agriculture to drastically increase and 'a revenue formerly unknown' was being coaxed from the land (Daly 1882: 402). Following Daly's presentation, Mr Adamson, a merchant who had previously been a member of the Straits Settlements Council, was called upon to offer some additional observations. Adamson thus proceeded to express his ardent hope that young Englishmen would soon go to the Malay States to set up coffee estates there, while also anticipating that 'the Chinese would flock into these territories, and assist in promoting such cultivation, until the country would become rich and prosperous, and a credit to this country [Britain] in every way' (Daly 1882: 411).

These sentiments were echoed some years later by the acting British Resident of Selangor, J.P. Rodger, who noted in his annual report for 1885 that the local administration had a 'most urgent need' for the presence of a large agricultural population. While tin revenues were steadily increasing and would continue to increase for some years to come, he thought 'it would be unwise not to fully recognize the fact that at some future period, more or less remote, these alluvial tin mines will gradually become exhausted ...' (*Further Correspondence Respecting the Protected Malay States, C.-4958* 1887: 109–10). Addressing the governor of the Straits Settlements in 1889, the colonial secretary seemed to share these views: 'To the spread of agriculture,' he wrote, 'I attach the greatest importance.' This was not merely due to agriculture's ability to supplement tin mining, but also because the 'progress of agriculture taken in connexion with the constant stream of immigration' would spread the population more evenly across the peninsula, rather than have it clustered around mining areas (*Further Correspondence Respecting the Protected Malay States, C.-5884* 1889: 114). J.F. Dickson, who was in charge of administrative duties during the governor's absence, agreed wholeheartedly and concurred in his reply, similarly noting that: 'It is on the extension of cultivation with a settled population that the future progress and permanent prosperity of these States must mainly depend' (*Papers Relating to the Protected Malay States, C.-6222* 1890: 10).

This desire to see a settled, agricultural population in Malaya remained a common refrain well into the 1890s. The Resident of Selangor, W.H. Treacher, opined in 1893 that in a country made prosperous from tin, few would 'dispute the desirability ... of giving every possible encouragement to agriculture, the soundest basis of permanent prosperity and of a contented population in all countries' (*Reports on the Protected Malay States for 1893, C.-7546* 1894: 44). Frank Swettenham, who was the Resident of Perak during this period, also thought it wise to encourage agriculture, the improvement of labour supplies,

and 'the employment of every reasonable means to induce European and native planters to convert . . . forest land into plantations'. As he concluded, it was only through these methods that it would be possible to secure revenue independent from mining, which 'cannot alone ensure real and permanent prosperity' (Swettenham 1893: 74–5).

Later, in 1895, Swettenham also asserted that the opening up of agricultural capabilities would give them:

the best thing we can hope for: a settled agricultural population and a body of Europeans who will . . . convert our jungles into extensive estates of permanent cultivation, a form of enterprise such as no Asiatic has hitherto had the ability, experience, or determination to attempt.

Reports on the Protected Malay States for 1894, C.–7877 1895: 22

In this manner, Swettenham was not merely echoing the preferences of administrators before him, but also harking back to the now-familiar myth that native Malays simply did not have the constitution to undertake meaningful enterprise (Alatas 1977). For the British, agriculture was associated with sustainable remuneration and a settled, rural society – key qualities of a thriving colony and the very antithesis of what tin mining resulted in.

The pursuit of (appropriate) people

The desire for an agricultural population aside, writings from the likes of administrators such as J.F. Dickson, W.H. Treacher and Frank Swettenham evidenced colonial desires to see the Malay States not only settled, but settled by the 'right' kind of population. This was particularly evident in the context of tin mining. Prior to the first quarter of the twentieth century, tin mining on the Malay Peninsula was monopolized by the Chinese, with up to 78 per cent of tin in 1910 having been extracted by Chinese producers (King 1940: 130). In contrast, European efforts were relatively muted until the 1880s – a 'feeble commencement', as the Resident of Perak, Hugh Low, would say in 1883 (Yip 1969: 95).

During these early years, European investors were largely uninformed about the potential of the Malay Peninsula, and the ones who did know about it ultimately decided to proceed with extreme caution. Even then, however, the unlucky few who invested in the region found the business to be an uphill struggle, with many soon shuttering their mines after finding it too difficult to compete with Chinese prospectors who had a labour-cost advantage (Courtenay

1972: 90). Reminiscent of the failures encountered by their spice-planting predecessors in Penang (Langdon 2015), many also severely underestimated the challenges that the Malay States posed to their pre-established methods of extraction (Yip 1969: 99–100). Consequently, when British officials wrote about mining during this period, it is quite likely that the overwhelming Chinese element (and perhaps the failures of Europeans) would have been at the forefront of their minds.

Such circumstances were also tempered by pre-existing attitudes towards the Chinese, which were ambivalent to say the least. In his work on race in British Malaya, Charles Hirschman describes Europeans as having a ‘sense of resentment and hostile admiration’ towards the Chinese (Hirschman 1986: 346). On the one hand, Chinese labourers were thought to be excellent workers – hardworking, skilful and adaptable – while on the other, they were considered troublesome and difficult on account of being involved with secret societies (Loh 1969: 144). For the British, Chinese workers were both bane and boon: a necessity for economic development but at the same time not the ideal permanent settler.

These contradictory racial beliefs were held by a number of colonial administrators. Colonial engineer and surveyor general for the Straits Settlements J.F.A. McNair, for instance, wrote that the ‘busy hands of the Chinese people’ would make Malayan lands ‘one of the most productive under the sun’, and that Chinese skilled labour in ‘mining, agriculture, and artifice’ was a ‘valuable acquisition to the country’ (McNair 1878: 3, 130). Meanwhile, in writing his history of British Malaya in 1906, Swettenham implored readers to ‘understand at once what is due to Chinese labour and enterprise in the evolution of the Federated Malay States’ (232–3).

Nevertheless, other British administrators declined to share such sanguine views of the Chinese. William Napier, who had previously been the lieutenant-governor of Labuan and the chairman of the Straits Settlements Association, was one such example. In his 1876 work, *The Malays: and a few words regarding Perak and Selangore*, Napier noted with some disquiet that the 20,000 Chinese in Larut (now Taiping) – a key mining district in the state of Perak – were mostly adult males. Although he described them as ‘industrious settlers, and generally disposed to peaceful courses’, Napier also thought that they harboured secret societies and had shown themselves capable of violence (Napier 1876: 18). His son-in-law, the Resident of Perak, Hugh Low (Begum and Mohamad 2009: 25), similarly adopted this stance. In 1882, Low’s annual report described how Chinese miners ‘were of all men the most rude, conceited, and ignorant, with no confidence in Europeans, easily oppressed . . . misled by their own countrymen

who employed them, and . . . greatly influenced by the secret societies of Penang' (*Correspondence Respecting the Protected Malay States, Including Papers Relating to the Abolition of Slavery in Perak*. C.–4192 1884: 26).

While mining was a predominantly Chinese affair, agriculture was increasingly characterized by the use of Indian indentured labour. This occurred because the British considered Indian labourers to be the best type of plantation worker. Where the Chinese were thought to be unruly and disruptive, Indians – especially those from the Madrasi caste – were idealized by the British as docile and easily managed. Employing a racialized hierarchy of labour, the British further believed that Tamils, and south Indian peasants more generally, were ideal labourers as they were seen as lacking ambition and self-reliance. Other so-called 'positive' traits included the belief that Indians were amenable to low wages, cost less in maintenance, were used to British rule, and easily acclimatized to tropical weather, as south India was climatically similar to the Malay Peninsula (Sandhu 1969: 56–7).

Importantly, these British perceptions were not merely about finding the 'ideal' worker. Echoes of white saviourhood and colonial paternalism were evident in these depictions as well, since Indian immigration was framed as not just a service to the Malay States, but also to British India. In his letter to the colonial secretary in 1881, the governor of the Straits Settlements, Frederick Weld, described how immigration was in the best interests of both administrations, as it would benefit British capital and commerce while also serving as a relief to overcrowding in India (*Papers Relating to the Protected Malay States*, C.–3095 1881: 44). Later in the year, he similarly told the Straits Settlements Legislative Council that introducing Indian immigration would bring a 'fresh impetus' to the prosperity of the Malay States. Commerce could be promoted, while the immigrants themselves would also derive great benefits. As 'a race eminently suited to the country, and fitted to develop its resources,' Indians were thereby thought to be suitable 'coolies' and 'small landowners, which they would speedily become' (cited in Loh 1969: 145–6).

Resident Hugh Low, in responding to Perak's great need for labour, further entrenched these beliefs by passing the Indian Immigration Enactment in 1882 (Wilkinson and Burns 1971: 240–9). Safeguards for wellbeing aside, the enactment ensured that family and spousal units were not to be split up, while also enforcing a certain ratio of men to women in each group (Loh 1969: 147). Subsequently, this had the effect of making incoming Indian family units who helped promote settled agriculture far more preferable to the largely transient, single male Chinese workers who staffed the tin mines. Two years later, updated

legislation was passed to also include the Straits Settlements and the Malay States, so that by 1886, Governor Frederick Weld was glad to report that with increased Indian immigration, Perak not only had settled Tamil agricultural families, but the European planters themselves were now also 'saved from imminent ruin' (*Further Correspondence Respecting the Protected Malay States, C.-4958 1887: 117*).

While the British saw mining's profitability as inextricable from the undesirable aspects of its Chinese labourers, agriculture, in contrast, promised both sustainable revenue and a seemingly malleable Indian population. These colonial preferences for agriculture demonstrate how administrators were motivated by a combination of both economic *and* societal concerns. It was not enough to merely weigh the benefits of one economic activity over another; the ensuing, envisaged society and the imagined traits of its people had to be taken into consideration, too.

Despite scholars such as Colin Abraham (1983) having demonstrated that the British were indeed manipulating ethnic relations to their benefit, it would be erroneous to assert that race was the exclusive reason for the migration of labour to Malaya. Though the British had a direct hand in both encouraging and causing Indian migration via the mismanagement of famines during the late-nineteenth century, Chinese miners had already been operating on the Malay Peninsula from as early as the 1400s – long before British interference in the region (Blythe 1947; Currie 1991; Arnold 1993). Flows of migrant labour into the peninsula were also dictated by larger historical and socio-economic forces beyond the control of British Malayan administrators during this period (Sandhu 1969). Famine, drought or a troubled political environment might have pushed migrants out of their home countries towards the Malay Peninsula, while at the same time, favourable economic conditions in the Malay States also pulled migrants towards these places (Vlieland 1934; Huff and Caggiano 2007; Ota 2014). In attempting to engineer a colonial society, officials were thus largely making use of and expanding upon pre-existing conditions, rather than actively creating their own.

The picturesque

British colonial concerns about mining were not merely limited to the issue of incoming migrants; they also needed to consider the situation of local Malays. To begin examining how British officials tended to associate Malay villages with

settled agriculture and its perceived aesthetic benefits, we might first look at Frank Swettenham's 1893 publication *About Perak*, which is a compilation of articles that Swettenham had originally penned for the *Straits Times*. Here, Swettenham described Kuala Kangsar in the following terms:

... there are no mines and though there is a small, neat village . . . , it is the absence of the Chinese element that, with the extreme Vitality of the place, makes Kuala Kangsar so attractive. It is the very paradise of Malays; a wide, shallow, clear river with high banks covered for miles with picturesque villages, hidden under a wealth of palms and fruit trees.

Swettenham 1893: 38

Beyond the typical association of mining with the undesirability of its Chinese community, Swettenham's invocation of Kuala Kangsar as a 'paradise' of Malays implied that these two visions were incompatible with each other. This was further demonstrated by Arthur Keyser, who was magistrate and collector for the district of Jelevu in Negeri Sembilan. In his 1893 report on the region, Keyser noted that mining was slowly ousting local rice planters who were, in turn, reacting to this development with mixed feelings. Planters were reportedly 'distressed at the sight of their cherished field being converted into unsightly pits', and yet, 'fully alive to the advantages to be derived from the receipt of compensation.' In an attempt to preserve Malay cultivation, Keyser added that he had set aside valleys as reserves, but still 'feared that should temptation be offered, there will be little doubt that the miner will prevail' (*Reports on the Protected Malay States for 1892, C.-7228C* 1893: 71).

Reading these two texts, we find that both Swettenham and Keyser subscribed to the idea that mining degraded the appealing qualities and visual aesthetic of Malay agriculture. While the excerpt from Swettenham highlighted his preference for peaceful Malay villages over the ugliness that came with Chinese miners, Keyser went one step further by translating these sentiments into actual policy. Indeed, Keyser's actions might have constituted one of the earliest examples of legislation that helped give Malay farmers a secure tenure for their land. Over time, this policy eventually evolved to become the Malay Reservations Enactments of 1913 (Kratoska 1983; Kratoska 1985) and 1933, the latter of which is still enforced today in Malaysia.

As Paul Kratoska (1983) has argued, colonial officials tended to perceive Malays as part of what he calls the 'yeoman peasantry: independent, self-sufficient small landowners' (149). This in turn stemmed from a British tendency to see Malay society as feudal and a mirror image of Britain's own, pre-Industrial

Revolution past (Butcher 1979: 52). Expanding on this point, Phillip Loh notes that the Malay Reservation policies were not only intended to secure land revenue for the colonial government but were also an attempt to prevent Chinese immigration from overwhelming the Malay countryside. In maintaining the link between Malay communities and idyllic villages, British administrators could thus assert their position as ‘intercessor and protector’ over a traditional society that needed to be preserved in their agricultural ways, thereby further reaffirming the paternalistic aspect of British intervention on the peninsula (Loh 1969: 123).

Importantly, this practice was not unique to British officials in the Malay States. In other places such, as Burma and the Dutch East Indies, longstanding racist notions about native labour sought to portray colonized peoples as inherently suited for agricultural work – so much so that former colonial official J.S. Furnivall stressed the importance of conserving ‘traditional’ village life even in the midst of progress (Furnivall 1948: 469–76). Situated within this legacy of colonial thinking, mining seemed to be the very antithesis of what British administrators hoped for.

These societal concerns aside, there was also a clear aesthetic dimension to how colonial officials approached the physical consequences of mining in the Malay States. In stark contrast to European attempts that were touted as professional and scientific (Macleod 1994; Harvey and Press 1989), Chinese mines with their giant ‘pockmarks’ in the earth were thought to be ugly and unsightly. Meanwhile, settled agriculture invoked picturesque scenes of an idyllic countryside instead.

Popularized during the eighteenth century, the ‘picturesque’ bridged nature and art by rendering each with aspects of the other. Picturesque art mirrored nature and corrected its perceived faults, while picturesque nature implied that the scene had picture-like qualities (Trott 1999: 80). The native English landscape – particularly its humble, rural scenes – served as the template for these works, the likes of which populated the oeuvres of artists such as John Constable, Thomas Gainsborough and J.M.W. Turner. Despite interpretations of the picturesque changing over the years, it is worth noting that some key qualities still remained. These included distinct characteristics such as landscape distances with a hazy background and detailed foreground; features that harmoniously balance the composition so as to draw attention to the middle distance; a winding river and rugged mountains in the background; and a soft, gold tint to the light (Bermingham 1986: 57; Auerbach 2004: 48).

The picturesque was itself a process of recognition, where a particular scene was framed against a set of pre-established artistic conventions (Casid 2005: 45). Correspondingly, this transformative act made the picturesque an important component of colonial discourse, as Europeans used the picturesque as a lens to render foreign landscapes into recognizable ones instead. As Jeffrey Auerbach (2004) argues, organizing and perfecting landscapes in imperial art reflected changes to the type of interests within empire – from explorations to discover an untouched Eden in the late 1700s, to presenting foreign spaces as safe and familiar during the mid-nineteenth century to encourage settlement. Writing in the context of Burma, Stephen Keck (2004: 394–7) similarly notes that travel writers such as Alice Hart used picturesque tropes as a means of justifying the ‘civilizing mission’. Foreign landscapes could be picturesque but their scientific unknowns and perceived social ills were fertile grounds for colonial development.

Consequently, this was the context in which British administrators described the environment in colonial Malaya. Colonial secretary for the Straits Settlements, W.E. Maxwell, for example, wrote that ‘Miners do not make the best colonists’, and that some officials would perhaps prefer to see in Malaya a ‘peaceful landscape of rural hamlets, instead of the hastily-built towns of a floating mining population’ (Maxwell [1891] 1983: 145). Others still combined their distaste for mining with an appreciation of the picturesque aesthetic. This is particularly noticeable in Swettenham’s *Malay Sketches* (1895), a collection of observations that occupy a curious place between fiction and truth. To quote Swettenham’s description of the book, these vignettes were intended as an attempt to ‘awaken an interest’ in the people who lived in ‘one of the most beautiful and least known countries in the East’ (vii).

In the last chapter of *Malay Sketches*, Swettenham described the view from a mountain summit as he imagined himself looking out towards the rest of the country. Written as a love letter of sorts to the Malay Peninsula, he detailed the region’s numerous beauties in a style that draws heavily on the picturesque aesthetic. Far out in the distance, hazy mountains rise on the horizon, and a ‘golden veil’ hangs over the entire scene. Meanwhile, on the western side of the peninsula, the Dinding coast, with its vivid green patches of cultivated cane and rice fields, lies ‘flat and fertile, a feast for the eyes’. All of this lovely scenery is nevertheless broken up when the reader’s gaze comes to rest on the town of Taiping in Perak:

You might cover the place with a tablecloth for all its many inhabitants, its long wide streets, open spaces, and public buildings. And those pools of water all

around the town, what are those? They are abandoned tin-mines, alluvial workings from which the ore has been removed, and water mercifully covers, in part, this desolation of gaping holes and upturned sand.

Swettenham 1895: 283–4

In this excerpt, the after effects of mining are depicted with particularly evocative imagery. The tranquil flow of nature and cultivation is interrupted by the presence of Taiping, its urbanity sitting at odds with the peaceful, rural scenes that Swettenham just described. Such is Swettenham's apparent dislike of this place that he even prescribes a tablecloth to cover it, so as to hide its existence. Indeed, one might go as far as to detect a note of dismay in the way he enquires about the pools – what are *those*? Given Swettenham's choice to write of abandoned mines rather than working ones, these depictions give life to his misgivings about the effects of the commodity frontier. Having rendered their mines unproductive, the miners had moved on and left only ugly desolation in their wake.

Swettenham's distaste for mining was not merely limited to his more informal writings. Written during his tenure as Resident of Perak, Swettenham's 1894 annual report for the state evidenced similar language when he urged a shift

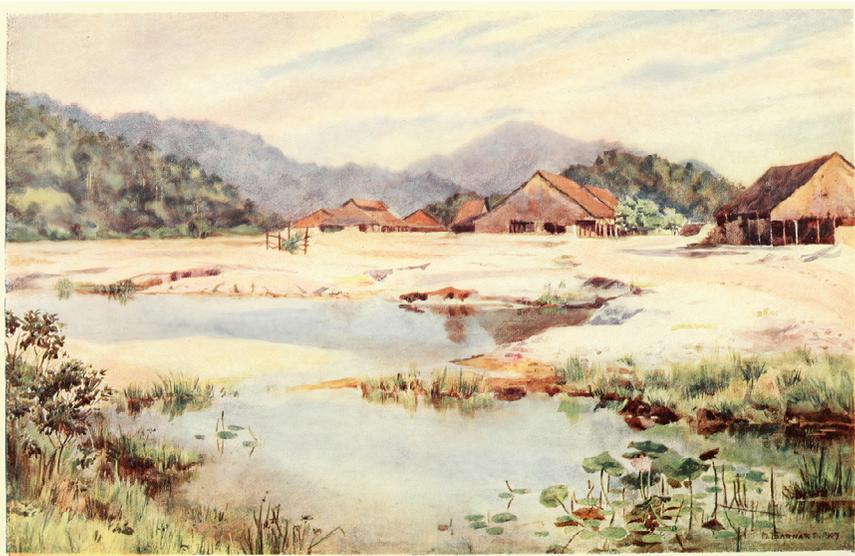


Figure 3.3 Painting by H.C. Barnard entitled 'Old Tin Workings'. Note the water-filled holes that have been left behind by mining activity. From C.W. Harrison, ed. (1920), *An Illustrated Guide to the Federated Malay States*, London: Malay States Information Agency, title page.

towards more agrarian policies. Like so many other colonial officials, Swettenham noted his preference for agriculturalists over miners, the latter being described with some measure of derision:

We give to the miner what is often fine land covered with magnificent forest, and, when he has destroyed the timber, he turns the soil upside down and after a few years abandons it, leaving huge stretches of country a sightless waste of water-holes.

While Swettenham recognized that miners undoubtedly brought in useful revenue for the Malay States, he also believed that planters were far more worthy of praise, as they converted jungles into fields, settled on the soil and kept the land in productive cultivation. Permanent remuneration could thus be gained from the sale of produce, so much so that it required 'no great effort of imagination' to see a time when agricultural exports exceeded that of minerals. 'To make it easy to mine successfully and difficult to plant with profit may be good shop-keeping,' concluded Swettenham, 'but seems indifferent administration' (*Reports on the Protected Malay States for 1894, C.-7877* 1895: 22).

In 1895, Swettenham's successor in Perak, E.W. Birch, made his stance even more explicit by including a section entitled 'Agriculture as opposed to Mining' in his own annual report. Describing himself as being 'imbued' with Swettenham's ideas on agriculture from the previous year, Birch asserted that it was impossible to disregard these perceptions when living in a country perfect for agricultural development, but 'which has hitherto been practically handed over to miners, who turn upside down lands that could be beneficially occupied by permanent settlers.' This 'process of devastation' only resulted in the over production of tin and punishment of the mining community. Birch thus believed that it was 'surely time' for the government to limit its revenues from minerals and to discourage mining and smelting (*Reports on the Protected Malay States for 1895, C.-8257* 1896: 23).

To explain these attitudes further, we can refer to David Arnold's work on the contradictory relationship between romanticism and economization, or 'improvement', in both a capitalistic and imperial sense. Writing in the context of British India, Arnold argues that while Europeans maintained a sense of romantic appreciation for nature's wonders, they also desired to 'improve' the country. The latter presented two types of improvement: a capitalistic, profit-generating one, and an aesthetic kind that concentrated on transforming wild jungle into orderly cultivation (Arnold 2005: 104–9). Transplanted to the Malay States, these ideas of 'improvement' meant that the immense profits of mining were nevertheless

tempered by their adverse effects on the surrounding environment. Agriculture, on the other hand, was the perfect vehicle for accomplishing these visions of an 'improved' colony, as it not only had the potential for sustainable remuneration, but also possessed picturesque qualities. These qualities in turn reflected colonial desires to see the presence of British aesthetics in the Malay States – which is to say, rural landscapes bearing signs of agricultural development. Correspondingly, while mining could only partially fulfil the capitalistic and aesthetic conceptions of 'improvement', agriculture fitted into both categories perfectly.

Given the background of these perceptions, it is perhaps of little wonder that British officials in the Malay States frequently invoked the picturesque qualities of settled agriculture. In a journal detailing his journey from Perak to the region of Slim in 1888, Frank Swettenham arrived at the confluence of two rivers, only to describe it as 'the picture of rest and beauty', with the 'two or three picturesque huts' on the riverbanks leading him to imagine that this 'might almost be a village in Switzerland' (Swettenham 1880: 58). Others, such as the superintendent of public works and surveys in Selangor, D.D. Daly, also explored the Perak region and returned with reports of passing through 'most picturesque country' which consisted of large fields and numerous Malay huts and gardens (Daly 1882: 399). Similarly, colonial engineer Major McCallum's record of a trip across the Malay Peninsula with the governor of the Straits Settlements indicated how Pahang's scenery had changed for the better once they were out of 'dreary, monotonous jungle', the company eventually finding themselves amongst paddy fields, gardens and orchards instead. Encountering 'ideal bits of Malay kampong scenery',² McCallum took to describing them with some indulgence as they 'stood out well in the early morning sun which was lighting up the blue hills ... in the background' (McCallum 1894: 11).

Appreciation for such scenery also held more practical motivations, as evidenced by the writings of Martin Lister, who was the Resident of Negeri Sembilan during the late 1880s. In his 1889 annual report for the state, Lister wrote of being incredibly satisfied to see gardens and houses springing up around the region of Kuala Pilah. For Lister, this type of settling for cultivation constituted 'a better compliment to the Government of a state than the opening of mines and large plantations', since it demonstrated that the local populations had intents to settle permanently. Subsequently, Lister argued, this would give them confidence in the state's future (*Papers Relating to the Protected Malay States, C.-6222* 1890: 75).

These positive sentiments towards the relative simplicity of rural agrarian settlement formed part of a much longer historical trajectory, one that stretched as far back as Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt (Bunce 1994: 5). As a comforting

myth that invoked some long-passed golden age in which things seemed simpler or purer, the countryside stood in opposition to the increased social tensions and change associated with urbanization. Fears of the future and an imperfect present thus rendered the rural past into an ideal (Short 1991: 31). Indeed, as Kratoska (1985) demonstrates in his work on Malay peasantry and land ownership, British misunderstandings of Malay customary law even led to the incorrect assumption that Malays had some kind of inviolable relationship with their land. Subsequently, it was these misunderstandings that also informed numerous misguided attempts to mould colonial land legislations and policies around this presumed sacred relationship.

In this case, nostalgia for a rustic, rural life was nothing new by the time of British intervention in the Malay States (Wiener 1981), though we can certainly point to industrialization in Britain as an important catalyst that helped fan these sentiments amongst colonial administrators. By the middle of the nineteenth century, factory production and mining had overtaken the agricultural sector, and while urban populations boomed, the countryside languished. At the dawn of the twentieth century, Britain was almost entirely industrialized and urbanized (Bunce 1994: 10).

Simultaneously, this shift from the agricultural rural to the industrial urban was accompanied with changes to social structure. As Michael Bunce summarizes, the paternalistic, interdependent ties of agriculture were replaced with the anonymity and insecurity of factory-work instead (Bunce 1994: 11). The mid- and late-nineteenth century thus saw landowners respond by building model villages or cottages which both perpetuated the picturesque aesthetic and evidenced a paternalistic social concern on the landowners' part. This paternalism stood in opposition to the 'hard selfishness' of the market, reviving previous forms of social thinking that focused on 'mutual responsibility and deferential hierarchy' instead (Burchardt 2002: 60). Considering this situation in the metropole, we can begin to understand how such beliefs might have been transplanted to the Malay States. Rapid industrialization and urbanization invoked a sense of nostalgia for a simpler, rural past, and when officials arrived in Malaya, that was exactly what they saw.

Conclusion

At the close of the nineteenth century, British rule in the Malay States was characterized by its close association with a number of different colonial projects.

Having examined the realms of tin mining and agriculture, this chapter demonstrates that these economic activities brought their own distinct effects on the region's economy, society and – perhaps most importantly for this volume – physical landscape. As officials debated the merits of each economic activity, what emerged from this confluence of approaches was a picture of colonial rule that was predicated on a range of environmental and racial attitudes, there being no single coordinated effort towards an overarching policy for the region.

In this case, occupying a space did not necessarily come hand in hand with clear-cut objectives for Malaya, as colonial interests tended to contradict each other. Despite the vast riches offered by tin mining, colonial administrators frequently voiced their preference for agricultural development instead. British intervention in the Malay States was thus not merely about extracting financial benefits; the social organization it governed and its corresponding aesthetics also required careful consideration. To help explain the inconsistency of such an approach, this chapter has argued that British officials approached agriculture not just as a long-term investment, but also as a vehicle through which they could socially engineer a preferred colonial settlement and reinforce the picturesque aesthetic. Seemingly docile Indian agricultural settlers were preferable to the rabble of Chinese miners while, from an aesthetic point of view, Malay villages which were so closely associated with settled agriculture stirred nostalgic sentiments for a simpler, rural time before the industrial era.

Viewing the industrialized metropole and rural, untouched periphery as dichotomies of a terrible modernity and paradisiacal agricultural past, British officials championed the continuation of the picturesque aesthetic. To achieve this aim, the British colonial government implemented a variety of policies to encourage the spread of agriculture. In an attempt to further preserve desirable aesthetics and economic practices, colonial administrators in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries even turned to creating special regions that sought to uphold these ideals, such as the Malay Agricultural Settlements and Malay Reservations. As a result, the British could go on to cast themselves as protectors who had a duty to preserve this 'better' past from the ravages of industrialization and urbanization. With the onset of industrialization brought on by developments in tin mining, however, the British were fighting a losing battle.

In sum, this chapter has demonstrated how colonial preferences for agriculture over the profitability of mining were driven by a mix of economic motivations, nostalgia and desires to 'improve' the country – a slew of seemingly incompatible desires which nevertheless worked together to further entrench the British colonial presence in the Malay States. For the British in Malaya, to occupy was

not only to build, mine and harvest, but also to imagine, idealize and impose, the afterimages of which can still be seen today.

Notes

- 1 Indian rupees were used as official currency during Company rule in the Straits Settlements, with Straits dollars only being used from 1867 onwards. Silver dollars from other areas were also considered legal tender at this point, while local currencies such as gold and silver coins were also in circulation on the peninsula. British trade dollars were introduced in 1895, only to be replaced with the Straits Settlements dollar in 1903 when the Settlements moved to the gold exchange. Official tender in the Malay States largely corresponded to these changes.
- 2 Kampong is a Malay word for ‘village’.

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The Unsuccessful Development of Southern Burmese Tin Mines in the Nineteenth Century

Yi Li

Introduction

On 29 November 1888, a two-man delegation left Rangoon (now Yangon) for northern Malaya. Their mission was to collect facts for the government of Burma (now Myanmar) on tin mining in Perak, where the successful extraction of the mineral, administered by the British Resident and his staff in the Sultanate of Perak, had acted as a model for British Asian colonies since 1874. The two delegates represented two separate but complementary administrative sectors of governance in the potential development of southern Burmese tin. As the director of land record and agriculture, W.T. Hall represented the Burmese colonial government, which had recently annexed the whole of Burma and now was on its way to govern this newest province of British India. T.W.H. Hughes, on the other hand, was a technocrat from Calcutta (now Kolkata), the central seat of government in British India, where he worked as the superintendent at the Geological Survey of India (GSI). First established in 1851, the GSI was a government organization responsible for the study and surveying of land, and its many natural resources, under British rule.

Hall and Hughes spent less than a month touring Perak and Penang in northern Malaya, then sailed along the coast of the Bay of Bengal to Ranong in southern Siam (now Thailand), before crossing the Burma-Siam border to Maliwun, the southernmost village in Burma. Both of them swiftly completed and submitted their reports by the end of 1888. Despite promising expectations, Hall and Hughes's visit to Malaya eventually made little impact on Burmese

tin-mining operations on the ground. This represented a failure for all parties involved. Even though new capital and labour forces were introduced by Rangoon in the following decades, indicating an immediate connection with northern Malaya as recommended in their reports, tin mines in southern Burma remained a disappointment throughout the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, the visit itself, as well as subsequent reports, raised interesting questions about how the British colonial administration, a relatively newly arrived political institution in this region, navigated its way in complicated natural and human spaces under its occupation, and challenged the very concept of political spatial demarcation.

This chapter explores the colonial management of Burma's rich mineral deposits at the political frontier between British Burma, British Malaya and the Kingdom of Siam during the second half of the nineteenth century. These three territorial entities occupied the entire western coastline of the Malay Peninsula, with the Siamese territory sandwiched between the two British colonies. This narrow strip of Siamese land, known as the Kra Isthmus, also existed between two different administrative systems of the British Empire in Asia: to its north was British Burma, which directly reported to Calcutta as part of British India (and eventually its metropolitan representative, the India Office); to the south was the collection of states known as British Malaya, where – as Joanna Lee explains in her chapter in this volume – the British governed using a complex mixture of indirect and direct colonial rule (Sadka 1968).¹

The area surrounding the Kra Isthmus – the 'neck' of the Malay Peninsula – has for centuries been a contested zone among competing powers in Southeast Asia, and occasionally external players (Kulke et al. 2009). Being a vital point of transshipment between the Bay of Bengal to the west and the Bay of Bangkok (and the South China Sea) to the east, it has attracted anyone with an interest in intra-Asian trade. Over the centuries leading to 1888, it was the Burmese and Siamese kingdoms that competed for control over it. Until the Burmese Army sacked Ayutthaya, the Siamese capital, in 1767, Siam enjoyed full control of both coasts of the peninsula, from Martaban and Moulmein in the north to the Kra Isthmus and below. However, the Tenasserim coast was taken by the Burmese after 1767, and later annexed by the British East India Company when it defeated Burma in the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824–6).

Political changes and the redrawing of borders did not affect the continuity of the land itself, nor the natural resources it contained under or above the ground. One key geological feature of the area is an extended, unbroken tin-bearing belt of granites in mountains and riverbeds, running through the entire stretch of the peninsula and its submerged extension to the south. Almost all tin mines in the

region benefited from this belt: at its southern tip was Sumatra and the Riaus, from where the islands of Bangka and Balitun produced some of the best tin in the world and brought significant economic benefits to the Dutch East Indies (Somers Heidhues 1992). Up north, tin mines became the defining landscape of British Malaya and vital to its colonial economy (Wong 1965; Yip 1969; Hillman 1988). In southern Thailand, mining practices were prevalent on Phuket Island and the coastal areas between Trang and Ranong (Cushman and Reynolds 1991). The same belt extended further north, crossing the border and reaching Tenasserim and Karenni in Burma (Hillman 2011), arguably going as far north as the Sino-Burma border and the Chinese province of Yunnan (Giersch 2020: 123–43).

United by this extraordinary line of natural resources were communities that crossed ethnic and political boundaries, who shared similar patterns of work and life, and who constantly communicated with and influenced each other. In the nineteenth century, this multi-ethnic population on a 'plural peninsula' (Montesano and Jory 2008) that was engaged in tin mining not only included Indigenous communities such as Malays and Siamese, but also foreign settlers and sojourners – such as European, Chinese and Indian people – who represented relatively new arrivals in the region.

Taking this 1888 Burma-Malaya study visit as a lens to dissect the complicated interaction of multi-ethnic agencies in this ever-changing political and communal space, this chapter challenges the very foundation of spatial demarcation under colonial occupation – a key theme that is linked directly to the writing of 'spatial histories' of colonialism in Asia, and that is addressed in a number of other chapters in this volume. Unlike Hillman's (2011) narrative of the development of Burmese tin (that focuses on ethnic and production/capital relations), the chapter situates itself in 'a meeting place of peoples in which geographic and cultural borders were not clearly defined . . . [and] intercultural relations produced mixing and accommodation as opposed to unambiguous triumph' (Adelman and Aron 1999: 815–16). I argue that the transition of this space from a frontier to a borderland was tangible, as 'contested boundaries between colonial domain' (Adelman and Aron 1999: 816) were recently drawn and started to be felt, despite ongoing, extending and overlapping networks across these new lines (Baud and van Schedel 1997: 225). Here, human occupation was intricately intertwined with political and institutional occupation, both of which played an important role in shaping the natural and social landscapes. As the 1888 study visit and its aftermath suggest, a realignment of space, with multiple dimensions and under multiple scales, was tentatively attempted. Ultimately, however, this yielded to the increasingly rigid and inflexible political

and institutional boundaries that came to represent the nature of colonial sovereignty in the region.

Locating tin deposits in southern Burma

People in Southeast Asia worked the region's tin deposits long before the arrival of Western colonial powers. The mineral was a desirable commodity for the Burmese and Siamese courts, was probably traded by the Arabs in the ninth century and attracted the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in the seventeenth century (Hillman 2011: 122–3). The method of working the mineral was simple. It involved shallow pits or dugouts and a washing trough to collect stanniferous gravel from streams and then to separate tin crystals from overburden. These were often worked by locals such as the Shans and the Karens (Helfer 1839: 32; Tremenheere 1841: 845; Penzer 1921: 137; Oldham 1856: 57).

In this politically contested zone, the last pre-colonial conflict between Siam and Burma did not end until 1793, when Siam formally ceded Tenasserim to Burma. In the late 1830s, when Europeans first set out to explore for natural resources in the area, it was less than half a century since peace had been restored and the region was yet to recover from large-scale depopulation. Although 'traces of the work of many thousands of men [were] evident in several places' (Tremenheere 1841: 845) in the mid-nineteenth century, most of them were in a ruinous state and barely recognizable, and few local people had living memory of mining practices in the region.

Shortly after the British annexation of Tenasserim in 1826, and as part of a systematic process to obtain knowledge about Britain's newly acquired territory and its peoples, several journeys were undertaken in the mid- to late-nineteenth century by various colonial administrators based in Calcutta and Rangoon. Findings from the ground were consistent: rich tin deposits in Tenasserim, 'washed by stream works', were considered 'the best' and were comparable to those from Bangka Island (Helfer 1839: 33), whose reputation had already been established in the European market. In particular, high-quality and easy-access tin was found in Maliwun, a border village at the southernmost tip of Tenasserim.

The first person to identify the potential of Maliwun was a young naturalist called Johann Wilhelm Helfer – 'the first German in Burma' according to Zöllner (2002: 34). Helfer was commissioned by Calcutta in January 1837 'to undertake an exploring expedition in the provinces in the peninsula of Malacca, not long before conquered from Burmah' (Nostitz 1878: 58). In his reports, Helfer

confirmed several tin ores near Tavoy and Mergui, but it was not until late 1838 or early 1839 that he managed to visit the southern border between Burma and Siam. He believed that the best tin was located along the border river of Pakchan.² He noted that:

This year having examined the country to the south of Mergui, it was found that the country to the north of the Packchan river is the richest in tin ores of all the districts in Tenasserim. The range of mountains in which the tin ore is found, is a continuation (only divided by the Packchan [Pakchan] river) of the Siamese tin territory of Rinowng [Ranong]. The tin is found in the debris of primitive rocks, like in all other parts of Tenasserim, but the grains or crystals are much larger (sometimes of the size of a pigeon's egg) and the soil in which they are buried, yields 8 to 10 feet of tin; while at Tavoy the utmost is 7 feet.

Helfer 1840: 20–1

This discovery was later confirmed by George Borlase Tremenheere,³ the executive engineer of Tenasserim, who made further surveys in the same region from 1841 to 1843. He again confirmed the location and quality of tin deposits, with a special recommendation of several sites, including Maliwun. In March 1843, Tremenheere spent several days in Maliwun, finding it the 'only spot in these Provinces, where people have located themselves for the purpose of collecting tin' (Tremenheere 1843: 528). Like many other sites examined by Helfer and Tremenheere, tin was extracted from streambeds or riverbeds, often known conveniently as stream tin or alluvial tin (Tremenheere 1843).

A decade later, in 1851, Thomas Oldham, an established Irish geologist, was appointed the first director of the GSI. Once again, Burma's tin deposits became a point of interest for Calcutta. Soon after, Britain won the Second Anglo-Burmese War (1852–3) and annexed Rangoon and the surrounding Irrawaddy Delta, and 'British Burma' was to be incorporated into British India. Shortly after the war, in 1855, the GSI conducted its first comprehensive survey of Burma, which was led by Oldham. Oldham had heard about the great potential of Tenasserim tin previously, but he was sceptical about the reports and samples that he had received, seeing them as not meeting his high professional standards (Oldham 1852). However, once in Tenasserim, Oldham became fully convinced of the quality of the ore, claiming without hesitation that the 'greatest mineral wealth of the Southern portion of the Tenasserim Provinces consists in the extensive and valuable deposits of tin ore which they contain . . . The principal source of the ore is however in the extensive deposits of "steam tin"' (Oldham 1856: 56).

While the geographical findings had now been firmly established and officially endorsed by the GSI, the prospects for the commercial development of the area were also laid bare. Oldham noted with frustration: 'A most serious drawback to the opening up of this country exists in the *total absence of any roads* . . . Another very serious difficulty in undertaking any mining works, or even in the making of roads, is the great want of labour, owing to the very scanty and sparse population of the Provinces' (Oldham 1856: 64–5). For officials in Rangoon, the next question was clear: how would they extract the tin and make it profitable for the colonial government?

Developing Maliwun

Before 1888, there were several serious attempts to extract the ore at Maliwun by a variety of interested parties. These included a Chinese headman and a Rangoon-based British company. However, time and again, and until the 1888 visit, such efforts appeared to have been doomed to failure. Indeed, the so-called tin 'dream' persistently tested the patience of Rangoon.

Maliwun was at the centre of these efforts from the beginning. It was one of the five townships in the Mergui District in Tenasserim. Up until 1891, it was also the headquarters of the township, before this was moved to nearby Victoria Point (present-day Kawtaung) (Andrew 1912: 31; Butler 1884: appendix ix). Although present-day Maliwun is a mere half hour's motorbike-ride from Kawtaung along a relatively well-built road, it was notoriously inaccessible during the colonial period. Access to the area was mainly through the border river of Pakchan. At its mouth to the sea at Victoria Point, Pakchan was over 3 kilometres wide and was navigable for steamers upstream for about 16 kilometres, where it reached the Maliwun Creek. Here one would change to smaller vessels and continue to sail for another 11 kilometres to reach the village itself. However, there was no guarantee of getting there, as the creek only worked 'on the flood tide, junks of twenty or thirty tons; but at low tide there is no water to float the smallest canoe' (Tremenheere 1843: 523, 528). The village, however, was a pleasant and hospitable place, with 'a range of high hills between it and the sea,' a rich moist soil suitable for cultivation, sugar cane, and areca trees that bore fruit after three years, instead of the usual seven- or eight-year period. Indeed, a district engineer noted that the village enjoyed a '... climate more resembling that of Penang than any other part of our [Tenasserim] coast' (Tremenheere 1843: 528).

The first resettlement of the village after the British annexation was recorded to be no later than 1840. Three years later, an estimated 500 inhabitants, including 100 Chinese, 160 Malays and 160 Siamese, were living in Maliwun. Like everywhere else in the region, Chinese worked the tin deposits under their headmen, and Malays and Siamese primarily worked as cultivators (Tremenheere 1843: 528). In 1859, the village was still 'described as wild and uninhabited', with 733 Chinese, Malay and Siamese residents working directly or indirectly on extracting tin, but no Burmese or Talain (Mon) (Hall 1888: 19). The same occupational pattern remained well into the following century. By then, and with the exception of a few Burmese government workers and their families, Chinese migrants continued working on tin, Siamese on the rice fields along the Pakchan River and Malays more often along the coast closer to Victoria Point (Andrew 1912: 31–2).

As early as 1830, Calcutta received a suggestion that the East India Company 'should establish a "chop" of its own' to fetch a better price for minerals in Burma than in the Malay Peninsula if the company could guarantee its quality (Hall 1888: 19). However, even after receiving a professional nod from the GSI, only the tin in Maliwun was seriously worked (Hall 1888: 19). The first organized attempt at commercial production was initiated by Hopkinson, the commissioner of the Tenasserim Division in 1860. Hopkinson leased the entire district to a Chinese man called Chit Syang for ten years at an annual rental of 650 rupees.⁴ The local government expected an extra income of 60 rupees per year for permission of liquor sales, and an annual profit of 2,000 rupees from selling government opium. Sale of both these products passed through the hands of Chit Syang, who also worked as Maliwun's *myook*, or extra assistant commissioner (Hall 1888: 19; Butler 1884: 29–30).

The 1860 lease allowed Chit Syang significant autonomy to mine on his own terms. In doing so, it also allowed him to follow a common practice of 'coolie labour' among Chinese migrant mining workers in the region. By paying for legal access to the land (the mines) and provisions under excise control (liquor and opium), Chinese headmen like Chit Syang could recruit workers and source other living essentials (such as food and accommodation) through their own networks, open and maintain pits and furnaces, organize and oversee working shifts, and make a profit by selling mineral products. The mining methods used at the time remained almost unchanged from those of pre-colonial years (Butler 1884: 29–31).

In the last year of Chit Syang's decade-long lease, tin appeared on the district revenue book as a deficit of 388 rupees. Such a meagre income (2,720 rupees)

could not cover the cost of keeping police in the region (3,108 rupees), and ultimately acted as a drain on the local government. Not surprisingly, Chit Syang's lease was not renewed and the government turned its attention to a Rangoon-based, British-owned company whilst they continued to debate the suitable length of a new lease term (Hall 1888: 20).

W. Strang Steel and Company succeeded Chit Syang in Maliwun and was awarded a lease on the deposit for thirty years at an annual rent of 1,000 rupees in 1873. Indeed, Maliwun tin was one of the very first enterprises taken by this new company, which had been recently founded by William Strang Steel in 1870. By that time, William Strang Steel had been in Rangoon for almost a decade, having worked for the Rangoon branch of Gladstone Wyllie and Co. to trade Burmese rice since 1862. Steel's company, later renamed Steel Brothers, would go on to huge commercial success, and was best known for its monopoly in Burmese rice. One account accurately summarizes that 'the history of these sixty years of development and expansion of business in Burma can largely be told in recounting the story of the growth of Steel Brothers and Co. Ltd' (Anon c. 1970). True enough, the company's experience faithfully captured the frustration over Burma's commercial development of its southern tin deposit. Steel's involvement in Tenasserim proved to be an exceptional disaster in the company's otherwise impeccable profit-making record.

One of Steel's agents, William Quiller Rowett, visited Maliwun in 1874. By then, Maliwun village 'consist[ed] of a few struggling houses' (Rowett 1874: 20) and was considered 'filthy' by Rowett (Rowett 1874: 21). The area had a guard made up of one corporal and two peons for the protection of the company's warehouse at night (Rowett 1874: 18). Outside the village, Chinese labourers worked two charcoal pits that provided fuel (Rowett 1874: 22). Nearby, three mining pits operated in a 'tributary system', which meant the Steel Company advanced funds and provisions (including opium) to the Chinese headmen, who then managed the sites and labour, and returned the mineral products to the company, in the same 'coolie labour' way as Chit Syang had done before. As had been the case with Chit Syang, this method was financially unsuccessful, and one pit had to be abandoned. The fourth pit, however, presented an opportunity in the eyes of Rowett. It was newly opened by the company's own workers, who were specially sourced from India, and was under the direct management of the company with no middleman involved (Rowett 1874: 25). In addition to these small-scale working pits, there were several Chinese individuals and groups working in sites left by Chit Syang, with an irregular schedule and minimal outcome.

Labour was a major issue at the site. A German company which leased a nearby site and invested 75,000 rupees over a two-year period found it difficult to recruit 100 Chinese workers from Penang. By the time of Rowett's visit, less than half of these workers remained due to a lack of facilities, absenteeism and disease (Rowett 1874: 5–6). Steel did not fare any better, despite a conscious effort to use new sources of labour from India to avoid the hassle of dealing with Chinese labourers and the Chinese 'coolie labour' practice. However, Indian labourers, who – in the eyes of European officials and businessmen – 'understood nothing of mining' (Butler 1884: 28), proved to be one of the two fatal factors in Steel's downfall. After investing 300,000 (three lakh) rupees in Maliwun, Steel's project ultimately lasted only four years. In 1877, the company ended operations and left Maliwun with significant losses.

Thereafter, operations on the ground became quiet. Chinese workers continued their own mining methods, struggling to pay for their living with the little income they received from the tin they mined. In the following decade, ground rent was sporadically imposed but never enforced, along with export duties. In 1888, Maliwun had two smelting houses and a handful of pits outside the village but no cart track linking them with each other or with the village, and two broken bridges. Nine Chinese in the village claimed to be 'mine owners'. Among those, three had around twenty labourers each and the rest fewer than ten. Workers were brought from China or Penang at a high cost and many absconded (Hall 1888: 17–18). The small and unclear amount of mineral output was carried across the river to Ranong in Siam, by-passing any Burmese revenue offices. The district statistics of Mergui shows near-zero economic activity in the years after the Steel Company left the region. Although 'no reliance can be put in their [i.e. statistics'] accuracy', the lack of interest from all parties was evident (Hall 1888: 17–18). Maliwun felt like, and essentially was, a dead zone.

Visiting Perak, Penang and Ranong

Frustrated by repeated and unexplainable failures from the south, Rangoon had to look elsewhere for new inspiration as well as new resources. Although Rangoon was administratively subordinate to British India, Calcutta provided little support throughout Burma's struggle with its tin deposits. Meanwhile, news from the south, at the border of the Siamese Kingdom and the British-controlled Malay Sultanate of Perak, seemed to be promising. Less than two decades after the signing of the Treaty of Pangkor (1874), British administrators, working

closely with Chinese labour and capital, and supported by the sultan of Perak, were on track to create one of the most profitable tin mines in Southeast Asia, whose annual export would increase three-fold in less than a decade, from 4,135 in 1879, to 12,973 tons in 1887 (Hall 1888: 1–2). Revenue in Perak increased almost five times from \$388, 372 (Straits dollars) to \$1,827,476 (Straits dollars) during the same nine-year period, from mining-related income, both directly (through royalties, fees and rent) and indirectly (through permission to sell opium and liquor) (Hall 1888: 3).

This success in Perak was in a sharp contrast to the stagnation in Tenasserim, especially considering that nature seemed to provide an equal, if not better, share to Burma than to its counterparts in Malaya. Indeed, the involvement of the British colonial establishment in northern Malaya began relatively later and was certainly more volatile than that in southern Burma. The control of tin mines was a key issue between rival Chinese factions in Malaya, who were in constant and open conflict, and who were supported by their respective Malay allies including the family of the sultan and his court. From the early 1860s, a series of violent conflicts broke out in various mining sites in Perak and nearby Penang, which caught the attention of the British administration in the Straits Settlements, which saw an opportunity to intervene in the tin industry for its own sake. In 1874, through the Treaty of Pangkor, the British managed to extend their influence in Perak, establishing a British Resident at the sultan's court (Sadka 1968; Wong 1965).

In 1867, while Chinese and Malays were at war over tin, the Straits Settlements was also administratively transferred from British India to the Colonial Office in London, becoming a Crown colony. This was part of the larger administrative reshuffle after the Indian Rebellion of 1857 – an event which, as Vishvajit Pandya and Madhumita Mazumdar demonstrate in their chapter in this volume, also had implications for the spatial governance of other parts of British-controlled Asia – signifying the end of the monopoly of the East India Company in India. In retrospect, however, the separation of British colonial administrative spaces by the Bay of Bengal – between colonies in the South Asian subcontinent and maritime Southeast Asia – seems to have been a rational and almost inevitable move. Since the late eighteenth century, a flow of East India Company men had travelled eastward and across the Bay of Bengal to explore the coast, the peninsula and the islands of what is now referred to as 'Southeast Asia', hoping to extend the company's influence to this side of the bay. Many of these men were pioneering colonizers in British Southeast Asia, including Francis Light, Stamford Raffles, John Crawfurd and Henry Burney. Despite being hired by a

company that was firmly based in India and its surrounding areas, they were embarking on a different path, diverging from other company employees who devoted their career to the subcontinent. They became familiar with the unique customs and languages of Southeast Asia (Raffles 1817; Crawford 1820, 1829, 1830, 1852; Burney et al. 1995), a categorically different knowledge set from that which had been needed by the company's South Asia-oriented employees.

This first generation of British colonizers, moving across the Bay of Bengal, saw two distinguishing spheres that deserved two distinctive approaches, even though this was often institutionally overlooked by their India-centred company colleagues and their peers in Britain, who conveniently allocated both the Straits Settlements and Burma to Calcutta's administrative sphere. In hindsight, the separation of the Straits Settlements from India signalled an early readjustment of the colonial rationale of spatial demarcation. Burma, however, would remain part of British India, despite its 'mis-orientation [and] awkward[ness]' (Li 2017: 5–6) for seven more decades, until 1938, when it too became a Crown colony and reported directly to a newly formed Burma Office in London.

As had been the case in southern Burma, tin was a well-known local resource in Malaya long before the arrival of the British. In many ways, tin extraction in Malaya and Burma provides an interesting opportunity for comparison. Geographically, Taiping (formerly Larut) – the main mining site in Perak – was similar to Maliwun. Situated more than 90 kilometres from the island of Penang, a British settlement, the site was about 12 kilometres from the coast (Hall 1888: 3). Transportation in Taiping, however, was anything but similar to that in Maliwun. Until 1885, a profitable railway operated between Port Weld and Taiping, as well as over 75 kilometres of metalled road, over 60 kilometres of unmetalled road and around 450 kilometres of bridle tracks in Perak (Hall 1888: 5). More roads and railways were planned when the Rangoon delegation visited.

When Hall and Hughes arrived at Perak on 5 December 1888, they went directly to Taiping. Although the British Resident, Hugh Low, was away at the sultan's court in Kuala Kangsar at the time, the staff at Low's headquarters, including the assistant Resident, the secretary for Chinese affairs and the inspector of mines, were extremely supportive and provided as much information as possible to their anxious colleagues from the north (Hall 1888: 1).

Taiping was essentially a self-contained Chinese town by this time. Its primary workforce was made up of Chinese miners who were under the direct supervision of Chinese mine owners. Among other regular features, such as smelting houses, miners' huts and mine-owners' houses, the jail and the bazaar, Hall and Hughes also visited a Chinese hospital, a Chinese theatre, a museum, liquor shops, a

gambling house, a pawnshop and the Canton Club (Hall 1888: 1). Recognizing the dominance of the Chinese population, a Chinese Department had been created in Taiping in 1883. This was staffed by a secretary for Chinese affairs, his assistant and several 'Chinese writers' (Hall 1888: 5–6). The main function of this department was to settle arbitration amongst Chinese labourers, to register mines and, most importantly, to monitor the activities of Chinese secret societies within the mining population. In addition, opium, gambling and pawn-licensing were carefully managed to balance supply and demand among the Chinese labourers while generating significant profit for the government. In addition, a hospital was set up on-site at the request of the miners with several Chinese doctors, as well as an English doctor. Each site was also allocated a European magistrate at the request of the Chinese (Hall 1888: 5). According to the officials, these arrangements, intended to manage the multiple interest and demands of the Chinese mine owners and miners, worked well enough to make 'Perak popular among the Chinese immigrants' (Hall 1888: 7).

Nevertheless, it was not only the Chinese who were thriving in Taiping. Although few in number and relatively small in scale, some European mining companies, including the Melbourne Tin-Mining Company, Sandhurst Mining Company and Larut Tin-Mining Company, were also active in Taiping. The largest of these were at a similar level of productivity as the medium-sized Chinese companies (Hall 1888: 13).

Hall and Hughes were particularly interested in the land and labour system installed by the new British Resident, and painstakingly brought back copies of various contracts as templates for future use in Burma. Licences, duties and contracts covered different stages of the mining operation, for various sizes of land plot, and for different types of people who worked at the mines, such as owners, individual miners and labourers. These contracts were valid for different periods (from six months to twenty-one years) and were all fixed at different prices. It is worth noting, however, that the officially sanctioned contracts between Chinese mining labourers and their employees marked no substantial departure from the old 'coolie labour' system between Chinese headmen and labourers that had been practised for decades in the region. However, the fact that such contracts were carefully designed and managed by immigrant regulations and were officially monitored by officials in the Straits Settlements, especially when they involved new workers who entered Perak through the Immigrant Depot in Penang (Hall 1888: 10), suggests that this Chinese practice was now well recognized by and integrated into the British system. As in Maliwun, there was a continual problem with an insufficient supply of labour,

and Tamils from south India were also recruited. However, the result (as far as the British were concerned) was unsatisfactory (Hall 1888: 10), echoing Steel's unsuccessful recruitment from north India during an earlier era. To tackle the perennial problem of labour shortages, efforts were made to by-pass ports such as Singapore and Penang, and to establish a direct supply line between south China and Perak to avoid any loss to other rival sites in the wider region, such as Sumatra in the Dutch East Indies (Hall 1888: 11).

For the moment, however, the real powerhouse for the Perak mining operation remained firmly in Penang – the next stop on the route taken by the delegates. Penang was the source of Perak's Chinese capital and labour, as well as a major centre for European commercial operations, all of which were regulated by a watchful colonial government. In Penang, the delegation wasted no time in calling on all key players, including fellow colonial officers at the Immigrant Depot and the Chinese Protectorate, the smelting operation of the large Singapore-based trading company Messrs. Boustead and Co. (Hall 1888: 1), and 'a few respectable Chinese capitalists . . . who have expressed a willingness to try a hazard on the Burmese continent, and who would carry out their own prospecting' (Hughes 1888: 3). The stop-over in Penang further expanded the delegates' knowledge of Chinese networks, European merchants and colonial management.

On 14 December, the delegates left Penang on a small steamer, sailing north along the coast. Three days later, Hall and Hughes arrived at the Burma-Siam border. Before returning to Burma, they called upon Ranong, where the governor (raja) of Ranong and his family lived. In 1846, King Mongkut of Siam had appointed a Chinese man, Khaw Soo Cheang, to take full control of Ranong.⁵ Khaw was Hokkien – his ancestral homeland was Fujian in south China. Before settling in Ranong, Khaw Soo Cheang had pursued various ventures in Penang as well as in coastal areas in southern Siam. When the Burmese delegates visited, the current governor was his second son, Sim Kong, who had inherited the title from his late father. By then, the Khaws had successfully extended their political and commercial bases in the area connecting northern Malaya and southern Burma, through Sim Kong's brothers who ruled the neighbouring southern Siamese districts of Trang, Langsuan and Phuket, most of which were known for their active tin industries and growing Chinese communities (Cushman and Reynolds 1991).

Ranong sits across the Pakchan River from Maliwun. However, in the eyes of Hall and Hughes, with their fresh memories of Perak, the river separated not only two political zones but also two completely different universes – both

physically and mentally. Indeed, despite being a Siamese territory that had been managed by a Hokkien Chinese family for almost half a century, Ranong bore many similarities with Taiping. First of all, labour in Ranong was supplied by depots in Penang and was under the surveillance of the Chinese protector, who explained the terms and conditions of employment to the labourers before they entered into a contract, even though this area lay well beyond the administrative boundaries of the Straits Settlements (Hall 1888: 16). Like Perak, steam engines for pumping water were commonly used, indicating that 'mechanical power was understood' (Hughes 1888: 2). In terms of transportation, a regular steamer route connected Ranong with Rangoon and Penang. Inside the town, there were street lamps and clean roads, 'evidences on all sides of the Raja's desire to make improvements' (Hall 1888: 16–17).

The sharp contrast between Ranong's thriving, healthy and content Chinese population – funded, no doubt, by a constant flow of profits from tin – and the miserable situation in Maliwun was nothing new for European visitors from the opposite side of the border. During the dry season of 1838–9, Helfer met the Chinese 'stadtholder', probably none other than Khaw Soo Cheang himself, who 'improve[d] the circumstances of the inhabitants', and made Ranong 'a central station' (Nostitz 1878: 236). In 1843, Tremenheere noticed one well-worn furnace (just over a metre in height) in the town. By then, there were no more than fifty families (predominantly Chinese) in Ranong. The Chinese headman in charge, presumably the same person who met Helfer, was said to pay Bangkok 6 tons of smelted tin each year, from an estimated 60 to 70 tons of its production (Tremenheere 1843: 531). In 1874, Rowett, on his way to Maliwun, also noticed Ranong's 'thriving appearance'. Its Chinese population had reached about 1,000 by this time, with newly-built houses and well-stocked shops. He also noticed 'a large quadrangular court' with several buildings, which were 'much after the style of a Penang Bungalow' and were used both as the family house for the governor, as well as the venue 'for smelting and storage of tin' (Rowett 1874: 11–13). On the south side of the quadrangle, tin ores were brought in by elephants and charcoal by cart. There were six furnaces, each with a daily smelting capacity of 'eleven blocks of 80 lbs' (Rowett 1874: 11–13). The monopoly of tin mining by the Khaws and its absolute priority in the work and life of Ranong was unmistakable. Hall again noticed that the furnace, the only smelting facility of the town, was 'just outside the palace wall and all the tin got in the mines is smelted here' (Hall 1888: 17). Hughes succinctly summarized that what they had seen in Ranong was 'a thorough appreciation of the administrative and executive

conditions requisite to secure progress' (Hughes 1888: 2) – a sharp contrast with Maliwun, its neighbour across the river.

The 'California of the Straits Settlements'

After leaving Ranong, the delegates spent a few days in Tenasserim, and eventually took a steamer north to Rangoon. By the end of December 1888, with rich material collected 'in the field', both Hall and Hughes were full of new ideas about how to mine in the region, developed around what they saw as a winning 'formula' of three mutual-supporting factors: Chinese labour, European technology and a sound colonial administration. At a more concrete level, several key items of infrastructure, such as transport, legislation covering fields such as labour, leases and taxation, and a willingness from all parties involved, were all recommended in their reports. Certainly, these were not best-kept secrets, and nothing in these reports was necessarily new. Almost all of their suggestions were either openly practised or had been suggested for decades already in mining sites both in and outside of Tenasserim. Was there anything that the delegation really found in Perak, Penang and Ranong that was not already known in Tenasserim? Importantly, a careful reading of the suggestions in their respective reports and the implementation (or the lack thereof) afterwards, provides a clue that potentially challenges the very foundation of colonial administration and its boundaries.

Hall, the delegate from Rangoon, applied his line of thought within the existing framework and context of the Burma administration. His four recommendations were to appoint an assistant commissioner at Maliwun; to allow long leases to induce European and other capital; to remit licence fees, export duties and ground rent; and to improve communications with the area by sea and land (Hall 1888: 21). All these factors indicated that he saw it best and most practical to transplant existing good practice from Perak, Penang and Ranong to Tenasserim, essentially replicating an operational space that existed in Malaya to improve the system in Burma.

But others had a different vision about mineral development in the region, especially when they had less of a direct connection with the Burmese administration. The Calcutta delegate, Hughes, went a step further than Hall by recommending not only the transplanting of the Malaya model into Burma but also recommending the use of Malayan personnel. He particularly singled out the inspector of mines in Taiping, who could claim twelve years' experience dealing

with the Chinese, to be seconded to southern Burma for a fixed period (Hughes 1888: 2). This, however, would not be a simple internal relocation, as Perak and Tenasserim belonged to two distinctive colonial institutions, both on the ground (the Straits Settlements and Burma) and in the metropole (the Colonial Office and the India Office), and a transfer like this would involve extensive, multi-party negotiations.⁶ In addition, Hughes, unlike Hall, suggested encouraging Chinese investment in the mines, with an open preference for the Khaw family of Ranong. In both cases, Hughes' approach was more thorough than Hall's, as he saw beyond the verbatim replica of an operational space. Engaging human resources with transferable skills was as important as (if not more important than) the geographical setting and administrative system. Hughes emphasized the individual contribution in space-making rather than the role of institutions.

Nonetheless, both men stopped short of questioning the overall spatial plan in the colonial framework of British India, whose demarcation of provincial and state borders until the 1880s was less a consideration of local suitability than an arbitrary result from existing borders and the hazard of wars. It would take another individual from outside the British India system to bring up the bold suggestion of re-designing the colonial border and realigning the institutional spaces, just as the Straits Settlements had tried (and succeeded) to do more than two decades earlier.

In 1892, three years after the study visit, E.H. Parker, in his capacity as officiating adviser on Chinese affairs in Burma, conducted an extensive tour in the major towns in Tenasserim and visited a number of Chinese communities, including Ranong. 'Maliwun is the Ultima Thule of the Indian Empire', Parker wrote in his diary on 2 November 1892, adding that 'it might and ought to be California of the Straits Settlements, with which it is in close touch' (Parker 1892: 7). Although Hall and Hughes recognized the important influence on Tenasserim from Malaya and Siam, it was Parker, whose career was entirely in the Foreign Office's consular service in China, and who had only been working in Burma for a short period, who bluntly spoke of something that neither Hall nor Hughes meant or dared to say – 'less connection to Rangoon, especially Calcutta and Simla' (Parker 1892: 7), the better for Tenasserim, Maliwun and the tin.

Conclusion

The story of unsuccessful tin mining in southern Burma presents an interesting case through which we can reconsider the nature of the geographical, human

and institutional spaces of this region – at the border of what we now call ‘South Asia’ and ‘Southeast Asia’ – under colonial occupation during the late nineteenth century. On (and underneath) the land and waterways of southern Burma, where geography connects natural resources and ethnic communities, and politics divides practice and mentality, tin symbolized not only a failure of commercial development, but also a failure of colonial rationality of spatial demarcation and management.

In the end, it was E.H. Parker, a complete outsider from the existing institutions of British India (and British Burma), who touched upon the very basis of the issue: the colony’s spatial division was problematic from its inauguration in Burma, and southern Burma was in every sense part of the Malay-Siamese world of maritime Southeast Asia. However, that was as far as Parker, and the British Burma government he worked for temporarily, could go. Parker’s plans would remain a short entry in an internal government document, the recommendations of which would never be followed up. Over time, Maliwun saw itself trapped in the increasingly rigid Rangoon/Calcutta administrative sphere, with the fluid trespassing across the Pakchan River and further south soon becoming a thing of the past. None of the recommendations from the study visit materialized in the long term, and more than a century on, Maliwun remains a sleepy village on the southern border of Myanmar, with almost no memory about the dreams, hopes and frustrations of tin once harboured by colonial visitors to it.

Notes

- 1 In 1888, Penang was part of the Crown colony of the Straits Settlements. Perak was under British protection by a British Resident and was soon to be incorporated into the Federated Malay States (1895). The northern Malay Sultanates of Kedah and Perlis would not be ceded to Britain from Siam until the signing of the Anglo-Siamese Treaty in 1901.
- 2 There were border disputes around the Pakchan River between British Burma and Siam at this time, as both parties were interested in the rich minerals on both sides of the river (Winichakul 1994: 65–6).
- 3 Tremenheere is a typical Cornish surname. However, I am yet to establish a clear link between Tremenheere’s professional activities in British India and the Cornish tin-mining industry.
- 4 In other contemporary sources, this individual’s name is given as ‘Sit San’. The spelling of the name varies, but all are obviously based on the same pronunciation of a Chinese dialect.

- 5 This happened on the 'fifth lunar day of the first lunar month in the *Yiji* year of the reign of the Daoguang Emperor of China' which is 31 January 1845. This date is recorded on an inscription, *xugong lingmu bei*, from the tomb of Khaw Soo Cheang in Ranong. The inscription was made on the ninth year of the reign of the Guangxu emperor (i.e. 1883).
- 6 However, this was not unprecedented. Precisely around this time, Burma first borrowed, then permanently hired, one China expert (William Warry) from the Foreign Office's China Consular Service to help with Sino-Burma border issues. The existing paper trail between China, Britain, India and Burma on negotiating Warry's relocation indicates the complicated nature of an intra-empire, inter-departmental transfer, and the very limited role that Rangoon was allowed at this level (Li 2016).

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Mapping China under Japanese Occupation: Spatial Configurations of State Power during Wartime, 1937–45¹

David Serfass

Introduction

The Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–45) had a tremendous impact on the spatial configuration of state power in China, whether by forcing the transfer by China's Nationalist government of its capital from Nanjing to Chongqing or in the creation by Japan of a new state apparatus in occupied areas of China. In the meantime, China's landscape underwent profound changes, from the massive Yellow River flood of 1938 to the transformation of the border regions as a result of the moving of the government administration westwards, followed by the movement of millions of refugees. In the same way, the size and configuration of China's territory had a significant influence on how the Japanese 'occupation state' took shape, and this process affected, in turn, the way in which China's political landscape was perceived. The occupation forces were gradually organized according to different areas, with each of them sponsoring local pro-Japanese governments. This political configuration of the occupation state was then justified by China's spatial configuration through a rhetoric that rationalized China's political disunity as a consequence of its geography.²

In keeping with the themes of this volume, this chapter seeks to explore how the Japanese occupation of China resulted in not just actual changes to the landscape of China itself, but also to new ways of administering, imagining and mapping occupied China. Drawing on both Japanese and Chinese archival sources from the occupation period, as well as the literature on 'mapping' in wartime Asia, I will show how the Japanese occupation did not lead to a monolithic view of what a wartime and postwar China would look like spatially, but to competing 'maps' of

China that reflected different visions. The chapter makes the case that our understanding of the occupation state can benefit if we take into account the spatiality of state power and the ways in which conflicting political strategies translated into different topographies of the state apparatus. After a preliminary discussion of the occupation state, this chapter focuses on three stages in the remapping of China under Japanese occupation. The first part presents a late 1938 Japanese memorandum promoting the ‘Confederate States of China’, which includes an allegorical sketch of China as a potato plant. The second section addresses the spatial aspect of ‘*huandu*’ (‘return to/of the capital’) – this being one of the main slogans of the collaborationist regime led by Wang Jingwei. It shows that the location of the capital was not only an issue regarding the fierce competition between Beijing and Nanjing, but also between major cities in each province to become the seat of respective provincial governments under occupation. The third part examines the circumstances in which the collaborationist reorganized national government (RNG) decided to create a brand new province in China – Huaihai Province – as part of a larger plan aimed at redrawing China’s administrative map in order to reduce the size of China’s provinces.

The occupation state in wartime China

To manage the large population and territory they encountered in China, the Japanese authorities had to set up new military and civilian agencies, as well as local governments, with the help of Chinese collaborators. This myriad of organizations, both Japanese and Chinese, formed an occupation state whose bureaucratic integration and territorial extent evolved throughout the war. From 1938 on, the state-building process strove to integrate these organizations behind the façade of a ‘new central government in China’ (*Shina shin chūo seifu*), the definition of which changed over time. In autumn 1937, the future Chinese government had been defined as an extension of the provisional government (*linshi zhengfu*) of the Republic of China (PGROC) established in Beijing on 14 December 1937 (Daihōnei rikugun sanbōbu dainibu 1937: 6914–15). However, as the occupied zone expanded with the capture of Shanghai and Nanjing at the end of 1937, followed by Guangzhou and Wuhan in October 1938, a multipolar polity progressively took shape in China. This translated into the establishment of the reformed government (*weixin zhengfu*) of the Republic of China (RGROC) in Nanjing on 28 March 1938, as well as local regimes in Guangzhou and Wuhan. From mid-1938, a new definition of the future Chinese government

emerged – a confederation of autonomous local regimes. At the time, a Chinese confederation appeared as the best possible compromise between the need for Japan's Cabinet to come up with a solution for the Chinese 'quagmire' and the refusal of the Japanese authorities 'on the ground' to give up their control over Chinese local regimes. The first step in this state-building project was the creation of the United Council (*Lianhe weiyuanhui*), established in September 1938 when the PGROC and RGROC were supposed to implement the *bunji gassaku* (cooperation between separate polities) policy (Boyle 1972: 119–22). In early 1939, this project almost materialized into a 'Confederal Republic of China'. This failed, however, in part because of the contradictions that existed between Japanese and Chinese local authorities in Beijing and Nanjing, but also because of the emergence of a new figure in occupied China – Wang Jingwei.

Before defecting from Chongqing in December 1938, Wang Jingwei had been the second most senior leader in China's Nationalist government after Chiang Kai-shek. He owed this position to his prestigious career. Regarded as a national hero after his failed attempt to assassinate the Qing regent in 1910, Wang had become one of the closest associates of Sun Yat-sen (the nominal founder of the Chinese Republic). After Sun Yat-sen's death in 1925, Wang competed with Chiang for the Nationalist leadership, but accepted to form an alliance with Chiang in the aftermath of Japan's invasion of Manchuria in late 1931. As premier of the Nanjing government between 1932 and 1935, Wang embodied the Nationalist Party's (KMT) unpopular policy towards Japanese encroachments. Badly wounded in an assassination attempt on 1 November 1935, Wang was then marginalized by Chiang Kai-shek.

Even though the Japanese expected Wang to join its future confederal state in occupied China as a local actor, Wang demanded that a government modelled after the KMT party-state be established in Nanjing. The Wang group described this legal restoration of the pre-war Nationalist government in its former capital of Nanjing as a '*huandu*'. Such a *huandu* to Nanjing had already become a tradition for the KMT ever since Sun Yat-sen had decided in January 1912 to establish his short-lived presidency of the Republic of China in Nanjing. Chiang Kai-shek did the same on 18 April 1927 to assert his legitimacy against internal rivals. A lesser known *huandu* took place on 1 December 1932 after China's Nationalist government 'returned' from Luoyang – a city it had temporarily moved to in order to take refuge during Japan's attack on Shanghai that year (Musgrove 2013: 23–54, 248; Wu 1999).

Eventually, Wang Jingwei's RNG was inaugurated on 30 March 1940, and was fully recognized by Japan on 30 November 1940. It was designed by Wang

Jingwei's group as the exact opposite of the confederal model that had been envisioned by the Japanese (Martin 2015). Whereas earlier collaborators had been recruited from amongst former (and disgruntled) officials who had been ousted from power by the KMT in 1928, Wang Jingwei claimed to represent the 'orthodox' KMT (in opposition to both Chiang Kai-shek's regime in Chongqing *and* to Chinese collaborators already in place). Opposing Chiang Kai-shek's united front with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and its alliance with the Soviet Union, Wang Jingwei wanted to pursue the pre-war policies of the KMT through his wartime regime, and to achieve national unification against internal and external threats (such as communism, which he saw as more dangerous than the Japanese invasion). Within the occupied zone, Wang's centralization project aimed at wresting power from pre-existing collaborationist authorities.

Therefore, from 1940 onwards, the state-building process in occupied China can be summed up as a conflict between, on the one hand, Nanjing's efforts to restore a central political system modelled after the pre-war KMT party-state and, on the other, the centrifugal resistance opposed to this project by older local governments attached to the confederal status quo (especially occupied Beijing and Wuhan).

While previous research has examined many aspects of this process, little is known about how it resulted in successive and often conflicting conceptions of China's administrative map. The notion of 'mapping' is used here in the sense of defining the spatial configuration of the occupation state, actual maps being only one medium for doing so. In fact, historians working on state-building in occupied China will struggle to find *any* relevant maps produced by Chinese collaborationist regimes. To be sure, Japan produced many maps of China during the war – distribution maps of local resources, persuasive maps for propaganda purposes and even board-game maps. However, it seems that the Japanese did not publish any administrative map or 'map-as-logo' of the RNG (in contrast to other areas controlled by the Japanese, such as Manchuria). Meanwhile, Wang Jingwei's government, unlike other modern states, did not use a nationwide map to assert its sovereignty. There was a very good reason for this, since doing so would only have emphasized the obvious gap between the official map of the Republic of China (that is, the state which the Wang regime pretended to represent), and the reality of China's compromised sovereignty under Japanese occupation.³ Indeed, most of China's national territory was beyond the reach of Wang's regime, either because it was outside the occupied zone, or because Japan had cut off large parts of it, whether *de jure* (e.g. Manchukuo and Mengjiang)⁴ or *de facto* (e.g. north China). Even territories supposedly controlled by Nanjing –

rural areas near the capital of Nanjing itself – remained largely autonomous. The Wang regime was well aware of this discrepancy. For example, the regime struggled in 1940 to find anyone to fill the seat of head of its Frontier Regions Committee (*Bianjiang weiyuanhui*); the joke at the time went that the ‘frontier regions’ this committee was to be in charge of were not places such as Tibet or Xinjiang, but the city gates of Nanjing (Jin [1964] 1986: 119).

Nonetheless, the Wang Jingwei regime did try to maintain the fiction that it had inherited the pre-war Chinese state’s administrative map at the provincial level, despite the obvious gap between each province’s legal frontier and the reality of Nanjing’s limited authority. To reconcile this orthodox map with administrative efficiency, the RNG resorted to temporarily remapping its provinces into smaller areas, as in the case of the ‘pacification zones’ during the Rural Pacification (*qingxiang*) campaigns (1941–3). However, in December 1943, it decided to divide the existing provinces of Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui into seven smaller provinces, thus renouncing the orthodox map of China that had existed before the Japanese invasion, as well as the legitimacy attached to it.

This lack of maps produced at the time might explain the quasi absence of maps in contemporary studies on the subject. The only general maps of the collaborationist governments established by the Japanese occupation forces in China appear to be those contained in the *Historical Atlas of China’s War of Resistance Against Japan* (*Zhongguo kang-Ri zhanzheng shi dituji*) (Wu 1995: 145, 147, 179). Even though such maps are useful, they are problematic because they give the impression that state power was homogeneous over a clearly delimited zone (whereas, in fact, it was quite the opposite). Of course, the difficulty in representing space and time in a single map is not unique to occupied China. However, it is certainly more difficult in the case of a collaborationist regime such as the RNG because of the blurred nature of sovereignty in this particular context.

China as potato plant: Japanese plans for a confederal polity

The notion of a ‘new central government in China’ was first publicly endorsed by Japan’s Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro in his infamous speech on 16 January 1938, in which he declared that ‘the Imperial Government would no longer deal with the KMT government and instead anticipate[d] the establishment of a new Chinese government worthy of true cooperative relations with the Empire’ (quoted in Hotta 2007: 162). From mid-1938 to mid-1939, Japan’s efforts to

rationalize the occupation state can be described as ‘decentralized centralization’ aimed at forming a weak central government to preserve the strong autonomy of already existing regional regimes in occupied China (such as the PGROC in Beijing).

Japanese archives contain many draft plans of this state-building process. Some of these include diagrams. However, as far as I am aware, no map of what China would have looked like if this process had succeeded exists. The closest thing to a map that we can find is a sketch depicting China as a potato plant. This sketch can be found in a memorandum entitled ‘The New Central Regime and the Problem of the Confederal System’ dated 24 November 1938 (Tōwaki 1938). This was authored by Major Tōwaki Mitsuo (1893–1945) for the Special Service

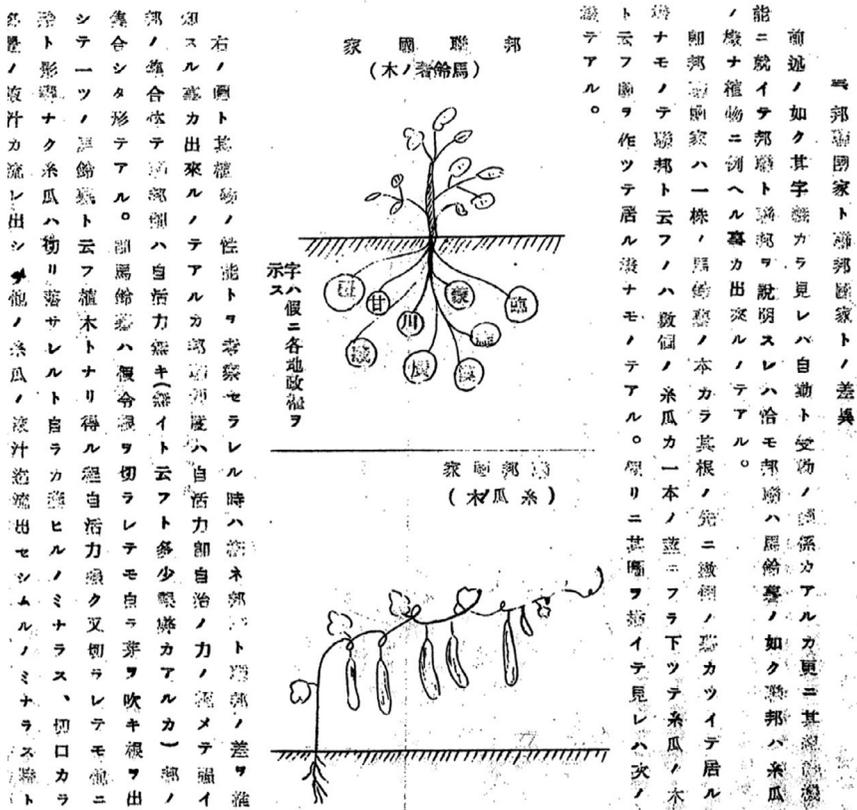


Figure 5.1 Tōwaki’s botanical sketch justifying a confederal state in China (Tōwaki 1938: 200), with the potato plant on top and the loofah plant on the bottom. Courtesy of the National Institute for Defense Studies Military Archives, Tokyo.

Department of the Central China Expeditionary Army, that is, the section in charge of recruiting Chinese collaborators and setting up pro-Japanese regimes in the Lower Yangtze Delta.⁵ The confederal definition of China was advocated in Tokyo, where the Cabinet needed to come up with results; it was also advocated in the Lower Yangtze Delta, where local Japanese authorities saw it as a means to limit Beijing's hegemony over the occupation state.

The first part of the memorandum aims at proving the superiority of the confederal model over the federal one. The word 'confederation' (*hōren*) is defined in contrast with its opposite, 'federation' (*renpō*). According to Tōwaki's definition, a confederation is a union actively decided by the involved political entities, whereas a federation is passively endured (Tōwaki 1938: 199). Tōwaki's insistence on opposing the two notions stemmed from the confusion that existed at the time, especially among Japanese, as shown by an editorial in the *Asahi shinbun* comparing the future Chinese confederal government to the United States of America – a federal polity (*Asahi* 1938).

To make this opposition even clearer and to promote the confederal model rather than the federal one, Tōwaki resorted to a botanical allegory (see Figure 5.1). He compared the confederal model to a potato plant and the federal model to a loofah plant. The Japanese word for the loofah is '*hechima*', which sounds the same as the Japanese word for 'useless' – a clear indication of Tōwaki's preference. In the first case, the potato stem (representing the central government) grows out from the tubers (local governments), whereas, in the second case, all the loofah pods (local governments) are produced from the same stem (representing the central government). Unlike loofah pods, whose survival depends on the stem that links them together, potatoes are self-supporting: if one of them is pulled up or eaten by worms, other potatoes are not affected, and the plant can continue to grow. As for the distribution of power and resources, the potato plant constitutes a balanced organism in which the above-ground stem provides underground tubers with oxygen and nitrogen, while the tubers keep the plant hydrated. In contrast, the loofah's stem monopolizes all the vital functions of the plant. Tōwaki proceeded to apply this allegory to China's case:

In fact, the Chinese state was originally organized following the confederal system. Ever since the Manchurian Incident, some people have gone so far as to assert that 'China is not a state'. Although, on many points, China cannot be considered a state, it can be seen as one as long as we admit the neologism 'confederal state'.

This passage is remarkable because it explicitly links state-building in Japanese-occupied China to a Meiji-era theory according to which, unlike Japan and the Western powers, China was believed to be unable to reach the nation-state stage of political development. In other words, political disunity in China was not a temporary result of post-imperial disintegration. Rather, disunity was seen by some Japanese theorists as ‘natural’ in China, whereas state centralization could only be temporary. This Japanese ‘China is not a state’ discourse (*Chūgoku hikokuron*) can be traced back to the ‘History of the East’ school (*Tōyōshi*), established by Shiratori Kurakichi in 1894, which directly participated in Japan’s imperial endeavours in China (Hakada 1962: 42). In 1918, when Japan’s dominance over China was reinforced at the end of the First World War, the Japanese nationalist Uchida Ryōhei was among the first to assert that ‘China is not a state’ (Miwa 1990: 135 sq.). As the only east Asian nation-state, Japan had the duty to reshape the region to maintain peace and prosperity. This discourse was used to justify violations of China’s sovereignty.⁶ While Tōwaki approved of this discourse for the most part, he used the confederal model to reconcile this conception of China with Japan’s current project, expressed by Konoe on 16 January 1938, for a new central government in occupied China.

In terms of space, this discourse reflected a certain vision of China’s geography. This was the idea that China’s territory is so large that, since the beginning of China’s long history, Chinese people have formed several local societies different from each other. Therefore, the institutions most suitable in such a political landscape are autonomous local governments:

In a country as large as China, this kind of organization is natural. Since each region, whether it be the north, the centre, the south, the southwest or the northwest, has very different religions, morals, customs, habits and living standards, it seems obvious that, though they share the same interest, each of these economically independent regions develops its own autonomous government.

Tōwaki 1938: 202–3

The confederation project that Tōwaki promoted would enable China to achieve a revolution in both senses of the term – bringing China back to the golden age of local autonomy while transforming the country into a real democracy (as opposed to Chiang Kai-shek’s oppressive centralism). Despite its numerous allusions to China’s federalist movement (*liansheng zizhi yundong*), Tōwaki’s rhetoric cannot hide the fact that his purpose was in direct opposition to Chinese federalists’ agenda. Chinese federalists had long wanted to overcome China’s lack

of national consciousness, echoed in Liang Qichao's famous metaphor of the 'loose sheet of sand' (*yi pan sansha*), by turning provinces into autonomous powers to build a strong and democratic Chinese nation-state (Duara 1995: 177). The territorial contours of the future autonomous regimes in Tōwaki's confederal system had little to do with this agenda. Indeed, his 'potato map' follows the spheres of influence of Japan's occupying armies, rather than local particularisms, which had ended up fitting into provincial frontiers. To be sure, some of Tōwaki's potatoes bear the name of particular provinces (e.g. Sichuan or Gansu), but they only exist in draft form, in anticipation of Japan's further expansion westward (something which did not happen). The potatoes depicting existing governments appear as an *ex post* justification of Japan's arbitrary remapping of occupied China.

Although the Japanese press announced in February 1939 that the Confederal Republic of China was soon to be established (*Asahi* 1939), this never came into existence. Nevertheless, Tōwaki's vision of China's political landscape had a lasting influence on the formation of the occupation state in the following years. Indeed, occupied China's political organization remained a *de facto* confederation of autonomous local regimes for the remainder of the war, especially as far as the Beijing government was concerned.

Opposed to this configuration, the Wang Jingwei group endeavoured, from 1940 onwards, to reinforce the centralization of the occupation state, at least on paper. This policy had many consequences for the political landscape, one of which was to transform the hierarchy within the occupation state. Indeed, an administrative map does not pertain simply to internal and external boundaries, but also to administrative centres of different importance. In the same way that Beijing and Nanjing (that is, both local Japanese authorities and their Chinese collaborators) had competed during the first months of the war to become the capital of the occupation state, the centralization at the provincial level awakened already existing rivalries between major cities in each province to become the seat of the provincial government. This was particularly the case in China's Lower Yangtze Delta.

'Return to the capitals': contested provincial centres

The 'territorial core' of the Wang Jingwei regime included the area inherited from the RGROC (including the provinces of Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui) as well as the city of Guangzhou (and a few districts around it). Despite being the most

distant provincial capital from Nanjing, Guangzhou was probably the place in which the Wang Jingwei group had the most influence (Yick 2014). This paradox is explained by Wang's connections to his native province (Guangdong), which allowed him to supplant local collaborators who did not have enough time to consolidate their power before Wang's return to Guangzhou in July 1939. Moreover, Guangzhou was less a priority for Japan than north China, where the Wang group never succeeded in expanding its authority.

The Nanjing government's reorganization (*gaizu*) in March 1940, which marked the restoration of the pre-war state organization in application of the *huandu* principle, was also progressively enforced at the local level. Provincial and district governments changed their names and their organization. As for the political and administrative personnel, many Chinese administrators who had been appointed by the Japanese during the first two years of the occupation maintained their posts. This was the case with the governor of Anhui, Ni Daolang, who had acceded to this position in July 1938 (Xu 2005: 271–2).

If the orthodox map had been restored as it was supposed to have been following the *huandu*, the city of Anqing should have been re-established as the capital of Anhui Province (see Figure 5.2). Anqing had been the capital of Anhui between 1760 and 1914 (except during the Taiping Rebellion), as well as during the 'Nanjing decade' (1929–38) under Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government (Zhang 2008). However, in 1938, the RGROC decided to make the city of Wuhu, which was closer to Nanjing, the capital of Anhui Province. Ni Daolang, the provincial governor at the time, had already established an administration in the city of Bengbu, in the northern part of the province, and refused to leave that city (Shen 1986: 90). He had good reasons for this: Ni Daolang had been raised by his uncle, the warlord Ni Sichong (1868–1924), who had been appointed military governor of Anhui Province in 1913. Ni Sichong had his power base in Bengbu, and Ni Daolang inherited such power there after his uncle's death.

In 1940, the reorganization of the occupation state raised hopes among Anhui elites that the newly created RNG might move the provincial capital away from the Huai Valley. Two interest groups appeared at the time to press their case to the Wang government. The first of these was the Anhui Native Place Association at Residence in Nanjing (*Anhui lüjìng tongxianghui*), which had been founded in 1927. This organization lobbied for the provincial capital of Anhui to be moved to Wuhu. However, an organization calling itself the 'Group in Favour of the Transfer of Anhui's Capital' (*Anhui qiansheng qingyuan tuan*) pressed for Anqing to become the provincial capital of Anhui again. Both groups petitioned Wang Jingwei in the weeks following the inauguration of the new government in 1940.

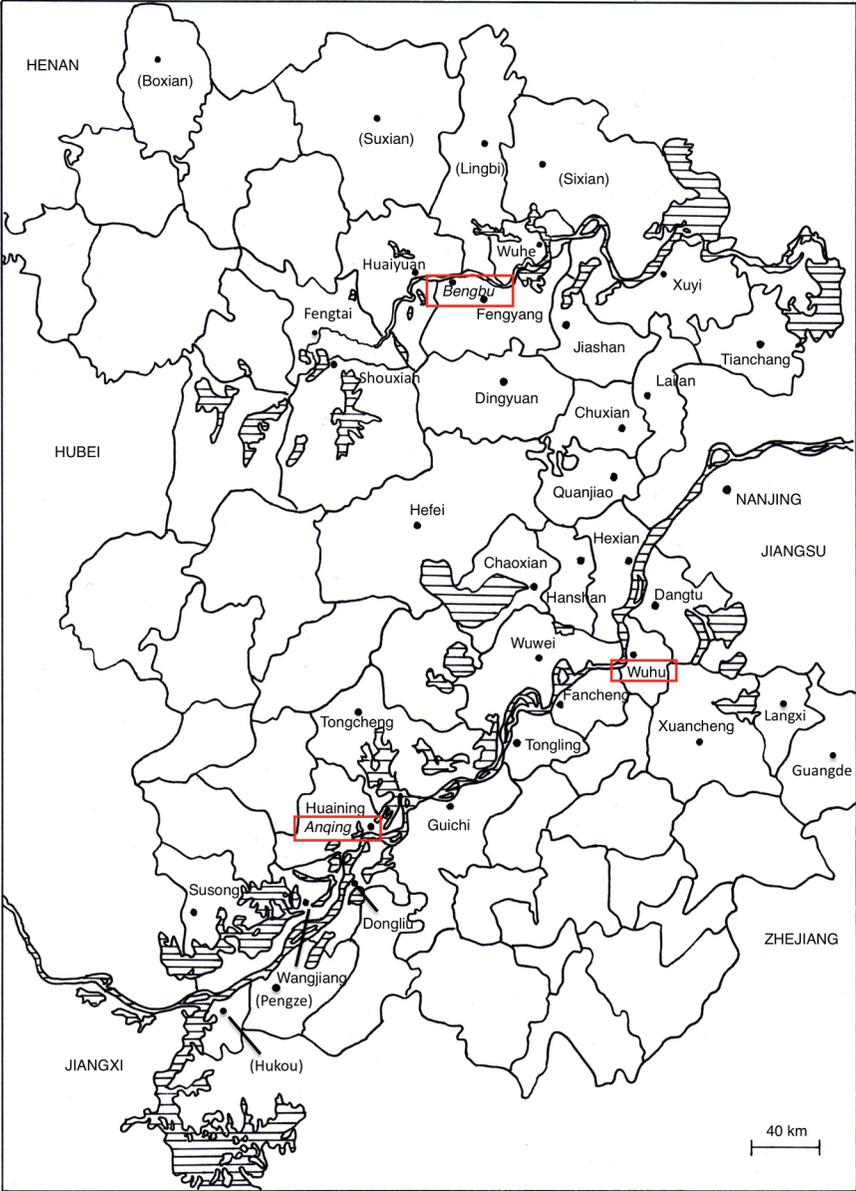


Figure 5.2 Map of districts in Anhui Province controlled by the RNG, with the names of the three contending provincial capitals framed. Map by the author (based on Liu Cheng 2016 and Yu et al. 2006: 1502–3).

The first group in favour of Wuhu complained that the Bengbu administration favoured the northern part of the province and argued that Anqing would not be a good choice because of the war. Wuhu's supporters, however, described their favoured city as an evident choice because of its centrality in the political, economic, military and cultural spheres for the province (*Neizheng* no. 2, May 1940: 56, reprinted in Guojia tushuguan 2012). Meanwhile, the group in favour of Anqing, which seems to have been related to the local chamber of commerce, sent a letter accusing Ni Daolang of corruption (Wang 1995: 162).

Wang Jingwei's Ministry of the Interior eventually pronounced itself in favour of Anqing being made capital of Anhui Province, writing that the '*huandu* principle' should also apply to the local administration, and that Bengbu had only been a 'temporary expedient'. However, as in 1938, Ni Daolang did his best to stay in Bengbu, fearing he would lose his local support if he left. To buy time, Ni sent a team in Anqing to survey a potential transfer of the capital. Its conclusions were, of course, against such a transfer. It presented Anqing as being too close to the Yangtze River and surrounded by cramped walls. According to this report, more than half of the administrative buildings had been destroyed at the beginning of the war and it was difficult to access the city since the river traffic on the Yangtze had not been fully restored yet. As for Wuhu, despite being economically developed, its location made it unfit to govern the province. In the end, the Nanjing government planned to reassess a potential transfer to Anqing in the future, but never did. Anhui's capital stayed in Bengbu until the end of the war (Wang 1995: 162).

A similar debate developed under the RNG about the location of the wartime capital of Jiangsu Province. This was triggered in July 1940 by a petition sent to the Ministry of the Interior by a group calling itself the 'Committee of Zhenjiang Various Circles to Promote the Return of the Provincial Government to Zhenjiang' (*Zhenjiang gejie shengfu huan Zhen cujin weiyuanhui*) asking for the transfer of Jiangsu's capital from the city of Suzhou to the city of Zhenjiang (*Neizheng* no. 4, July 1940: 53–4, reprinted in Guojia tushuguan 2012). This debate about Jiangsu's administrative centre was an old one. It had originated in the division of Jiangnan into several provinces by the newly established Qing Dynasty in 1661. At that time, it was decided to split the office of Jiangsu's financial commissioner (*buzheng shisi*), which was the second most powerful official in a province, into two – the 'right commissioner' would be in charge of the western part of the province and based in Jiangning (now Nanjing), while the 'left commissioner' would be in charge of the eastern part of the province and based in the city of Suzhou. This division persisted through the circuit system

(*dao*), which was an intermediary level between the provincial government and the district governments. In 1908, during the New Policies (*Xinzheng*) period, Chinese authorities launched a centralization policy in favour of Jiangning. However, the 1911 Revolution revived the dispute between Suzhou and Jiangning over the location of the provincial capital of Jiangsu.

Suzhou was chosen as provincial capital between 1912 and 1913, before the Jiangsu government was transferred to Nanjing, through until the installation of China's Nationalist government in 1927 (Ji 2017). In 1928, the KMT's Central Committee voted to transfer the provincial capital out of Nanjing. The city of Zhenjiang was chosen because of its location in the geographic centre of the province (but relatively close to Nanjing). Another reason was that Sun Yat-sen had praised Zhenjiang in his *Plan of National Construction (Jianguo fanglüe)* (Tian 2014: 47–8).

Zhenjiang greatly benefited from its administrative role in the pre-war years, but the city was deeply affected by the Japanese invasion of 1937 (Brook 2005). The Japanese chose to establish Jiangsu's capital in Suzhou, which experienced demographic and economic growth, partly because of the concentration of bureaucratic personnel in the city. In addition to the district and municipal levels already located in Suzhou before the war, the city hosted the provincial level's personnel as well as the massive bureaucracy that the RNG needed to prosecute the Rural Pacification campaigns (to eradicate armed resistance in the countryside) from July 1941 onwards (Wu 2017).

As had been the case in Anhui Province, public figures from Zhenjiang hoped that the *huandu* of the Wang regime would also apply to their city in Jiangsu Province. In a petition, they urged the central government to respect the *fatong* (the legitimate transmission of authority) and stressed the fact that Suzhou's location, far from the centre of the province, was causing harm to Jiangsu. As it had done in the case of Anhui Province, the RNG's Ministry of the Interior dodged the issue by saying that it was in favour of the return of the Jiangsu's provincial capital to Zhenjiang, but that the current situation made this transfer difficult (*Neizheng* no. 4, July 1940: 53, reprinted in Guojia tushuguan).

The debates over the location of provincial capitals in Anhui and Jiangsu suggest that the occupation period should not necessarily be studied separately from the rest of the Republican period or even from earlier periods in Chinese history. To be sure, the spatial configuration of local administrations under the RNG reproduced systems that already existed during the first two years of occupation. Just as in Major Tōwaki's potatoes, such existing configurations

stemmed partly from the institutional structure of the occupying forces. Indeed, Special Service Agencies (Tokumu kikan) had been established in both Bengbu and Suzhou at the beginning of occupation, which helped them become provincial capitals in the collaborationist regimes (Brook 2005: 60). However, this was not the only explanation, as shown by the fact that a Japanese Special Service Agency was also established in Anqing. These “organizational residues” of past landscapes’ (Mostern 2018: 466) had a longer history. In the case of Anhui, this political landscape centred on Bengbu dated back to the warlord period; in Jiangsu, it resulted from an internal competition between cities that was almost as old as the province itself.

These debates over the location of provincial capitals were very much linked to the spatial configuration of these provinces, especially in the case of Anhui. The ‘de facto’ map of Anhui under the RNG formed a strip of districts along the Yangtze and the Huai Rivers, as well as along the main railway lines (such as the Tianjin-Pukou and the Nanjing-Wuhu lines, as well as the Huainan line, which crossed the eastern part of the province from north to south). This lack of territorial coherence in land actually controlled by Nanjing in each province led the Wang regime to reconsider the necessity of maintaining the administrative map of China that it had inherited from the pre-war KMT.

Redrawing the map of China: Huaihai Province

This brings us to another major issue in the spatial history of Japanese-occupied China – scale. To paraphrase Harald Baldersheim and Lawrence E. Rose (2010: 2), the occupation state, as with any other state, sought ‘to achieve a better fit between the scale of governance and the scale of problems.’⁷ In wartime China, administrative efficiency depended on very basic needs, namely the capacity of the central government to control local society in order to maintain order and collect taxes. Small provinces were better suited to such needs.⁸ In contrast, a highly centralized and comparatively efficient government during peacetime can benefit from decentralization and larger provinces in terms of administrative efficiency, as is currently the case in a country such as France.

The problem is that, as previously noted regarding Anhui Province and Jiangsu Province, administrative maps are often less the result of rational reforms than their social context. Moreover, not only do maps result from their social context, they also (to a certain extent) produce it. Indeed, regional identities tend to fit into administrative boundaries. Hence, reforms of administrative maps in

the name of efficiency often trigger opposition in the name of traditions, as was the case in France in 2016 when the number of *régions* was reduced from twenty-seven to eighteen (Fourcin 2016). To be sure, such opposition to state reforms are less of a problem in non-democratic states like Japanese-occupied China. Nonetheless, administrative maps cannot be modified easily – even in societies under military occupation.

As Ruth Mostern (2018: 463) rightly contends: ‘since the capacity to govern people and control resources is a consequence of the ability to delimit territory, internal and external boundaries are not just lines on a map. They are the ideological basis of state power.’ In the case of the Wang Jingwei regime, the administrative map itself was an important symbol of state ideology. Just as the Wang group had fought to restore the name ‘national government’ (*guomin zhengfu*) and retain use of the Chinese national flag (with both being crucial symbols to restore the legitimacy of this regime), the orthodox map had to be maintained. It could not be redrawn without contradicting the very principles of the *huandu* (i.e. a ‘return’ of the old pre-war KMT party-state) and, thus, further weakening the legitimacy of the Wang regime.

In this regard, the situation in China proper differed from that in other parts of Japanese-occupied China, such as Manchuria, where the occupation state’s ideology was not based on the notion of a *huandu*, but on the invention of a new state combining imperial Manchu symbols and those extolling a pan-Asianist Utopia. For this reason, modifying the administrative map was less of a problem there than it was in the Lower Yangtze Delta. Indeed, Japanese authorities in Manchuria kept redrawing provincial boundaries. From four provinces before the invasion, Manchuria was first divided into ten provinces in 1934 and then as many as nineteenth in 1941 (Li 2012: 121–2).

For its part, the Wang Jingwei regime tried for a time to maintain the fiction that it had inherited the pre-war Nationalist government’s administrative map, at least at the provincial level, despite the obvious gap between each province’s legal frontiers and the reality of Nanjing’s limited authority. This gap was nowhere more obvious than in Jiangxi, where only ten of eighty-four districts fell within the occupied zone (*Guomin zhengfu gongbao* no. 539, 20 September 1943: 17, reprinted in *Zhongguo di’er lishi dang’anguan* 1991). The RNG decided nonetheless to create a provincial government in Jiangxi. The process was launched in February 1941, but only materialized in June 1943, despite many petitions sent to Nanjing by local elites. This delay was caused by the Japanese local authorities in Wuhan who had never really relinquished their plan for a regional autonomous government in central China modelled after the PGROC

in Beijing. For this reason, the Hubei provincial government controlled most of Jiangxi's ten districts until 1943 (Chen 2005: 189–203).

To reconcile this orthodox map with administrative efficiency, the Wang regime resorted to temporarily remapping its provinces into smaller areas, as in the case of the 'pacification zones' during the Rural Pacification campaigns between 1941 and 1943 (Serfass 2016). These campaigns were directly inspired by Chiang Kai-shek's anti-communist campaigns in the early 1930s, which had also led to the creation of smaller temporary administrative areas – namely an intermediary level between the provincial government and districts governments, often called 'administrative oversight districts' (*xingzheng ducha qu*). As China's pre-war Nationalist government had done, the RNG presented such redrawing of the administrative map as a temporary measure, as it went against the two-level (provincial and district) map that had been defined by Sun Yat-sen (Fitzgerald 2002: 22–4).

However, in December 1943, the Wang regime decided to permanently modify the size of China's provinces. In other words, Nanjing was now ready to discard the orthodox map and the legitimacy attached to it for the sake of administrative efficiency. The Central Political Committee passed a plan for the 'adjustment of the local administrative organization' (*difang xingzheng jigou tiaozheng yuanze*) (Zhongguo di'er lishi dang'anguan 2002: 178). It stated that the size of the provinces should be reduced, so that each province would include between fifteen and twenty-five districts. This policy would be first tested in the Lower Yangtze Delta through the implementation of a 'Plan for the Division of Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui Provinces' (*Su-Zhe-Wan fensheng jihua dagang*), which fundamentally redrew east China's administrative map (see Table 5.1).

According to this plan, the three provinces would be divided into seven provinces. Jiangsu would be split into three provinces: the name Jiangsu was to be used for the areas previously referred to as Sunan ('southern Jiangsu'; that is, districts located on the south bank of the Yangtze River), while, on the north bank of the Yangtze, Suzhong (central Jiangsu) and Subei (northern Jiangsu) would become two provinces called Jiangbei and Huaibei, respectively. This reorganization reflected a long-term problem in Jiangsu – the difficult integration of northern Jiangsu into a provincial administration centred around southern Jiangsu.

As for Anhui Province, the lack of territorial coherence mentioned earlier in this chapter was to be resolved by splitting the province into two: the southern half, along the Yangtze River, would retain the name 'Anhui' and would take the city of Wuhu as its capital; the northern half, along the Huai River, would be

Table 5.1 Plan for the division of Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui Provinces

Name of the province	Area	Capital
Jiangsu	Jiangsu districts south to the Yangtze	Wuxian (Suzhou)
Jiangbei	Jiangsu districts north to the Yangtze	Jiangdu (Yangzhou)
Huaibei	Suhuai Special Zone	Xuzhou
Huainan	Northern Anhui districts	Bengbu
Anhui	Southern Anhui districts	Wuhu
Zhejiang	Western Zhejiang districts	Hangzhou
Guiji	Ningshao districts (Ningbo, Shaoxing, Taizhou) and Jinhua	Yinxian (Ningbo)
Shanghai	Unchanged	Shanghai
Nanjing	Addition of Jiangning districts (to be considered)	Nanjing

Source: 'Su-Zhe-Wan fensheng jihua dagang' (Plan for the division of Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui Provinces), Central Political Committee, Session no. 130, 2 December 1943 (Zhongguo di'er lishi dang'anguan 2002: 279).

named 'Huainan', and take Bengbu as its capital. Zhejiang was also to be divided between the districts close to Jiangsu, which would form a smaller Zhejiang Province with Hangzhou as its capital, and the eastern part of the province, south to Hangzhou Bay, which would take the port city of Ningbo as its capital.

These new provinces were partly modelled after the *dao* (circuits), the intermediary level between the province and the districts in the Beiyang period's (1916–28) administrative map (Shanghai shangwu yinshuguan 1922). In the case of the new Guiji Province in what had been eastern Zhejiang, even the same name was used.

This plan was in line with the general tendency to reduce the size of China's provinces throughout the Republican period. Kang Youwei's suggestion in the aftermath of China's defeat against Japan in 1895 that the centuries-old administrative map should be redrawn was partly heard by Republican reformers (Guomin zhengfu 1941: 516). Indeed, while there were twenty-three provinces in 1912, there were forty-eight province-level administrative units in 1947, including thirty provinces (Hua 2002: 31–2). However, the pre-war Nationalist government envisioned a more radical remapping of China. As early as 1930, KMT technocrats such as C.C. Wu (Wu Chaoshu) and Chen Lifu had raised the issue during a meeting of the Central Executive Committee (Guomin zhengfu 1941: 520). Like many other KMT policies, their 'Plan for Reducing the Size of

the Provinces' was shelved during the Nanjing decade before resurfacing again in the 1939–41 period (Guomin zhengfu 1940). At the time, a division of China's map into sixty-four provinces was drafted (Guomin zhengfu 1946: 651). It was not until after the war, however, that this plan became a priority for Chiang Kai-shek himself (Jiang 1946). During the five years that followed the Nationalist government's retreat to Taiwan in 1949, the government continued to draw up a 'Provincial Areas Adjustment Plan' (*Tiaozheng shengqu fang'an*) as part of Chiang's grand strategy to recover mainland China from the communists (Xingzhengyuan sheji weiyuanhui 1954).

In 1951, the Ministry of the Interior even published a draft map dividing China into sixty-three provinces (Yap 2009). Jiangsu, Anhui and Zhejiang were split into seven provinces, the boundaries of which were very close to those planned by the RNG in 1943. This shows that, unlike the RNG, the postwar Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek on Taiwan was willing to use maps as a way to assert its sovereignty over mainland China, even though the gap between its nominal sovereignty and its actual authority over this territory was even larger than that of the Wang regime.

Meanwhile, the People's Republic of China did the opposite by reducing the number of province-level units from fifty-three (including twenty-nine provinces) in 1951, to twenty-nine (including twenty-two provinces) in 1958. This number has been stable ever since, but for a few modifications (e.g. the promotion of Chongqing as a province-level municipality in 1997). The current number is thirty-four province-level units (Hua 2002: 32–3).

The RNG's ambitious plan to redraw the administrative map did not materialize before the end of the war. There was, however, one important exception: the creation in January 1944 of Huaihai Province, made out of twenty-one districts taken from northern Jiangsu and Anhui (see Figure 5.3). The RNG's Executive Yuan emphasized the fact that this decision was to be an experiment to study the effect of the adjustment programme (*Guomin zhengfu gongbao* no. 591, 21 January 1944: 6, reprinted in *Zhongguo di'er lishi dang'anguan* 1991).

The reason why this particular region was chosen instead of better-controlled areas such as southern Jiangsu is because Nanjing wanted to enhance its control over this interface zone between the Lower Yangtze Delta and north China. The fact that the control of this region was contested by Nanjing and Beijing, and also the fact that many communist resistance bases were located in it, explains why the administrative map was redrawn so many times during the war, first by creating special zones placed under the direct authority of the central government,

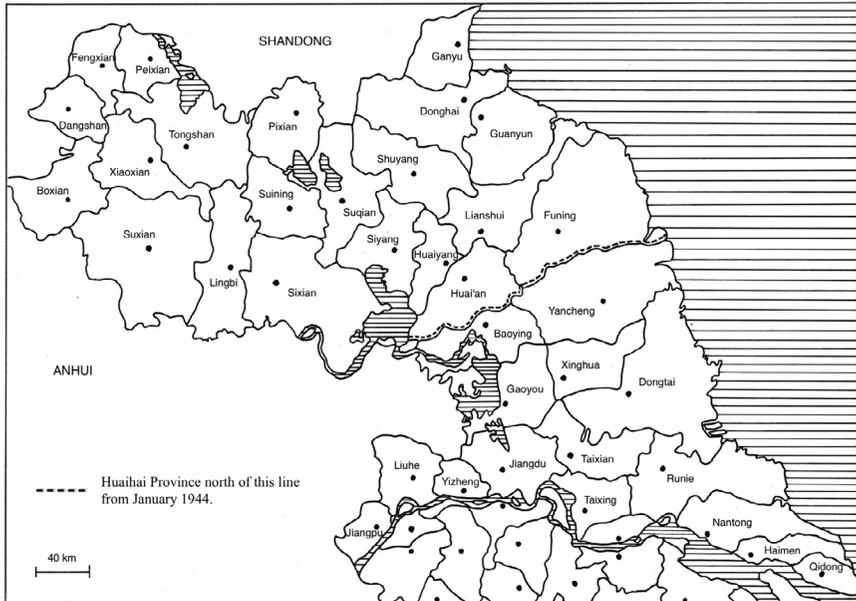


Figure 5.3 Map of northern Jiangsu and Huaihai. Map by the author (based on Liu Cheng 2016; Yu et al. 2006: 1498–501; Zhou and Ren 1981).

and later by establishing a new province in order to integrate the region into the regular administrative apparatus (Yu et al. 2006: 1499–500). Indeed, the redrawing of the map of east China was immediately followed by other manifestations of sovereignty. For instance, the RNG Finance Minister Zhou Fohai announced that, from 1 March 1944, the issuance of the north Chinese currency (*lianyinquan*) would be stopped in Huaihai in favour of the Central Reserve Bank currency (*zhongchuan*) (Yu et al. 2006: 1211).

Conclusion

In a communiqué about the ceremony conducted on 30 March 1942 to mark the return of Sun Yat-Sen's viscera to Nanjing, the RNG's Central Press Agency described 'President Wang Ching-Wei' as the one 'on whom the mantle of the Father of the Republic [Sun Yat-sen] has now fallen' (Central Press Service 1942). Such imagery, used here to express legitimacy, can also be applied to the evolution of the Chinese administrative map under Japanese occupation. The pre-war map of China was like a suit that was too large. Wang Jingwei's so-called 'Nationalist

government' had to wear this suit to pretend that it was the one and only central government of China, even though it was too emaciated to wear such a large suit properly. After using temporary expedients, the Wang regime decided to have the suit tailored so it could fit its owner by reducing the size of its provinces. This dilemma between, on the one hand, the orthodox map and the legitimacy attached to it, and, on the other, a new map based on administrative efficiency, is obvious in the case of the Wang Jingwei regime because of the gap that existed between the fiction of orthodoxy (based on the *huandu* principle) and the realities of the Japanese occupation.

However, this dilemma was in no way specific to this so-called 'puppet' regime, as successive remapping of China under Japanese occupation was similar to efforts which took place before and after the war, be these driven by debates about federalism versus centralism, by arguments over the location of provincial capitals, or by considerations over the optimum scale for provincial administration. In other words, a better understanding of the occupation state in space also allows us to reassess its place in time. Far from being the historical anomalies described in much of the Chinese historiography, 'puppet' regimes such as the one led by Wang Jingwei are an integral part of the *longue durée* of the Chinese state. In this regard, the Wang regime's efforts to map China to reconcile nominal authority, administrative efficiency and Japanese encroachments were similar in nature to those of China's Nationalist government in the 1930s. As shown by Major Tōwaki's memorandum, this long-term view of occupation in China can also contribute to the history of Japan's colonial and wartime empire by shedding new light on how the spatial configuration of the occupation state adapted to both the Chinese existing map and to the Japanese institutional structure.

Notes

- 1 An earlier draft of this paper was presented as part of the 'Cultures of Occupation in 20th Century Asia', Asia Research Institute Seminar Series at the University of Nottingham in January 2019. I thank the organizer Jeremy E. Taylor and the participants of that event, especially Mark Baker and Stephen Legg, for their comments and suggestions. I am also indebted to Oriane de Laubrière and the editors of this volume.
- 2 In this chapter, I borrow the notion of the 'occupation state' from Timothy Brook's ground-breaking work on collaboration (2005). However, I define the occupation

- state not as a synonym of the ‘collaborationist government’ but as a concept referring to an apparatus going beyond the collaboration regimes and including the Japanese military and civilian agencies as well as local governments in China (Serfass 2022).
- 3 Torsten Weber (2013: 44) notes that, unlike Japanese maps, the RNG portrayed ‘Greater Asia’ without any borders. This ‘abolition of national borders’, one can add, revealed the Wang regime’s inability to overcome this gap. Maps can lie, but only up to a certain point.
 - 4 The Chinese abbreviation for ‘Mongol United Autonomous Government’.
 - 5 The preface provides further details on the background of the document: ‘Major Tōwaki used it during a meeting attended by the head of each Special Service Division to explain to them the concept of the confederal system that has been circulating lately among the population of Central China’ (Tōwaki 1938: 197). Since the said major’s given name is not mentioned, we can only assume that the author is Tōwaki Mitsuo (Serfass 2017: 244). ‘Central China’ (J. *Chūshi*; C. *Huazhong*) refers to the Yangzte Delta or east China.
 - 6 When Japan withdrew from the League of Nations in March 1933, it justified the occupation of Manchuria by the fact that China could not be regarded as ‘an organized state’ (Beasley 1991: 200).
 - 7 I thank Kristin Stapleton for introducing me to this book.
 - 8 Provinces were only one aspect of this reconfiguration aiming at reducing the distance between each administrative level and between the bureaucracy and the population. These efforts translated into the creation or the expansion of new bureaucratic levels within the local administrative apparatus (between the provincial and the district echelons) as well as under it through structures such as the *baojia* (an old system set up for policing and mutual surveillance between groups of households). For a discussion of the reciprocal adaptation of administrative organizations and local communities ‘for organizing territory into manageable portions’, see Brook (1985).

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Part Three

Island and Maritime Spaces

Corral and Confine: Colonial Occupation and the Politics of Space in the Andaman Islands

Vishvajit Pandya and Madhumita Mazumdar

Introduction

In 1789, when the earliest British colonizers landed on the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal, they saw it as *'terra nullius'*, or empty space. The British described bands of 'savages' that were seen 'prowling' and 'dancing' over what they considered a Rousseau-esque landscape, free from societal constraints, private property and law. With the British occupation fully established by 1858, the colonizers saw these incomprehensible savages as objects of 'scientific' curiosity to be observed, captured and tamed for further study. But the larger project of colonial occupation in the Andaman Islands followed a settler-colonial logic that demanded the colonization and settlement of the land, as well as the forced containment, if not 'elimination', of the islands' Indigenous people. The colonial project was sustained in the post-colonial era through the prevailing idea that the Andamans was empty space that had to be filled by 'disciplined natives', as well as mainland India's 'excess populations' who would transform the tropical forest to crop-yielding plantations and farms (Pandya 2013).

While many scholars have told the story of the colonial occupation and settlement of the Andaman Islands (Portman 1888; Temple 1903, 1930; Mathur 1968, 1984; Sen 2010; Anderson, Mazumdar and Pandya 2016), the history of the pre-colonial islands as a 'culture zone' defined by the distinctive livelihoods, languages and cosmologies of hunter-gatherer groups living within a shared island space is often not addressed. These groups, though marked by individual cultural attributes, moved along the north-south axis of the islands and maintained complex relations of communication and exchange between each other. With the expansion of the penal settlement at Port Blair in the southern part of the Andaman Islands, this practice of intra-group relations became

jeopardized and was eroded. Earlier relations of exchange crumbled and hostility between groups within the 'culture zone' intensified. The logic of settler-colonial occupation targeted those very spaces of exchange and communication between the hunter-gatherer groups that had sustained them over centuries. A closer look at the specific points of colonial occupation on the islands, beginning from the southern extremities and moving slowly up to the north via critical nodal points, was meant to restrict intra-band or intra-community movement across both the vertical and horizontal axes of the territory. This spatial logic of corralling various groups among the Andaman Islanders would eventually limit their capacity for resistance and leave them vulnerable to capture and confinement.

This chapter builds on conventional archival records and 'ethno-historical' accounts to draw attention to the spatial logic of settler colonialism and its implications for the Andaman Islanders, for whom the historical experience of colonial occupation presents a process of displacement, replacement and ultimately confinement in 'reserves' created by the post-colonial state (Elwin 1973). It tries to understand how the spatial logic of occupation that worked through the severance of zones of exchange destroyed an entire cultural zone, decimated the bulk of its inhabitants and rendered them irredeemably 'vulnerable'.¹

With its particular historical framing of the nature and implication of colonial occupation at one of the extremities of colonial India, this chapter explores the 'shape' of the colonial occupation of the Andaman Islands, and how the nature of occupation impacted cultural, political or social practices in the local setting. To do so, section one looks at the early colonization and representation of the Andaman Islands as *terra nullius* and the historical circumstances that led to the abandonment of this first incursion. Section two focuses on the re-engagement of the islands and more specifically with the Andamanese as a key to the project of colonization. It tries to tease out from colonial records the strategic decisions that informed the sequence of occupying spaces with the larger intent of corralling and confining the Aborigines as a way to safeguard the nascent penal settlement. Section three then looks at the implications of the transformation of the islands into an 'occupied space' by drawing attention to the ways in which this modality of colonization undermined the diverse relationships of reciprocity, exchange and communication among the Andaman Islanders and rendered them divided, isolated and vulnerable to contact, confinement and the contingencies of acculturation.

Prowlers on an empty land: the view from the shore

Because of their location along the sea routes to Southeast Asia and the South China Sea, the Andaman Islands have had a long history of visitors (Symes 1808; Alexander 1826; Pratt 2008; Vaidik 2010). The British first became interested in the islands in 1789, when the governor general of India, Lord Cornwallis, dispatched Lieutenant Archibald Blair on a survey mission, instructing him to raise the Union flag and to set up a harbour so that ships might be refreshed and refitted there (Blair 1789). Much earlier, however, following an order from the governor and Council of Bengal in 1771, Captain John Ritchie prepared a survey report that presented the first British description of an encounter with the Andaman Islanders (Pandya 1990). Only partially visible at first sight, and almost completely camouflaged by thick vegetation, the shadowy figures in Ritchie's survey were described as 'Cafferries' ('kaffirs'). They seemed to him to be distinct as a race in relation to those in adjacent countries and were reported to be eager only to gather iron in any form. The early survey said little else about the Islanders but indicated the possibility and desirability of further exploration of their lands.

In 1792, Captain Blair and Captain Kyd convinced Lord Cornwallis that the Andaman Islands be included as 'newly acquired subjects of the East India Company'. Kyd attached his report with detailed maps and sketches provided by earlier surveyors, such as Captain Blair and Captain Colebrooke (Colebrooke 1795). His report doubled as both a survey and a travelogue – a document laden with both signs of wonder and the logic of appropriation. Kyd's survey constitutes an important point of entry to understanding the framing of the Andaman Islands as *terra nullius* and its peoples as mere prowlers on the land. Interestingly, Kyd, inspired by the liberal political ideology of his times, proposed to name the islands the 'Rousseau Islands'.

Kyd depicted the Andamanese as 'prowlers' who danced and celebrated the apparent freedom they enjoyed in this 'Voltairean republic'. He sought to assure Lord Cornwallis that the Andamanese could be subjugated to the eventual 'embrace of civilization'. Although they displayed the rudest of habits, ate 'frogs, rats, snakes and yams' and were like 'smelly dwarfs' who stood lowest in the 'scale of modesty', Kyd argued that the Islanders could be brought under control. Their nature was described as having a 'ferment for freedom', as they had no hindrance of any form of 'government or religion and were free of any impositions of inequality or social status' (Kyd 1792).

In light of his own understanding of mainland India, Kyd pointed out that the Andaman Islanders were distinctly free by nature, as they had no 'zamindars to look down upon them or collectors, standing armies penal statutes and executioners, pawn brokers and other vermin' (Kyd 1792). In fact, because they didn't have any noticeable form of 'social government', Kyd regarded the Andaman Islanders as 'sheep' who had been left to take care of themselves and who moved around from place to place. He worried about the danger that came from some 'wolves' – competing colonial powers who were active in the region – who were keen to move in and take care of the sheep. Kyd insisted on the sustained presence of the East India Company in the role of the 'shepherd' who would protect the flock and keep it from straying. In this context, a project of colonization was deemed both desirable and appropriate in that it would both civilize the people and transform the unknown potential of the land.

By 1790, the doctrine of *terra nullius* represented a powerful and pervasive argument for policies advocating for the forcible expropriation of Indigenous land. It also represented a new understanding of the right to ownership of land and, by extension, private property. Although the doctrine owed this specific interpretation to the writings of the English philosopher John Locke in the early seventeenth century, by the eighteenth century, jurists' interpretation was that land had to become property if rights of ownership were to be tied to it. Property ownership entailed that land should have been improved; it should be rendered more efficient as a source of human subsistence rather than left in its natural state (Veracini 2015: 62–6).

Within these frameworks, the Andamanese did not constitute themselves into a 'society' nor were they bound by any rule of law. Because the British thought that there was no land ownership on the islands, the land was 'no one's' and hence open to uncontested acquisition. In the European settler-colonial imagination, the notion of *terra nullius* not only justified the expropriation of foreign land but also a taming and replacing of its people, and its constitution as a space for the accommodation of surplus population. The doctrine of *terra nullius* was integrally linked to imagery of vast stretches of empty, cultivable land that belonged to no one but the pioneer settler who would tame and turn a wasteland into a productive agrarian landscape. In the European judgement, the Andamanese (much like the Australian Aborigines) were thought to be nomadic – not in a pastoral or biblical sense, but as a people who merely prowled about the landscape in search of sustenance (Veracini 2015). The Aborigines belonged to the land, but the land did not belong to them. This made the colonization of the Andamans very different from that of the Indian subcontinent. The Andaman Islands were simply there to

be taken, without the requirement for contract, compensation or even acknowledgment of a people's legitimate presence on the land.

Until 1854, the Andaman Islands remained an occasionally occupied colony, as settlement was not easy due to hazardous conditions, isolation and the unpredictable nature of its Indigenous inhabitants (Temple 1890, 1903, 1930). Indeed, the first attempts at colonizing the islands between 1789 and 1796 ended in disaster. However, the islands' central position on Asian trading routes was a fact that could not be ignored by the East India Company and its ships that occasionally anchored there. During the 1840s and 1850s, however, stories of Andamanese attacks on shipwrecked sailors seemed to push the company to rethink its presence in the islands. Even though Governor General Canning remained sceptical, he organized a survey party under the direction of Bengal Army Surgeon Dr F.J. Mouat to gather further information. During these discussions, the Indian Rebellion of 1857 broke out. The scale and spread of the revolt meant that the British were faced with the impossible task of capturing escaped prisoners and punishing the increasing numbers of rebels and 'mutineers'. By the time Mouat left Calcutta, therefore, he was issued with new instructions: he was to survey the Andaman Islands again not just to reaffirm the possibilities of colonization but to select the best possible site there for establishing a penal colony. At this time, the colonial encounter with the Andamanese and the Andaman Islands began to acquire new levels of complexity.

Corralling and controlling the South Andaman Islands

Individual accounts of colonial administrators in the period of the second settlement – particularly those of F.J. Mouat, the head of the Andaman Commission, and later the colonial officer in charge of the settlement, E.H. Man – bear testimony to the constantly evolving colonial logic that drove the occupation of the Andaman Islands. Firstly, the 'empty space' of the islands had to be 'cleared' of forest so that a penal settlement and colonial quarters could be established. Secondly, the British needed to make sense of the extent of territory occupied by the Aborigines and the trajectory of their movements across the islands and the surrounding archipelago. The first attempts at colonizing the islands in 1789 and the surveys done by Lieutenant Blair made it clear that the islands represented a difficult territory to occupy. This was reaffirmed again in 1858 when Mouat was directed to survey the possibilities of a penal settlement in the region (Mouat 1861, 1863; Portman 1899).

Maurice Vidal Portman, who collected the entire corpus of colonial records from the period between 1858 and the late 1890s, provided a sense of the multiple and often contradictory bodies of knowledge about the Andaman Islands and the Andamanese that informed the colonial project in its first decade. Colonial knowledge of the Andaman Islands was largely structured around marine, botanical and geological surveys undertaken at various points in time by British scientists, such as Dr Rink, Dr Oldham and Dr Prain. Portman's two volume compilation of records, published under the title *A History of our Relations with the Andamanese* (1899), summarizes the key points of interest in the spatial occupation of the islands – its coastline, its harbours, its climate, its forests, its geological formations and soil, and a theory of the origins of its local populations. It summed up the spectrum of information that would inform the colonial engagement with both the terrain and the people of the islands.

The Andaman Islands were notoriously complex in spatial layout. In strictly geographical terms, the islands lay in the Bay of Bengal between the 10th and 14th parallels north, and between the 92nd and 94th meridians east. The islands were divided into Great Andaman and Little Andaman, with the former further subdivided into the North, Middle and South, as well as the outlying islands of Landfall, Interview, Rutland, the North and South Sentinel Islands, and the Labyrinth groups. From north to south, the islands are a 351-kilometre-long chain of 204 islands with a maximum breadth of 30 kilometres. The main chain of the islands – the Great Andaman Islands – feature hills rising to about 730 metres.

Geologists saw the Andamans as a continuation of the Arakan Yoma and the archipelago of the Nicobars and thought it similar to the main body of Sumatra. Landing on any of the Andaman coasts would prove difficult if not for the numerous straits, creeks and excellent harbours there. Portman underscored the significance of the islands' serrated coastline, only to make the point that it allowed a particularly safe haven for ordinary vessels in times of bad weather or when supplies were needed. There was a near consensus on the observation that the islands were the headquarters of Malay pirates, particularly because of the sheltered harbours and the hiding places they provided at all times of year (Portman 1899: 14–5; Tarling 1963).

The first task of colonial marine hydrographers and surveyors was to ascertain the peculiarities of the eastern and western coasts of the islands to determine how much shelter they would provide during the two seasonal monsoons (Ritchie 1787). Once the coastlines were surveyed and the movement of particular vessels along the eastern and western seaboard established, demands for the expansion

of the settlement deeper into the interior started to grow. The new imperative was to demarcate specific areas within which the colonial administrative headquarters and the penal colony could be established in a way that would allow for continuous surveillance. The logistics of setting up the penal settlement were entrusted to Dr. James Walker, whom Mouat appointed in 1858.

Walker's report, cited by Portman (1899: 264–5), provides insights into the enormity of the task that awaited the first group of colonial officers, naval guards and penal labour forces that were dispatched from Calcutta. Immediately on arrival, convicts were set to clear Chatham, but the supply of fresh water was limited. After three months, it was instead decided to clear and settle the area of Ross Island. Walker was evidently intimidated by the enormity of the task that awaited him. He wrote:

The magnitude of the task of clearing the primeval jungle of the Andamans can only be appreciated by those who have witnessed the nature of the vegetation and the difficulty of effecting a clearance. The jungle is so dense and its entanglement by gigantic creepers so complete as to render impassable except along the few pathways used by aborigines. . . . There is great difficulty even during the dry weather in getting brushwood that has been several days felled due to burn and the largest heaps are constantly extinguished at night by the very heavy dews that fall drenching everything exposed.

Portman 1899

Notwithstanding these difficulties, Walker devised a plan to cut through the interior to fetch basic supplies for the settlement. So great was the fear of the Andamanese that no attempt was made to explore the creeks running off the harbour. A supply of thatching leaves for the barracks was ultimately obtained from Moulmein, where they were known to be available in large quantities in the creeks (Portman 1899: 260–70). In spite of the initial difficulty in approaching the creeks and the interior, Dr Walker pushed on with the settling the area with great energy. Bamboo and thatching leaves from the jungle were cut and brought in by convicts, who then made huts for themselves. At the end of the rainy season, Dr Walker sank wells at the upper end of the harbour and arranged for the occupation of the mainland at that site. Following the arrival of a second troop of naval guards from Madras, Walker pushed deeper into the interior and sent a division of 421 convicts to the neck of land between Port Blair and Port Mouat. He considered this a strategic decision: even as Ross Island was cleared and settlements were established in the area, it was thought that the main task was to control the area around Port Blair and the northern limits of South Andaman.

Following these actions, Walker directed his men to settle in sixteen villages on the Port Blair side of the neck. A similar division was sent to settle on the Port Mouat side. He considered that intermediate villages might also be necessary to strengthen the whole as a frontier against the local Indigenous population. However, Portman was quick to note that the government of India's response was cautious. In a letter to Walker (Portman 1899: 270), he wrote:

To prevent collisions between savages and convicts you have selected the southernmost part of the Great Andaman bounded on the north by Port Mouat and the intermediate neck of land about 2 miles in breadth. On this neck you propose to construct entrenchments, fortlets or stockades and establish a mill cordon with a local corps of Madrasis. It might be beneficial to the settlement from a sanitary point of view to cut a broad vista through the jungle from Port Blair to Port Mouat and it might have the effect of inducing the savages to keep to the north of the line thus laid down. But if any attempt is made to drive them from the southern part of the Island by force the Hon'ble Government will object. A more prudent measure after occupying the Islands in Port Blair would be to clear the mainland gradually and uniformly from the south shore of the Bay establishing advanced posts near the edge of the jungle and leaving only cultivation and dwellings of the colonists in the rear.

During the strategic dilemmas that faced the administration in the Andamans, an incident took place that changed the course of British relations with the Indigenous Andamanese and radically disrupted the complex network of inter-tribal relations that had sustained hunter-gatherer life in the region for thousands of years. Although historical records for this period are scarce and unverifiable, what is left to us of the Battle of Aberdeen – the first recorded organized conflict between the British and the Andaman Islanders – is a court deposition of the event by the chief instigator of the 'rebellion', a runaway convict named Dudhnath Tiwari. Tiwari was one of many convicts that tried to escape confinement in the penal barracks at Ross Island by making their way to Port Blair and moving in rough, handmade canoes towards the many sheltered creeks (Pandya 1997). Most of these unfortunate adventures either led to drowning or capture. In early 1859, Dudhnath Tiwari was captured by a group of Andamanese near the McPherson's Straits north of Port Blair. Instead of killing him, the group provided shelter and a home to Tiwari for several months, accepted him as one of their own and even let him marry two women from among them. Grateful to them for their affection and hospitality, Tiwari advised them to organize a calibrated attack on the colonial military officers that guarded the frontiers of the settlement.

When the Andamanese troops gathered for a fight, he abandoned them and returned to the British.

The details of the ensuing conflict, which occurred the next morning, are unclear. While colonial records dismissed it as a skirmish with little or no casualties, nationalist memory looks at the Battle of Aberdeen as the first struggle for independence on the Andaman Islands that was led by its Indigenous inhabitants. Nevertheless, whatever the outcome of the Battle of Aberdeen, it was clear to the authorities that there was a need for a more concerted policy towards the Andamanese, a policy that would be driven by gestures of 'friendliness' but informed by a well thought out occupation of critical areas of the island space that would 'contain' the local population and help expand and protect the settlement (Pandya 1997, 2014).

The first attempt to recast the relationship between the colonial administration and the Andamanese was the British creation of the 'Andaman Homes' by the chaplain of Port Blair, Reverend Corbyn (Ball 1874, 1879). The idea of the Andaman Homes was to hold captive Andamanese in these spaces with the allurement of gifts, and to 'civilize' them in the habits of the colonizers by teaching them English, elementary numeracy and the arts of cultivation and craft. The first of these homes was set up in 1863 on Ross Island. The home was established as a small house in which a number of captured Andamanese were brought under the watch of a guard of native convicts. Within months, such homes were replicated as 'stations' in sixteen different sites across the South Andamans. Both administrative records and secondary literature on the homes suggest that despite their generic name, these institutions were fluid in structure, organization and purpose. Some were temporary while others endured over several months. The largest of such homes was located in Haddo in the South Andamans. In the view of J.N. Homfray, the longest serving officer in charge of the Andamanese, 'the lazy, quarrelsome and dishonest residents of the homes around Port Blair ought to take to agriculture and supply their wants by their own labour' (Wintle 2013: 25). Homfray's 'civilizing mission' was meant to contain, sedentarize and tame groups of captured Andamanese and hold them up as exemplars to their kinsmen who would then be encouraged to move to the 'homes' voluntarily to discover the wonders of civilization, embrace the habits of work and discipline, and finally abandon their nomadic way of life.

According to some scholars, the Andaman Homes were often deemed by colonial officers to provide a stable, familiar context for inter-tribal communication and marriage and thus operate as a site for a peaceful, non-conflictual 'transformation and homogenization' of the Indigenous people from

the second half of the nineteenth century. On closer inspection, however, it becomes increasingly evident that the homes, far from being safe havens, were spaces marked by coercion, violence and death from disease and contact (Wintle 2013: 26).

Though much has been written on the culturally devastating impact of the homes on the Andamanese by colonial officers like Portman, little attention has been devoted to the strategic considerations that went into the selection of specific locations for the homes in the first decade of the penal settlement. It is important to pose a number of questions at this point. First, what drove the first relocation of the homes from Ross Island to Port Blair? Second, in what ways did Dudhnath Tiwari's 'insider' information of the specific campsites, trails and movements of the Andamanese on the north-south axis of the islands influence the creation of more such homes as 'bridgeheads' in the forest interior? We use the term 'bridgehead' here advisedly. Although the term in military parlance has several meanings and nuances, a colloquial understanding of a 'bridgehead' usually refers to a 'strong position secured by an army inside enemy territory from which to advance or attack further'. A bridgehead could also refer to an actual fortification protecting the advanced position seized in 'hostile' territory (Marshall 1988).

Reverend Corbyn's tenure as 'father of the Andaman Homes' abruptly ended after the surprise attack on and killing of a colonial officer by one of the so-called 'friendly' Andamanese reared in the Andaman Homes. Corbyn's successor, Jeremiah Nelson Homfray, decided to shift the homes to Port Blair and to secure the outer periphery of the convict settlements there. Securing and controlling the area around Port Blair was thought critical to help protect the settlement from more 'savage attacks'. The intent was to cut off the trails of movement of the Andamanese and block their entry to the settlement at Port Blair. For this, Homfray directed that the Andaman Homes be located further away and spread across the islands. The plan was to establish friendly relations with the groups on the west coast from as far as Interview Island and to deploy them as interlocutors and scouts. Port Mouat was strategic not only from the point of establishing friendly relations with the Aborigines but also for capturing runaway convicts who would reach the area and put out to sea on rafts (Portman 1899: 526). From Port Mouat, the next move of the Andaman Homes was further up to Port Campbell in the Middle Andamans. At the end of 1867, four years after the first Andaman Home was set up by Reverend Corbyn, and almost a decade since the islands were occupied as a penal settlement in 1858, a report by Colonel Ford proudly stated their 'influence on the Andamanese was most satisfactory' (Portman 1899: 526-7).

From Port Blair to Port Campbell, twelve different Andamanese 'septs' were identified, and friendly relationships established with them.² Colonial officers proclaimed that they had befriended groups who were previously hostile to Reverend Corbyn, such as those groups living on Interview Island. The new strategy of friendship resulted in the successful inclusion of the Rutland Islanders, Labryinth Islanders and groups in the eastern archipelago within a colonial sphere of influence. Although colonial officers in charge of the homes were not able to classify these groups linguistically or culturally until the 1890s, they were aware of the fact that there were different social relations that existed between the groups who occupied different spaces along the north-south and east-west axes of the islands, particularly along the ridge that separated the two halves of the Middle Andamans.

However, notwithstanding these deep gaps in the colonizers' cultural understanding of the Andamanese, the officers in charge of the Andaman Homes noted confidently that not only were they able to 'engineer' new ties of friendship between warring groups, but that they also initiated new forms of barter between the groups of the north and south who met each other at the homes in Port Campbell and Port Mouat. The reality of the impact of the Andaman Homes on the Andamanese, however, was far from what was written in the colonial records (Pandya 1990). The corralling of the South Andamans and the befriending of various groups on differential terms resulted in the creation of invidious hierarchies and competitiveness among local communities, particularly around colonial systems of patronage and gift-giving that the British established in the homes. The occupation of specific creeks and straits that connected the South, Middle and North Andamans, as well as the arbitrary constraints that were put on the movement of groups from the north and south, radically disrupted long established relations of sharing and exchange. By the end of the first decade of the second colonization of the Andaman Islands, therefore, the spatial and social relations that had bound hunter-gatherer life over centuries were redrawn along deeply contentious lines. It could be argued that by overlooking the islands' cultural diversity and imposing restrictions on the traditional movements across space, British colonizers altered the contours of Indigenous cartography and inscribed the spatial logic of occupation on the islands. In view of the fact that colonial archival records rarely reflect on the patterns of spatial movement of the Andamanese or examine the implications of the disruption of such movements by the logic of colonial occupation, the next section of this chapter follows a close analysis of the ethnological record, together with colonial language and material cultural studies of the Andamanese, to reinforce the argument that if

the movement of the tribes across space was altered or blocked by the strategies of colonial occupation, it would invariably cause a structural breakdown in an established pattern of human relations in the Andaman Islands.

The breaching of the north-south axis

The fact that there was a tradition of movement and exchange among speakers of the different Andamanese dialects was documented in much detail by M.V. Portman.³ Unlike E.H. Man, Portman moved in a wider space, and he realized that the Andamanese at the Andaman Homes spoke in distinct dialects while also maintaining a differentiated identity. Portman's ability to identify the different dialects within these groups helped him command the local Andamanese and gather data more effectively.

Portman's insights led to the assumption in the Andaman Homes that all Andamanese were part of a monolithic cultural identity. Portman's meticulous photographic work negated this earlier colonial administrative assumption. Portman's linguistic, photographic and ethnographic observations asserted that in each group, women cut the men's hair in a specific style to perpetuate a group's distinct identity. In this reading, the Islanders had a distinctive pattern of hair as well as designs of clay paint on their bodies to assert their regional and linguistic differentiation, particularly within the confined geographical space of the Andaman Homes.

Distinct linguistic and identity markers found across the islands underwent fusion and erosion due to confinement at the homes. New social relations emerged because of the restricted movements of the Andamanese. Islanders who were relatively hostile and who lived further away from the areas cleared through 'punitive expeditions' were regularly captured and brought into the homes to be disciplined and 'tamed'. It was at these homes that new social relations were forged and marriage alliances across traditional tribal territories were negotiated. Conversely, the homes that facilitated new opportunities for intimacy also triggered the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.

As the colonizers restricted the movement of Islanders within the island space, the Andamanese invariably found themselves displaced or replaced. For hunter-gatherer communities, arbitrary confinement or displacement blocked the areas of traditional resource gathering such as the coastline, mangroves and forest. Traditionally, all groups moved from place to place in relation to the shifting monsoon winds along the east-west axis. On the other hand, as

movement was blocked by the growth of colonial settlements, there were also severe limitations on the flow of resources and commodities along the north-south axis.

But why was movement essential for the diverse groups of Andaman Islanders? In what ways did the trajectories of the British occupation of the islands and the corralling and confinement of particular groups play out in the lived experience of the Andaman Islanders? The Andamanese groups were divided into 'bands' and identified as 'pig-hunters' residing in the forest interior or as 'turtle-hunters' residing on the coast. During the wet season, the turtle-hunters would come to stay in the forest with the pig-hunters. In the dry season, the pig-hunters would move to the coast. Wherever they were located on the longitudinal island, the community depended on the shifts of the northwest and southeast monsoon, as this would influence their movement on the east-west axis.

This seasonally-determined movement from interior forest via the creeks to the coastline is still prevalent among different Andamanese groups. In the context of the cultural practice of moving across the islands in accordance with meteorological conditions, the established conventions of exchange facilitated by a mutual understanding of linguistic and customary cues meant that the exchange of red clay and iron was extremely significant. This contributed to a collective consciousness among the Andaman Islanders about the extent of their forest space and generated deep resentment within the community when the space of their movement continued to be constrained.

The demand for iron and red clay often brought members from twelve different groups spread over the islands to meet – directly or indirectly – on the islands of Rutland and Interview, as well as the outer periphery of the present location of Port Blair (Bamboo Flat, Mithkhari and Middle Strait). In fact, Rutland Island and the mangroves around Port Blair were the pivotal points where various groups would come to meet, exchange and return.

The fact that the Islanders moved along the north-south axis to certain fixed points around Port Blair is substantiated by archaeological evidence. Near Port Blair and on Rutland Island, large middens can be found with deposits of charred clamshell and bivalves. There are kitchen-middens in other parts of the island as well, but the ones adjacent to Port Blair contain extraordinarily large deposits of shells, as well as other types of deposits such as animal bones (Dutta 1963; Cooper 2002). This is an indication that these locations were sites of seasonal occupation; they were not locations for the consumption of pigs or turtles.

Archaeological data shows that in the period before the Andamanese groups moved north or south at selective points, they would collect and camp at specific

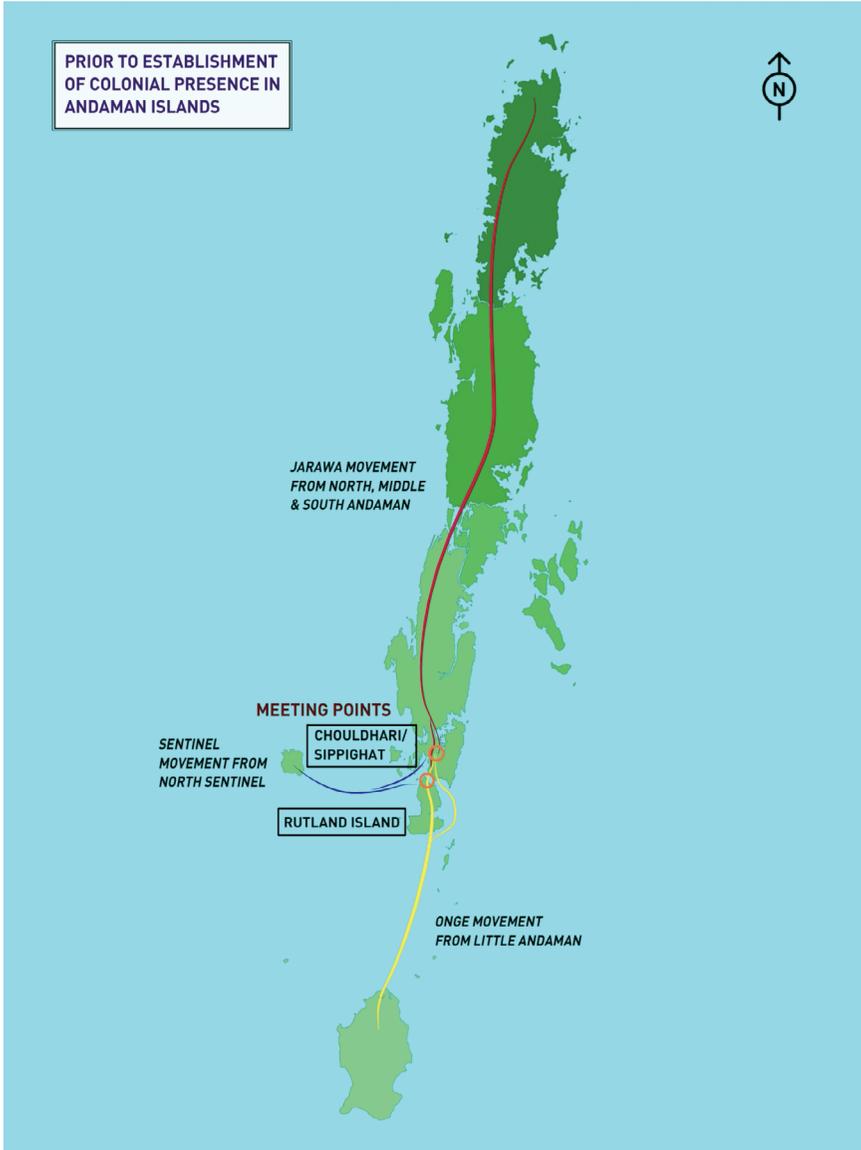


Figure 6.1 Map of the Andamans, showing the established traditional meeting points for various tribal groups along the north-south axis. Map by the author (with Anirban Duttagupta).

sites and then exchange items. This included iron from the north and red clay from the south. Elders from the Jarawa and Ongee communities have reported that 'shells and molluscs are now a less preferred food item but their ancestors used to consume it as community cook-outs took place, specially because the most delicious were found from Rutland and present day Mithakhari'. These are food items that contemporary Ongees and Jarawas regard as 'collective food', or items that are to be consumed when a number of families gather, making it easy to deploy large number of gatherers during low tides at the creeks and mangroves (Day 1870).

Meetings between large groups that facilitated communal feasts and the exchange of items are now remembered as a pre-colonial tradition. Ongees have a special term for it: '*Ayekanenge*', or 'to go to bring back things'. The idea of undertaking a journey that can also cause confrontations and accidents is a prominent trope in Ongee and Jarawa mythology. The fact that journeys propelled by greed could also bring about misfortune is a lesson that is passed on to children through several myths and songs (Pandya 1993).

The demand and exchange of specific items between the north and south axis of the Andaman Islands is also evident in material cultural practices among various groups. The demand for metal (which was largely found in the northern reaches of the islands at Port Cornwallis) and the demand for red clay (which was found in the south) meant that the groups living at the two extremes of the islands developed techniques of movement and travel with distinctive features. Groups in the extreme south (Ongees), extreme west (Sentinelese) and in the extreme north developed the technique of building outrigger canoes and based their knowledge of navigation on sea currents and wind direction. Other groups occupying the Middle and South Andaman Islands did not depend on canoes to move, as the distances between landmasses was not significant. They would cross the sea either by swimming or by pushing rafts on which could be carried material and even young children. The Sentinelese, being the furthest from the chain of islands and being 'off the grid' of the north-south axis, depended on frequent shipwrecks for metal. Historically, there are Ongee and Jarawa narratives of how iron came from the Sentinelese who, in older times, would undertake the journey to Rutland. The primary source for iron was and continues to be scrap and waste from shipwrecks near the North Sentinel Islands (which are surrounded by rough seas and a densely scattered coral reef).

The free movement of the diverse Andamanese communities along the four cardinal points was necessitated by shifting meteorological conditions and consequent resource availability. These conditions generated distinctions of spoken

language and cultural identity, but the practices of repeated exchange, such as in red clay or iron, ensured that these items acquired common terms of reference among all language groups. Today, only four of the twelve Andamanese groups from colonial times are identifiable as bearing distinct identities. Among the four groups who remain and are confined to reserves, the terms for iron and red clay remain the same. In early colonial times, and among the widely distributed and estimated 10,000 Andamanese, there was one shared root word for each item that offered little variation across contexts: *lohawe* ('from the north') for iron and *alameyeh* ('from the south') for red clay-paint. These two items of exchange exemplified how free flowing community movement fostered relations in a limited space of close proximity. Today, many Jarawa and Ongee elders still use these terms. More significantly, however, they use the terms to describe the cardinal directions of north and south. Implicit in this referential system is the historical movement of communities and relations of exchange that came about because of movement.

We can substantiate that until at least 1910, the Andamanese groups moved through each other's territories. According to Radcliffe-Brown (1922), if the movements were not accompanied by the obligatory exchange of gifts, conflicts would arise between them (Pandya and Mazumdar 2019). The threat of conflict and the tension surrounding a potential disruption in the social structure was managed by distinctive peace-making ceremonies (Radcliffe-Brown 1922: 134). While Radcliffe-Brown highlighted the significance of these peace-making ceremonies, earlier colonial ethnographers remained largely silent. The colonial record sustained an implicit denial of conflict between the groups, as well as the fact that most of the Andamanese groups resisted the colonizers (Pandya 2014).

The colonizers long denied that their presence and their occupation of the Andaman Islands disrupted Andamanese social relations, which were founded on ideas about space and movement that had sustained exchange systems for centuries. They also failed to acknowledge that the logic of colonial occupation stopped long-practised migrations and severed social relations that were sustained by exchange, peace-making ceremonies and, more significantly, by practices of child adoption. 'Peace-making' ceremonies were organized to sustain culturally-prescribed inter-group exchange and inter-territorial movement (Radcliffe-Brown 1922: 134, 238). A working *lingua franca* was developed by the Andamanese to minimize friction while moving through different dialect zones. And a well-developed custom of adoption across territories was developed, with 'child adopter' groups not resistant or hostile to the presence of 'child provider' groups who used resources from territories that were not their own. These fictive kinship ties were often fixed even before a child was born (Radcliffe-Brown

1922: 76–7). In contemporary times, Jarawas who move over a large reserve territory have continued the custom of obligatorily sharing a portion of their own resources with groups they meet on a common trail. Such chance meetings are marked by acts of reciprocity where the hosting group will also offer parting gifts to the guest group (Pandya and Mazumdar 2019).

Clearly, then, the logic of colonial occupation that invariably resulted in the severance of the north-south axis of movement disrupted an entire way of being

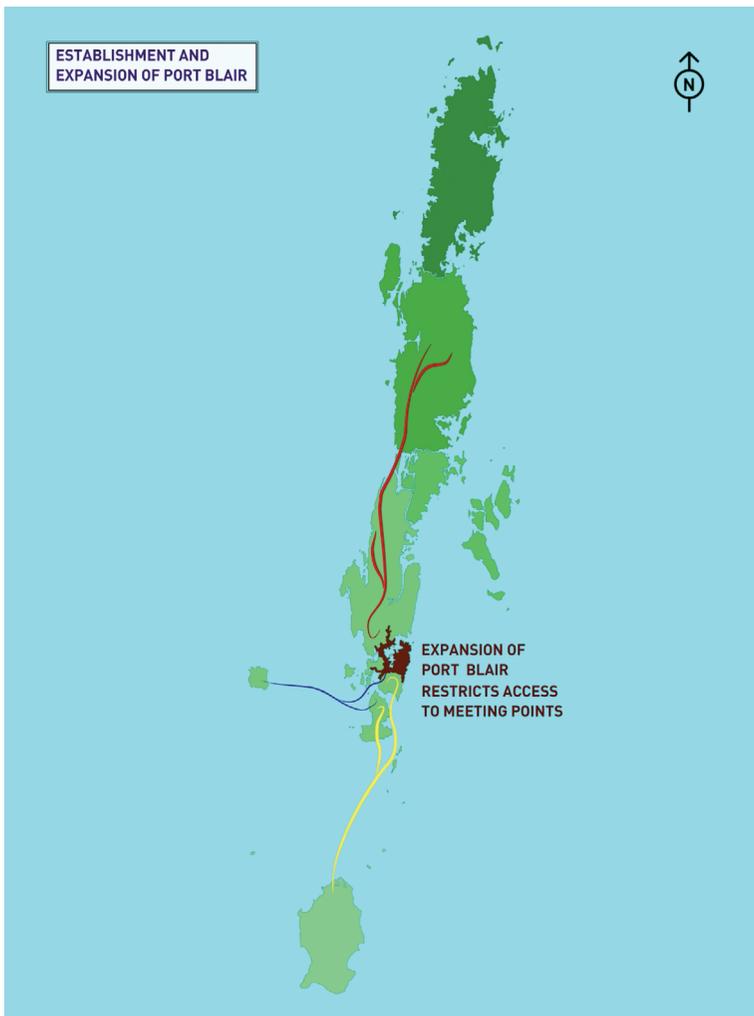


Figure 6.2 Map of the Andaman Islands showing how, as the British developed Port Blair, the movement of islanders along north-south and east-west axes was blocked. Map by the author (with Anirban Duttagupta).

for the Andamanese. The clearing of forests and the expansion of settlements in key zones of meeting and exchange for the Andamanese ended the long-established practices of exchange, sharing and acts of reciprocity that had sustained the lives of groups living in different reaches of the islands. The Andaman Homes were the primary instruments for corralling and confining the various groups in distinct locations. These added to the final erosion of a culture zone that had been sustained on the islands for millennia.

Conclusion

The enduring logic of settler colonialism in the Andaman Islands continued even after the British were ousted from India in 1947. The penal settlement was disbanded to make way for a new free settlement, with thousands of settlers encouraged to make their homes on the islands. Many of the new settlers were refugees who had fled the riot-torn districts of erstwhile East Pakistan to seek shelter in India. The government of India agreed to settle these people on the islands under various schemes of 'refugee rehabilitation'. Other schemes related to the 'colonization and development' of the islands saw a further expansion of the former penal settlement and an ever-increasing demand for forested land (Shivdasani 1949).

Under this new administrative order, the severely decimated Andamanese groups were identified as 'Primitive Tribal Groups' in need of protection and preservation through legislation. The consequence of the passing of the Protection of Aboriginal Tribes Act of 1956 marked specific areas within the islands as Reserve Territories for the various Aboriginal groups known as Great Andamanese, Jarawas, Ongees and the Sentinelese. The confining of the Andamanese groups within such reserve territories and the restructuring of the lives of the communities through policies of welfare, was the final moment in the spatial logic of the settler-colonial project on the Andaman Islands. The Tribal Reserves marked the categorization of Andamanese lived space as fixed, dead and unmarked. Settler colonialism demanded the marking of closed categorized spaces to naturalize the settler and erase the claims of the Andamanese. Ultimately, the colonial project of corralling and confining the Indigenous people of the Andaman Islands culminated in their final enclosure in a reserve bereft of the sustaining social relations that had nurtured local communities as they moved across the north-south axis of the islands in search of iron and red clay.

Notes

- 1 The government of India constitutionally recognizes some tribal communities as 'Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups' because of their geographical isolation, lack of education, poor health and underdeveloped (or lack of an) agricultural base.
- 2 Up until the 1860s, it was assumed that there were only three language groups found in the basic geographical division of the north, middle and south. With transforming relations between the colonized and the colonizers, multiple dialects were identified.
- 3 Portman's work formed the foundation of a detailed study and reconsideration of an Andamanese vocabulary, as well as a compilation of multiple dictionaries of languages spoken in different parts of the island (Clarke 1875; Ellis 1932; Man 1878, 1901, 1923; Man and Temple 1877; Portman 1881, 1887, 1889; Radcliffe-Brown 1914).

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Occupation at Sea: Rethinking the ‘In-Between’ Spaces of Empire in Colonial Indonesia and China

Kris Alexanderson

Introduction

The political atmosphere in colonial Indonesia changed dramatically between November 1926 and January 1927 when rebellions – likely carried out by a small group armed with revolvers, rifles and hand weapons – broke out first in western Java and then Sumatra. Swift suppression by Dutch police and military forces ended both rebellions within a few days and, while one European was killed, thousands of Indonesians felt the effects of state repression following the protests. Of the 13,000 arrests made after the uprisings, those found to have engaged in the destruction of property or life were executed, 4,500 others were sentenced to time in prison, and 1,308 were interned at Boven Digoel prison camp in Western New Guinea (now West Papua). Eventually, the number of internees at Boven Digoel reached nearly 5,000. They were deemed a ‘potential threat to the law and order’ of the colony (Mrázek 2013: 38–9; Ricklefs 2007: 241). The Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia, or ‘PKI’) was outlawed and most of its leaders were incarcerated or forced into exile abroad (Shiraishi 1997: 3; Mrázek 2015: 255). The Dutch colonial administration was left scrambling to make sense of these unanticipated rebellions and quickly enacted strategies to prevent further political unrest.

Intensified Dutch surveillance and policing policies – driven as much by colonial paranoia as actual threat – were born out of colonial insecurities following the 1926–7 uprisings. The 1901 Ethical Policy’s focus on modernity and technological innovation inadvertently helped promote this growth in state surveillance, as surveillance was itself an ‘outgrowth of scientific modernism’

(Thomas 2008: 4). Surveillance undertaken by the Dutch Political Information Service (Politieke Inlichtingendienst) and General Investigation Service (Algemene Recherche Dienst) was subsequently increased and centralized. The General Investigation Service began distributing monthly circular police political surveys (Politiek-Politioenele Overzichten), containing surveillance updates from sources across the archipelago and sent to police and administrators throughout colonial Indonesia, including the Governor General's Office. This circular helped infuse the entire Dutch administration with 'surveillance psychology' and a policing-centred mentality (Friend 1998: 38). The Dutch administration also became more involved in collaborative surveillance projects across Asia, disproving common conceptions that, due to its history of neutrality, the Netherlands 'did not dare to enter into intelligence activities outside Dutch territory' (de Graaff 1987: 564). State surveillance was meant to prevent future attempts at political organization, temper political participation and slow the dissemination of anti-colonial propaganda. The Dutch implementation of a police state, and a system of punishment based on exile to internment camps, was aimed at teaching colonial subjects to obey the limits set by the government and warned colonial subjects not to 'trespass' beyond these limits through participation in anti-colonial activities or associations (Shiraishi 1997: 44).

The maritime world played an important role in the subsequent imperial project to clamp down on subversive people and ideas. Both Dutch administrators and popular opinion blamed the 1926–7 turmoil on foreign influences entering the colony's shores from abroad – what Ann Stoler (1985a: 79) terms 'the phantom of external agitation' – rather than acknowledging a home-grown movement reacting to inherent shortcomings within the colonial system itself. Activists who were not killed or imprisoned in the months following the uprisings were assumed to have fled the colony on ships bound for ports across Southeast and east Asia, as well as Middle Eastern ports associated with the hajj. While some Indonesians did flee the colony following the unrest, colonial insecurities and fears dictated the increase in regulations over the maritime world following the 1926–7 uprisings. Surveillance on land, where colonial officials relied on definitive legal boundaries and national jurisdiction, differed markedly from surveillance at sea, where maritime fluidity replaced the 'elemental solidity' found within the terrestrial confines of the colony (Peters 2014: 428).

The same fears and paranoia felt by the colonial authorities over threats to Dutch authority were shared by maritime businesses, which became increasingly protective of their interests in the years leading up to Japanese occupation. As

imperial enterprises, Dutch shipping companies were exposed to imperial instabilities during the interwar years including two economic depressions, rising nationalism, worker strikes and the communist-fuelled uprisings in 1926–7. While some historians acknowledge the interwar period was financially difficult for the Dutch shipping industry, these difficulties resulted not only from economic instability, but also from political and cultural uncertainties affecting corporate decision making. Despite increasing technological hegemony both at sea and on shore, Dutch fears over the oceanic ‘wild space’ surrounding colonial Indonesia grew substantially during the interwar period due to heightened paranoia over increasing imperial instability (Tagliacozzo 2005: 3). Colonial fears over the maritime world’s transformative possibilities stemmed from the spatiality of ships themselves, which served as diminutive models of colonial society – what Paul Gilroy calls ‘a living, micro-cultural, micro-political system in motion’ (Gilroy 1993: 16). Dutch authorities were often challenged by colonial subjects who expressed their own ideas about how the sea could – and should – be used. Beyond simply playing an economic role in imperial expansion, Dutch shipping companies served as political and cultural agents of empire and facilitated connections across global maritime networks that helped define anti-colonialism during the interwar years.

This chapter briefly examines one of the largest Dutch shipping companies of the interwar period, the Java-China-Japan Line (Java-China-Japan Lijn, or JCJL), which moved cargo and passengers between colonial Indonesia, Southeast Asia, China and Japan and shared a ‘bilateral monopoly’ of economic and political power with the colonial government (Campo 2002: 188–9). Both were highly invested in maintaining the colonial status quo and, like the colonial administration, JCJL’s management took a strong stance against communism, enacting policies supportive of the government’s fight against political ideologies seen as threatening to both Dutch business *and* politics. JCJL played a role in these policing efforts, as maritime workers were specifically targeted for their anti-colonial affiliations. Additionally, Dutch consulates in Shanghai and other port cities worked together with British and French intelligence agencies to track the movements and activities of known or suspected Indonesian communists across transoceanic networks linking Russia, China and colonial Indonesia. Ultimately, this chapter reveals the ways imperialism and colonial control existed outside the geographic connections linking metropole and colony by uncovering networks used to control flows of communist ideology, activists and weapons from port cities across Asia to colonial Indonesia.¹ It also suggests that, in thinking about colonial rule – as many contributors to this volume have done for

examples across Asia – we need to acknowledge what I refer to as the ‘in-between spaces’ of empire.

Surveillance at sea

Ships played an important role in Dutch maritime surveillance both as sites of colonial policing and as vehicles enabling the spread of subversive agents and ideas across global maritime networks. The colonial administration regarded Dutch shipping companies as allies in their fight against subversive agents and anti-colonial ideology. Ships were used as imperial tools to help protect the archipelago from communist infiltration through policing the maritime contiguous zones surrounding the Indonesian archipelago. JCJL participated in the colonial surveillance project by working together with government authorities in colonial Indonesia and local port authorities in China to intercept suspicious passengers and confiscate smuggled communist propaganda and weapons. JCJL’s management took a strong stance against communism and the company’s policies supported the colonial administration. By instructing European crew members to police on-board spaces, shipping companies and ships themselves served as political agents across global maritime networks.

The ‘bilateral monopoly’ of power shared between JCJL and the colonial government meant both were highly invested in maintaining colonial peace and order. Shortly after the 1926–7 communist uprisings, JCJL stated: ‘it is our duty, so far as it is in our power, to fight against the Bolshevik danger in Netherlands India’ mainly due to ‘the recent outbreak of disturbances in Java and the west coast of Sumatra that bore a distinct Bolshevik character’; JCJL recognized that its ships were ‘the connecting link’ between colonial Indonesia and China and were thus extremely exposed to communist networks, making their ‘effectiveness in [fighting communism] especially difficult’ (Koninklijke Java-China Paketvaart Lijnen 1927).

JCJL considered its European captains and officers were the best defence against the spread of communism and directed all European crew members to act as the frontline in the fight against Bolshevik supporters and propaganda. Captains had to police both crew and passengers and were reminded that such on-board surveillance ‘must bear a very confidential nature’. Captains policed crew members for any subversive activities and were obligated to ‘[a]s much as possible watch and monitor the acts of the Chinese crew’, suspected as most likely to support communist ideology. Other European crew members were

expected to aid these policing efforts and captains were advised to 'keep discipline of the Chinese' crew members by using their European officer corps. Policing was carried out through the '[r]egular and if possible daily thorough searches of the entire ship, including the hold, for opium and "stowaways" and the keeping of daily accurate and complete records of such in the ship's logbook' (Koninklijke Java-China Paketvaart Lijnen 1927). Captains were also advised to withhold 'monetary advances to the crew, so that when leaving service, they are not in possession of as large a sum as possible', possibly aiding their subversive activities after disembarking (Koninklijke Rotterdamse Lloyd 1929).

In terms of passengers, JCJL instructed captains to 'keep a sharp eye on all passengers in all classes headed to Netherland East Indies ports'. Captains were specifically looking for communist sympathizers and any passengers espousing such ideas. If found, the captain was required to 'immediately telegraph the authorities at the destination port, so that they can follow the steps of these individuals' (Koninklijke Java-China Paketvaart Lijnen 1927). Captains were responsible for alerting government officials to the presence of suspicious passengers on board before docking in port. By doing so, captains either enabled terrestrial surveillance units to follow suspicious passengers once they disembarked or prepared law enforcement to make an arrest before or immediately after the suspicious passenger left the ship.

JCJL captains were also responsible for sharing intelligence with the colony's foreign surveillance collaborators. Captains worked together with the Dutch colonial authorities and foreign allies in a maritime surveillance project networked across Asia. Frederic Wakeman describes the collaboration between European colonial intelligence agencies as 'a kind of distant early warning system' alerting each other of dangerous elements across global maritime networks (1988: 412). Captains on individual ships worked together with port city nodes such as Singapore to warn colonial authorities across Asia about revolutionaries and radicals travelling through the Straits of Malacca. For example, Mahmud Sitjintijn, who also used the name Mohammad Jusuf, arrived at Singapore in February 1928 after living in Russia and attending Moscow's Communist University for Toilers of the Far East or 'KUTV' (Poeze et al. 1986: 251; McVey 2006: 484).² A communist and nationalist who formerly directed the nationalist organization Indonesian Union (Perhimpunan Indonesia), the Dutch worried that Sitjintijn planned on spreading communist ideas to colonial Indonesia and, therefore, 'requested collaboration with the Straits authorities for them to covertly observe him and signal [Dutch colonial authorities] with which ship he sails towards Java' (Consulaat Shanghai 1928c).

Foreign surveillance agencies shared their intelligence information with each other and sometimes also their surveillance tactics. This was particularly true within transoceanic maritime surveillance, where colonial surveillance could greatly benefit other colonies due to the fluid nature of maritime travel. To aid the management of subversive agents on its ships, JCJL worked together with the Dutch colonial authorities in Batavia (now Jakarta) to implement the most effective maritime policing tactics. For example, in 1928, Governor General A.C.D. de Graeff suggested the company meet with a British captain named Shelley who was an 'expert in the matter of subversive movements in these parts of the world'. All three parties – the colonial government, the shipping company and the expert consultant – would 'consider together with the colonial authorities the advisability and, on agreement, the means of cooperation between the Netherlands Indian and British services concerned' (Consulaat Shanghai 1928h).

Another important element in maritime surveillance were inspections of JCJL ships by foreign customs officials. Foreign customs agents acted as an additional set of 'eyes' helping captains and officers police on-board spaces, passengers and crew members. The Chinese Maritime Customs Service (CMCS) was a Chinese state agency that, until the late 1930s, consisted of an 'outdoor' branch largely staffed by Chinese workers who inspected the ships, and an 'indoor' executive branch staffed by Europeans. While the CMCS was an agent of the Chinese state, it had historically been managed by foreigners and used English as an official second language (Bickers 2008: 222). The racial composition of the CMCS further complicated Dutch shipping company interactions with Chinese customs officials, and inspections could lead to JCJL and its captains being fined for smuggled goods or people found on board.

CMCS officials, often accompanied by soldiers and police agents, searched for communists or communist propaganda on Dutch ships. JCJL captains were happy to cooperate in the search and questioning of individuals and their belongings before docking in Chinese port cities. For example, on SS *Zosma* Captain Kornelis Egbert Dik stated that '[t]wo persons in grey' came on board to ask 'if I had Bolsheviks on board, for, they said, that was especially what they wanted to look for' (Consulaat Shanghai 1927c). Inspectors told Captain Pieter Abbo on SS *Tjisalak* they intended to take with them 'three Chinese because they were in possession of Bolshevik literature' (Consulaat Shanghai 1927d). When one naval officer, three army officers and twenty armed soldiers boarded SS *Tjikini*, Captain J. Van Rees 'ordered all Chinese passengers on deck, whereupon they were interrogated and partially searched. Letters, already written and sealed, were opened and the contents examined.' The soldiers and officials ultimately left

the ship 'taking with them different visiting cards and a photo', while one of the officers in civilian clothes named Lou wrote a few lines in Chinese in the ship's logbook. Captain Van Rees understood the inscription to mean 'Russian communists sometimes come to Shanghai in Netherlands ships and these communists must be arrested' (Consulaat Shanghai 1927b).

Surveillance and policing of individuals went hand-in-hand with policing ships for communist propaganda and literature, but the fluidity of maritime networks complicated attempts to censor subversive literature at sea. Two changes in the colonial law facilitated press censorship in colonial Indonesia. The first were the 'hate-sowing laws' (*haatzaai artikelen*) that allowed the government to punish anyone creating 'a writing or illustration, in which feelings of hostility, hate or contempt toward the government of the Netherlands or the Netherlands Indies are awakened or encouraged'. It also punished those who 'intentionally awaken or encourage feelings of hostility, hate or contempt among or toward groups of the population of the Netherlands Indies' (McVey 2006: 454). The second was a new regulation passed in 1931 that gave the governor general the right to ban any periodical for up to a year without first needing permission from the courts. Victims had no right to appeal the governor general's decision (Maier 1991: 70). Together, these two laws made it easier for the Dutch colonial authorities to control publications within the colony, but most of the subversive publications found on ships came from abroad and therefore had to be intercepted by authorities to stop their entry into colonial Indonesia (Maier 1999: 247).

Censorship was a tool in the colonial surveillance project difficult to translate to maritime conditions. Propaganda moved rapidly across global maritime networks and connected colonial Indonesia with centres of communist activity in Russia, China, Europe and the United States. The shared goal of the colonial authorities and JCJL was to not only control subversive people on board, but also to 'stop the spread and publication of pestiferous lecture on our fleet and in our colonies'. JCJL was particularly concerned with literature expressing anti-Western sentiments 'inspired by Moscow' (Koninklijke Java-China Paketvaart Lijnen 1931). Soviet-inspired literature began entering Southeast Asia as early as 1921, including pamphlets such as 'Methods of Communist Teaching in Russia and China and the Russian Revolution of October 1917', only some of which were confiscated by colonial censors (Yong 1991: 630). JCJL also suspected persons responsible for the 1926–7 uprisings were 'no stranger to Russian/Chinese influences as far as their preparations were concerned' (Koninklijke Java-China Paketvaart Lijnen 1927). Research such as W.M.F. Mansvelt's 1928

study on 1,000 internees at Boven Digoel prison camp – all accused of participating in the 1926–7 communist uprisings – showed extremely high levels of literacy amongst the prisoners and may have fuelled Dutch fears over the possible influence foreign literature was having on communist underground circles in colonial Indonesia (Mansvelt 1928: 202–25). This threat of foreign communist propaganda infiltrating colonial Indonesia was heightened due to the transoceanic mobility of maritime passengers and workers who could easily penetrate the colony's fluid surrounds. The Dutch knew maritime actors were travelling between dozens of port cities – interacting with thousands of crew members, passengers and people ashore – and feared their goal was to distribute communist propaganda to as large an audience as possible in Southeast Asia.

European crew members put in charge of on-board surveillance were important political agents within the larger colonial project of protecting colonial Indonesia from dangerous foreign political influences. Captains were instructed to pay special attention for 'the reading of Bolshevik literature, making Bolshevik propaganda on board, or otherwise'. One example of subversive literature found on JCJL ships was an issue of the newspaper *Nanyang Monthly*, which was banned in colonial Indonesia due to its anti-Western propaganda. The issue found on board was a special edition on colonial Indonesia and painted a negative portrait of Governor General de Graeff and the colonial government as a whole. While using different English names to sidestep Dutch censors, for anyone who could read the Chinese characters the names remained brazenly similar. One article in the special edition entitled 'The Crisis of the Chinese in Netherlands India and the Regulations Against Them' spoke of the oppression of Indonesians and Chinese residents in the Dutch colonies (Koninklijke Java-China Paketvaart Lijnen 1927). JCJL was outraged that a paper with such a 'red character' was circulating on board and the company immediately alerted Dutch authorities (Koninklijke Java-China Paketvaart Lijnen 1931).

In addition to subversive people and literature, an additional target of Dutch maritime surveillance was the smuggling of weapons. Dutch shipping companies and colonial Indonesia's governors general together pledged a strong 'interest in all matters relating to the traffic of arms in Eastern waters' (Consulaat Shanghai 1926b). As a member of the League of Nations, the Netherlands abided by the St Germain Convention for the Control of the Trade in Arms and Ammunition (1919) and the Geneva Convention for the Supervision of the International Trade in Arms and Ammunition and in Implements of War (1925), both prohibiting arms from being in the hands of private persons or organizations. While the convention restricted weapons amongst 'barbarous' or 'semi-civilized

peoples', it did little to stop arms trafficking amongst what it called 'civilized states' (Stone 2000: 218).

Dutch authorities worried that foreign ships carrying illicit arms and ammunition were docking at Indonesian ports. Ships carrying illicit munitions were susceptible to explosions and fires, potentially costing lives and damaging local port infrastructure or other ships. For example, in 1926 the German SS *Adolph von Beyer* caught fire while docked at Sabang and was suspected of carrying illicit munitions. While investigators eventually found other causes for the fire, it was a warning to Dutch authorities to take extra precautions moving forward (Consulaat Shanghai 1926b). More alarming was the fact that weapons could be smuggled ashore from these foreign ships and make their way into the hands of communist, nationalist or anti-colonial activists. To counteract this threat, twenty-four-hour watch was placed on all suspicious vessels for the duration of their time in the colony's ports (Consulaat Shanghai 1926a). Further, individuals suspected of arms smuggling were kept under close observation while in port (Consulaat Shanghai n.d.).

One such suspected arms smuggler was Ethel Wiesenger, an Austrian-born resident of Shanghai who arrived in Tanjung Priok on the German-owned SS *Nordmark*. According to shared memoranda between British and Dutch intelligence agents, Wiesenger – together with her husband, who was a merchant in Shanghai principally trading in watches, clocks and chemicals – chartered European ships for the express purpose of smuggling arms from Germany, Britain, the United States and France to destinations in Japan and China. While in Tanjung Priok, Dutch agents covertly searched Wiesenger's cabin and copied telegram codes from a notebook left there. Other agents followed Wiesenger and the ship's captain, E. von Aswegen, while ashore, tracking the two so closely that 'from time to time it was even possible to hear their conversation'. Although the ship carried 417 cases of Mauser rifles and 6,304 cases of ammunition, Dutch authorities were unable to prove the illegality of the shipment. Unlike the British authorities who, due to a lack of proper paperwork, had already confiscated 300 cases of rifles while the ship docked at Durban, Dutch authorities allowed Wiesenger and the shipment of weapons to depart colonial Indonesia headed for a 'secret destination' believed to be in China or Japan (Consulaat Shanghai n.d.). Wiesenger's example reveals how easily smuggled weapons could make their way around the globe and, despite intra-imperial surveillance and policing efforts, the difficulties faced by authorities to halt such shipments.

In the face of such difficulties, Dutch intelligence worked together with British surveillance agencies to police the waters of Southeast Asia. British and Dutch

authorities were particularly suspicious of Russian ships smuggling arms to the Chinese communists. Since the nineteenth century, Russia's role as an arms buyer and imperialist actor helped increase the import of arms across Eurasia and – together with the ideological sympathies shared with Chinese communists – made for a particularly dangerous fleet within Asian waters (Grant 2007: 17). For example, in September 1925, British intelligence alerted Governor General D. Fock that the Russian ship *SS Deabrist* – en route from Constantinople to Sabang – was 'carrying arms and ammunitions for the communists in Canton.' This early-warning telegram allowed Dutch authorities to prepare for the ship's arrival and if the steamer called at any Indonesian port, the highest colonial authorities ordered they be warned before the ship docked (Consulaat Shanghai 1925a). Dutch and British customs officials were also alerted to other ships arriving with crew members appearing well off financially, a sign the crew may have 'shared to some extent in the profits of the shipment of munitions' (Consulaat Shanghai 1926a).

While some crew members profited from smuggling, others became informants for CMCS officials, police agents and military personnel who conducted investigations on board. In 1929, Chinese soldiers boarded the Dutch *SS Oudekerk* docked at Shanghai, where smuggled weapons were found 'with the help of an informant' crew member (Consulaat Shanghai n.d.). This informant alerted authorities to a large cache of weapons retrieved from under a water tank near the ship's left beam: twenty-three revolvers with 1,867 cartridges and twenty wooden cases; thirty-two Chiao Loh revolvers with 3,740 cartridges and thirty cases; two cartridge feeding machines; thirty pistol handles; thirty-six cartridge holders in a secret hold along with 185 Mauser pistols; one automatic pistol; and 19,522 cartridges of ammunition. The large number of weapons seized was not unusual, as many arms smugglers thought 'it was only remunerative to [smuggle arms] in large quantities, as expenses were too high on small consignments' (Consulaat Shanghai n.d.). The Dutch consulate in Shanghai blamed two Chinese crew members who 'during or immediately after the incident ... disappeared without leaving any trace so that it is to be supposed that with them the guilty persons have escaped'. Whether or not there existed any responsibility or negligence on the part of the captain or other Europeans on board was 'difficult to say, since no data [was] available'. However, the consulate reported the matter to 'competent authorities' which would carefully investigate the case (Consulaat Shanghai 1929a).

However, not everyone was so quick to place blame on the 'escaped' Chinese seamen. Wong Tsen-Hsing, Chief of the Public Safety Bureau in Shanghai, placed full blame on the Netherlands and expressed strong disdain towards what he saw

as an egregious case of Dutch maritime smuggling. He wrote to the mayor of the Shanghai Municipality:

[I]n the recent years, dangerous elements have been very active. People are deprived of peaceful living and disturbed by assassination and kidnapping. Communists in various parts of the country also join hands with loafers and massacre people and burn their properties. The military and police authorities spare no time in their efforts to wipe out the communists and the bandits. The root of all this lies with the smuggling of arms and ammunition by treacherous merchants with the cooperation of their foreign confederates. Now the Netherlands vessel SS *Oudekerk* smuggled such a large quantity of contrabands. If it were not for the search, the cargo would certainly have gone into the hands of communists and bandits, and the harm which will entail is more than that can be expressed in words . . . When communists and bandits get these supplies they would become as uncontrollable as tigers provided with wings.

Consulaat Shanghai 1929a

Wong further accused the Dutch ship of defying international law and claimed the Dutch 'dared to smuggle such a large quantity of revolvers and cartridges, hoping to make a profit out of it'. Even if true that the principal smugglers had escaped, Wong concluded the ship carrying the cargo should be detained and that 'even though the vessel has departed from this port, the company who control her naturally ought to be held responsible'. This stereotyping of Dutch interests as greedy, treacherous and conniving was an issue repeatedly faced by Dutch businesses during the interwar period and ship owners were often at the mercy of local and international media to present them in a good light. Chinese media outlets quickly saved the SS *Oudekerk* smuggling incident from becoming a bigger public relations issue by highlighting the outcome of the CMCS's 'Outdoor Staffs Club' investigation into the matter: the arms seized on board SS *Oudekerk* originated from Germany and were loaded onto the ship while docked at Hamburg (Consulaat Shanghai 1929b). The need to avoid such controversies grew after the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and the attack on Shanghai shortly thereafter, when European worries over arms trafficking increased.

Foreign consulates and maritime surveillance networks

The Dutch colonial authorities did not have the same policing and surveillance tools available in colonial Indonesia to help them exercise control over colonial subjects in Chinese port cities. In the geographic confines of the colony, the

colonial government was relatively well-informed about Indonesian political activities and officials had both police forces and Indonesian informants to provide them with comprehensive surveillance information (Locher-Scholten 2002: 95). Due to the colony's Political Information Service and General Investigation Service, the colonial government projected an image of omnipotent intelligence oversight amongst its colonial subjects in Indonesia (Poeze 1994: 240–1). The loss of these colonial tools abroad hindered the Dutch from projecting an authoritative presence in foreign port cities like Shanghai, where they were forced to rely on cooperation with other Shanghai-based forces, primarily the International Settlement's Shanghai Municipal Police (SMP) and the French Concession Police (FCP) (Stoler 1985b: 655). By the mid-1920s, the SMP had four different categories of detectives working for the International Settlement's Special Branch – British, Chinese, Japanese and White Russian – and both the SMP and the FCP mainly recruited Chinese detectives from the city's underworld (Wakeman 1995: 41). The FCP in particular relied on Shanghai's Green Gang for its police force and used gang members and other informants as detectives (Wakeman 1995: 30; Thomas 2008: 64–92; Martin 1995). These detectives' intelligence reports helped give the Dutch government similar surveillance 'eyes' (*mata-mata*) as those in colonial Indonesia (Locher-Scholten 2002: 95).

Further complicating the Dutch surveillance project in Shanghai was the nineteenth-century treaty-port system of extraterritoriality that, by the interwar period, had transformed Shanghai's French Concession and International Settlement into 'havens of dissent' (Yeh 1997: 378). Indonesian communists took advantage of this lax infrastructure beginning in the early 1920s when 'growing activities of Bolshevik agents in the Far East', including intercepted correspondence and the presence of Henk Sneevliet, Adolf Baars and other Dutch communists, made it clear that communists had chosen Shanghai as 'the Mid-Chinese Headquarters of their inter-regional organization' (Consulaat Shanghai 1922). In response, colonial Indonesia's Governor General D. Fock requested a 'reciprocal exchange of information' between colonial Indonesia and the SMP beginning in January 1922. This information focused primarily on tracking the movements, interaction and whereabouts of Indonesian communists, especially seamen whose mobility most threatened politics within the Dutch Empire.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s the International Settlement's Criminal Intelligence Department (CID) willingly shared surveillance information with the Dutch government and CID directors were pleased to 'place at [Dutch]

disposal all the information in possession of the CID (Consulaat Shanghai 1927a). The Shanghai Commissioner of Posts, who oversaw mail and telegraphs, was also willing to offer the registered names at any specific address and vice versa. Other Dutch consulates around Asia also shared surveillance information amongst themselves, agreeing to send telegrams and 'keep certain letters' regarding 'special cases' of interest (Consulaat Shanghai 1925b). For example, the Straits Settlements Police Special Branch kept its connection with Dutch colonial authorities 'close and cordial throughout the year' on all matters concerning international communist movements (Cheah 1992: 74). Anne Foster (1995: 335) shows that the French, British and Dutch secret police forces not only openly exchanged intelligence, but also frequently arrested and deported revolutionaries from each other's colonies. The United States, China and Japan were less willing to exchange secret police reports, although the United States was open to some communication with European security forces.

Colonial Indonesia's communist uprisings in 1926–7, in connection with other actions in China such as the May Thirtieth Movement and the Northern Expedition, made Dutch authorities fearful that communism was gaining ground against Western imperialism across Asia (Thomas 2005: 951). Shanghai surveillance became more intense and, in addition to the monitoring of well-known communist leaders, previously unremarkable maritime seamen became targets of Dutch surveillance. This increased surveillance continued even after 1927 when the Kuomintang leader Chiang Kai-shek massacred thousands of communists across China during the 'White Terror'. By the end of the year, about 85 per cent of Chinese Communist Party members had been killed and Chinese communism was driven underground. Nevertheless, Dutch officials were increasingly worried about the influence of Chinese communism across Asia (Share 2005: 615). A similar trend was happening in colonial Indonesia during the last years of the 1920s, when, despite the thorough suppression of communism following the 1926–7 uprisings, paranoia over subversive elements greatly increased (Stoler 1985b: 653).

Spurred by these heightened fears of communism, the Dutch surveillance project in Shanghai aimed to collect 'complete information concerning [all] natives from the Netherlands India in Shanghai' (Consulaat Shanghai 1933c). The Dutch consulate wanted to know the names of all Indonesian colonial subjects in Asia 'with a view to tracing [their] whereabouts, if possible' (Consulaat Shanghai 1928b). Both well-known communist leaders and previously unknown seamen had intelligence dossiers created in a Dutch attempt at total oversight of the colony's globally mobile colonial population. The Dutch colonial

administration believed anyone approaching its consulate in Shanghai, even those asking for financial, housing or employment assistance, was capable of providing information on others or might themselves be people of interest living under an alias.

The Dutch consulate's interactions with seamen in Shanghai were characterized by suspicion over their real identities, the truthfulness of their statements, and their underlying intentions for residing in Shanghai. Seamen coming into contact with surveillance authorities, whether by asking for support from a consulate, or being arrested by local police, were interviewed and – when possible – their identification documents and photographic headshots were copied and kept on file. Duplicates of these files were often made and sent to other policing agencies collaboratively monitoring subversive persons. This was the experience of an eighteen-year-old Sumatran named Saiman who approached the Dutch consulate in Shanghai on 8 November 1933 seeking financial assistance after his funds ran out and he had nowhere to stay. Dutch suspicions over Saiman stemmed from his history as a seaman. Saiman served on the Norwegian tanker SS *Soli* as a 'saloon and cabin boy' from August 1932 to April 1933. The chief officer on board remembered him as a 'good boy, willing and honest'. At the end of May 1933, he signed onto the Norwegian SS *Willy* in Shanghai and travelled to Australia, Singapore, Colombo, Sumatra, Singapore, Balikpapan, New Zealand and back to Shanghai as a stoker (charged with tending the steamship's boilers) at a salary of 25 kroners per month. In October 1933, Saiman was discharged at his own request, stating 'he did not wish to remain on board on account of the small remuneration for the heavy work he had to perform'. A statement by the ship's engineer claimed Saiman's work and conduct were satisfactory. After being discharged in Shanghai, Saiman received \$27 (Mexican silver dollars)³ and went to live at Ward Road, where he rented a room for two weeks at \$5 (Mexican silver dollars) per week. He then stayed with a Norwegian seaman named Hoken at Kung Ping Road for another week, but after Hoken left a few days later he had nowhere to stay and all his money was spent. Saiman slept somewhere in the Wayside District for one night together with a seaman from Colombo named Fakir before arriving at the Dutch consulate to ask for financial assistance.

Saiman was interrogated over his knowledge of other colonial subjects in Shanghai before receiving \$2.50 (Mexican silver dollars) to pay for a room through to the end of the month and some additional pocket money to purchase food. The Dutch consulate suspected Saiman might shed light on the community of itinerant Indonesian maritime workers in Shanghai and hoped to gain more

information over the community of globally mobile seamen. An eyebrow was raised at Saiman's 'well dressed' friend Eglin, who accompanied him to the consulate and was in possession of Saiman's passport. The dossier noted Eglin spoke English 'rather well' (Consulaat Shanghai 1933c). Consulate employees made numerous copies of Saiman's passport and sent copies to the SMP, the FCP and the head of Shanghai's British Secret Intelligence Service, Harry Steptoe (Aldrich 1998: 183–4). In exchange for a small amount of financial support, Saiman had a surveillance report registered with Dutch, French and British intelligence agencies in Shanghai, complete with his facsimiled headshot (Consulaat Shanghai 1933c).

Amat bin Amat was also interrogated when he approached Shanghai's Dutch consulate for financial aid. Born at Tanjung Pura, Langkat, Sumatra, fifty-five-year-old Amat approached the consulate in September 1933 after the friend caring for him disappeared and left him 'stranded' in Shanghai. He sought the consulate's help in purchasing a return ticket to Hong Kong. Amat had worked most recently as a cook on a steamer between Singapore and Penang for six months, after which he paid his own passage to Hong Kong and again signed on for a six-month stint as a cook on the Japanese SS *Taiku Haru*. Amat claimed he was '[f]orced to join the strike of the Chinese crew' on the Japanese ship, after which he stayed at a boarding house in Hong Kong called 'Wantsjai' owned by a man named Badjo who spoke Malay. After three months, his money ran short and he roamed from one place to another. He had already visited the Netherlands Consulate-General in Hong Kong once before, where he received \$1 (Mexican silver dollars) in financial assistance.

Despite the Dutch consulate's remarks that Amat looked 'old and ragged [like] a man who is returning to his native land to die', he was considered a suspicious person due to his participation in the Chinese strike and because his tuberculosis x-rays from the Municipal Police Hospital listed him under the name of Ahmath, age forty-three. This was enough discrepancy for the consulate to interrogate him in the hopes of finding out if Amat was actually the man he claimed to be. Amat was questioned over who he knew, where they lived, who they lived with, where these acquaintances had travelled in the past, and the reasons behind their travels. Amat's letter of introduction to the consulate was written for him by a Sumatran named Baharuddin Saleh, the former chairman of Padang Pandjang's Indonesian Communist Party branch, who had been imprisoned for sedition in 1926 before moving to Bandung to continue his political work (McVey 2006: 484). The consulate proceeded to compare Amat's handwriting to samples of those by wanted or suspected Indonesian communists already on file. Consulate

workers questioned his knowledge of other Indonesians living in Shanghai and Hong Kong. Amat was shown various photographs of Javanese and Malayan subjects previously or currently residing in Shanghai, but he failed to recognize any of them. Despite his seemingly destitute state, Amat was still considered valuable to Dutch surveillance efforts and the consulate conjectured that any 'information given concerning others may be of assistance in locating [Netherlands East] Indian revolutionaries hiding in Shanghai'. After the questioning was over, he was given \$2 (Mexican silver dollars) to pay his hotel bill and purchase a ticket to Hong Kong on a steamer leaving the same evening (Consulaat Shanghai 1933b).

Other seamen who came to the consulate for financial assistance were suspected of being wanted communist activists using aliases to hide their true identity. A man named Amat bin Ali, claiming to be twenty-seven years old and born in Tanjung Priok, came to the Dutch consulate in Shanghai for financial aid in June 1933. Ali was asked to relate his life history in detail. After coming to Singapore at the age of fifteen or sixteen to work for his uncle, he served as a ship's 'boy' for six months with the Dutch shipping giant Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij and then became a seaman making numerous trips to the United States with the Holland America Line. He also worked on the Irish SS *City of Bremen* travelling between Singapore and Rotterdam. He was last engaged on the SS *Highland Bank* travelling from Singapore to London, Japan, Australia and Hong Kong, where he lost his position when the Southeast Asian crew was exchanged for a Chinese crew.⁴ Most of his compatriots returned to Singapore, but he thought it might be easier to find employment in Shanghai and arrived three or four months prior to coming to the consulate with no place to stay. Amat bin Ali claimed not to know anyone in Shanghai 'except Sadri, whom I met once [but] I cannot stay with Sadri because his place is too small'.

The consulate believed Amat bin Ali was using an alias to hide his true identity as a communist agitator previously exiled from colonial Indonesia. The only papers he produced to consular employees were 'pawn tickets for a total value of not yet \$3' and he had nothing else proving he was a Dutch colonial subject. He spoke 'Riouw [Riau]-Lingga Malay, the language spoken in Deli and Singapore. He does not speak any Javanese, neither the typical Javanese Malay language. To others he stated to be the son of a Javanese father and a mother from Manado (Celebes). In appearance, he certainly does not look like a native of Java.' To make matters worse, Amat bin Ali refused to stay at the boarding house for which the consulate offered him a voucher, finding it not to his liking and

requesting to stay elsewhere. When told the substitution would be impossible, he unsuccessfully asked for the cash instead (Consulaat Shanghai 1933a).

After looking through surveillance files, Consul Jan van den Berg suspected Amat bin Ali was in fact Mohammed Ali, a leader of the communist uprisings at Tangerang in October 1926. Mohammed Ali had escaped the mass arrests by fleeing to Singapore and later attended a training period in the Soviet Union before returning to Southeast Asia. Shortly after his arrest in Singapore on 16 March 1930 – together with a group of other Indonesian communists in the city – Amat bin Ali was released from jail and served as a seaman on a ship sailing between Pekanbaru and Singapore under the name Magid Bin Hamid. While at sea, he was suspected of being ‘in charge of the compilation and distribution of pamphlets of an inflammatory nature, printed in the Malay language on behalf of the Communist Society “Seamen’s Union” *Sarikat Boeroek Laoet*’ (McVey 2006: 202). Despite being interrogated about his history and relationship to other Indonesians in Shanghai, Amat bin Ali denied being Mohammed Ali, stating simply ‘[i]n Hong Kong I called myself Amat bin Amat, here I sometimes use the name Ali’. His true identity was never discovered, but his surveillance dossier was added to Dutch intelligence reports as well as those of the SMP. His file included a description of the missing top of his left middle finger – lost to an accident at sea five years earlier – that would make it easier for police to identify him in the future. Five months later, Amat Bin Ali still appeared to be in Shanghai, and the consulate received a complaint from the local JCJL branch office – Amat bin Ali’s former employer – about the ‘objectionable manner in which he asked for money there a short while ago’ (Consulaat Shanghai 1933c).

Discovering the true identities of Indonesian seamen in Shanghai was difficult due to the nature of maritime communities. Seamen in Shanghai often had networks of friends who could aid them with money, accommodation and employment. For seamen involved in communist politics, clandestine political networks could also provide assistance. Patchy access to these communities further hampered colonial surveillance and kept the Dutch government in the dark over many activities of globally mobile Indonesian seamen. Making things more difficult was the fact that only seamen with no other options approached government officials for help.

This murky knowledge of seamen in Shanghai also led to mistakes being made by the Dutch when attempting to apprehend wanted communists. For example, Johannes Waworuntu, an active communist in colonial Indonesia since the early days of the Indies Social Democratic Association (*Indische Sociaal-Democratische Vereeniging*), called at Shanghai’s Dutch consulate in November

1927 'without papers or funds' and applied for assistance (Consulaat Shanghai 1928d). He claimed to be born around 1897 in Manado and was temporarily lodged in a seamen's home and working at the Municipal Shelter. The consulate tried to obtain a new passport for him from the Resident of Manado and, if unsuccessful, planned to 'provide funds from the State to repatriate him' (Consulaat Shanghai 1928a). Before instructions were received from Java about his repatriation, Waworuntu left Shanghai on 12 December on the Danish SS *Kina*, working as a stoker.

The Dutch consulate realized only in May 1928 that Waworuntu was a wanted communist activist, but by that time he was no longer in Shanghai. The consulate inquired at the places he had stayed six months prior, but 'none of the inmates or the manager of that place know anything about him'. It also found '[n]o trace of his having been in the Work Shelter that can be found and if he did obtain work there as stated in a letter from the Netherlands Consulate-General it must have been under an assumed name'. In the meantime, it was ascertained from local agents of the East Asiatic Company that Waworuntu had been voluntarily discharged from the SS *Kina* upon arrival in Shanghai on 25 January 1928 (Consulaat Shanghai 1928c). With much dismay, the consulate discovered the ship had stopped in Vladivostok with Waworuntu on board (Consulaat Shanghai 1928c). Although he was never found in Shanghai, Waworuntu was eventually apprehended upon his return to colonial Indonesia and immediately interned by the police (McVey 2006: 201).

Additionally, the International Settlement's CID began forwarding police reports to the Dutch consulate specifically 'about certain people from Java who went to Russia to become better acquainted with Soviet methods' (Consulaat Shanghai 1928g). For example, Lim Khe-dok (alias Lim Kek-dok), a former student in Moscow who was previously active in the Fujian Provincial Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and served as editor of the communist publication *Red Flag*, was arrested in September 1933 by the Shanghai Public Safety Bureau. He was subsequently escorted to Nanjing and sentenced to life imprisonment by a military court. The Dutch consulate was immediately notified of his arrest, as government officials in Batavia had previously sent them a photograph of a wanted communist activist who had fled colonial Indonesia. The arrested man and the image in the photograph were identical (Consulaat Shanghai 1934).

Anti-communist surveillance in Asia was part of a larger project to establish a boundary protecting the Dutch colony from Comintern infiltration. Shanghai had strong connections with Russia through the 'Red Underground

Communication Line, a clandestine network of Chinese communists forming a transportation route between Shanghai, Hong Kong and the central Soviet region, and largely used by those fleeing purges in China (Chan Lau 1999: 192–203). Shanghai also served as the Comintern's Far Eastern Bureau, which oversaw and was responsible for the direction of communism across Asia. It was also the centre for the Comintern's International Communications, which handled money, communications and logistics for communist agents (Fowler 2007: 5). Despite these very concrete connections between the Comintern and Shanghai, Dutch fears over the Comintern's influence on Asia were more powerful than actual evidence of such connections. Additionally, Dutch officials may have been quick to focus on Russian involvement in their colonies because, rather than confronting Dutch imperialism's fundamental flaws, it was less threatening to presume that dangerous ideologies and activists were caused by foreign influences entering the colony from abroad (Thomas 2005: 935). Nevertheless, the Dutch administration feared Comintern organizational models were being used by anti-colonialists in colonial Indonesia. While the Dutch consulate in Shanghai worked together with British and French intelligence agencies to track the movements and activities of known or suspected Indonesian communists across transoceanic networks linking Russia, China and colonial Indonesia, communist supporters routinely subverted these controls and were able to build networks connecting Indonesian communists with the Comintern and other organizations around the globe.

Conclusion

While oceans are often seen as conduits between terrestrial locales – where the most important dynamics of empire are assumed to transpire – terrestrial and oceanic worlds were mutually dependent on each other to transport goods, people and information required to ensure the logistical integrity and profitability of the imperial project. As the oceanic world became more congested, increasingly contentious and less controllable during the 1920s and 1930s, exchanges facilitated across oceanic networks helped destabilize colonial power and compelled the Dutch Empire to extend its influence beyond Southeast Asia through transoceanic projects of surveillance, policing and control. The imperial system was at its most vulnerable in the oceanic world, which provided opportunities for anti-colonialists to exploit Dutch vulnerabilities in ways more difficult to achieve in the terrestrial world. The maritime world, therefore,

exposed the Dutch Empire's fragility in maintaining hegemony both within colonial Indonesia and abroad. Oceanic empire was a fundamental part of modern imperialism. Essential in unravelling the transnational scope of the Dutch Empire during the 1920s and 1930s is understanding that Dutch imperialism did not merely exist within the spaces of metropole and colony but rather was a transoceanic and transnational project spanning the globe. Revealing how this oceanic empire functioned and the ways it both supported and subverted terrestrial empire presents a more complex picture of not only the Dutch Empire but *all* empires during the early twentieth century.

Investigating global maritime networks, including seamen and ships, exposes how Dutch imperialism travelled beyond the borders of the Indonesian archipelago and the ways in which anti-colonialism penetrated its watery surrounds. Global maritime networks enabled exchanges of communist ideology, activists and weapons between port cities across Asia. With ships serving as active sites of colonial policing and surveillance, shipping companies themselves became political agents active in the fight against anti-colonialism. Companies such as JCJL played a role in these policing efforts, as maritime workers were specifically targeted for their anti-colonial affiliations. The company was asked by the colonial administration to patrol ships for subversive people, anti-colonial propaganda and smuggled armaments, and it willingly collaborated with the colonial administration. The Dutch consulate in Shanghai worked together with British and French intelligence agencies to track the movements and activities of known or suspected Indonesian communists across transoceanic networks linking Russia, China and colonial Indonesia. Ultimately, seafarers exercised a dangerous mobility in the eyes of Dutch authorities, fostering political networks targeting the same colonial expansion oceanic connections had helped to create.

This chapter contributes to a growing body of historical research seeking to decolonize the Dutch colonial past and uses a transoceanic lens to critically re-evaluate the late colonial period. Oceanic de-colonization provides historians with a powerful tool in re-conceptualizing modern empires by interrogating archival materials 'against the grain' of terrestrial norms. First, the oceanic world complicates established metropole-colony relationships by moving the metropole to the margin and instead focusing on the 'inter-constitutive networks' connecting colonial Indonesia with littoral peripheries around the globe (Banivanua-Mar 2014: 10). Second, incorporating trans-oceanic empire into the historiography of the twentieth century – and into debates about the spatial history of colonialism and occupation – exposes a myriad of global actors who

engaged with and were influenced by the Dutch Empire, helping provide a voice for the 'other' hidden within colonial archives. Third, transoceanic analyses require historians to complicate colonial and business archives by challenging the narratives that hegemonic colonial institutions tell about themselves and exposing everyday acts of resistance within systems of oppression and occupation. Incorporating transoceanic empires into twentieth-century historiography illuminates both the regulatory aspects of terrestrial worlds and transgressive aspects of oceanic worlds – ultimately exposing the multifaceted, chaotic and complex ways these worlds overlapped, mingled and collided.

Notes

- 1 For a broader examination of issues discussed in this chapter, see Alexanderson 2019.
- 2 The Communist University for Toilers of the Far East (Kommunistischeskiĭ universitet trudiashchikhsĭã Vostoka or KUTV) was first suggested by Dutch communist Henk Sneevliet (also known as Maring) at the second Comintern Congress in 1920 and was formally established in Moscow in 1921 by Soviet government decree. The KUTV was intended to provide communist training for activists to use in their own nations' political movements.
- 3 The Mexican silver dollar was still used in Shanghai in this period.
- 4 The use of ethnically homogenous crews was common practice for Dutch shipping companies during the interwar period and continues to be practised in today's global shipping industry.

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Hydroponic Imperialism: Race, Hygiene and Agro-Technology in Occupied Japan, 1945–60¹

Abhishek Nanavati

Introduction

Following Japan's surrender at the end of the Second World War, US occupation forces attempted to create their own biosphere – an ideal environment that was tuned to a 'modern American' lifestyle – within Japan. The US military tried to create a hermetically-sealed food production and supply system that would guarantee hygienic and nutritious produce suiting the occupiers' standards and bodies.² The challenge of supplying the necessary nutrition for the healthy development of American forces and their families was shaped by anxiety over Japanese soil. Medical officers worried that the historical use of 'night soil' – treated human waste used to fertilize crops – had contaminated the archipelago. The US Army used cutting-edge hydroponic technology to overcome perceived environmental barriers, produce familiar vegetables and provide them to its growing forces. Through their desire to standardize vegetable production and protect the health of occupying personnel, they developed something radical: a soilless farm theoretically operable anywhere in the world. At the same time, the US military's efforts to create occupied spaces were deeply intertwined with ideas of racial hygiene, and colonial ideas of environmental control and the desirability of Western crops, as well as the use of Japanese soil as a stage for technological experimentation.

This chapter examines the dynamics of public hygiene as it relates to space in occupied Japan. It argues that something as simple as food production relied on ideas of race and race making. There was a hygienic hierarchy in the territories occupied by the US military. While the racial issue I address in this chapter focuses on the military's construction of a 'Japanese-ness', and more broadly, an 'Asian-ness', it was being viewed by Americans in opposition to whiteness. When

military commanders and medical officers, mostly white, conceived of a hygienic body, they thought of a white body – though they may have thought of it as an ‘American’ body. Moreover, American leaders referred to the country as an ‘alloyed but firmly Anglo-Saxon Christian society’ (Perry 1980: 170). Thus, when the military thought of ideal hygienic practices and diet, they thought of what came through middle- to upper-middle class Anglo-Saxon Christian traditions. They did not think of collard greens and corn dumplings; they thought of roast beef and gravy or scalloped cabbage (Office of the Quartermaster Military Planning Division 1946: 16).

This chapter combines military and environmental history with the history of technology to explore how the military-base-as-colonial-outpost was built on the fear of occupied land, where soil and terrain were read as extensions of the colonized subject (Gillem 2007; Lutz 2009; Höhn and Moon 2010). By focusing on US forces in Japan’s ecological landscape we can see how ideas of race and natural environment affected the development of military settlements, as well as the development of agro-technology in occupied Japan.

Military families, race and space in occupied Japan

While the occupation of Japan was chiefly an American endeavour, troops from several states, including Australia and New Zealand, also occupied bases in Japan. Their numbers peaked in early 1946, and by 1950 most Allied soldiers departed Japanese soil leaving around 115,000 US soldiers. Following the outbreak of hostilities in Korea in 1950, American forces in the region grew quickly, and by the time that the San Francisco Peace Treaty went into effect in April 1952, 260,000 soldiers were stationed across Japan as thousands more transited on their way to and from the front line in Korea (Takemae 2003: 126).

In addition to thousands of US military and civilian personnel, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) also provided for increasing numbers of military dependents – spouses and children accompanying servicemen. In 1946, the US government officially sanctioned family members to join military personnel stationed abroad (Alvah 2007: 2). Within the first six months of the occupation, 700 families joined soldiers in Japan; by 1950 that number had increased to 14,800 (Takemae 2002: 75; General Headquarters (GHQ), Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers and Far East Command (FECOM) 1950: 107).

The presence of service members' families played an important role in the expansion of the American empire overseas. Military wives and children, in unofficial capacities, facilitated occupation efforts and participated in Cold War international relations through their interactions with local residents. This 'unofficial' arm of the US military fostered international co-operation and cultural exchanges and, just as importantly, showed the supposed benefits of American life to the Japanese people and the wider Cold War world (Alvah 2007: 39–40). Dependents also posed a challenge: occupation authorities had to protect the health, morale and bodies of American soldiers as well as American women and children.

The building of an occupation biosphere was in part a project to provide military forces and families with a comfortable, sanitary and familiar way of life. Such a way of life was built on a system of differentiation steeped in racial anxiety. It is important here to understand the racialized foundation of the US military's occupation of Japan. In 1945, the US military was still segregated, and while Black personnel enjoyed many of the same privileges as their white counterparts, they generally had to live and work in their own enclaves (Green 2010). Moreover, they still faced discrimination by white soldiers and much harsher treatment from white officers. The US military was also trying to re-define where Japanese subjects fitted into its segregated racial global order while dismantling a former multi-ethnic Japanese empire (Shibusawa 2006). Military officials believed that each individual had a 'proper national territory', and forcibly sorted and moved people according to the military's understanding of their race or origin (Watt 2009). The United States was a crucial partner in the forced displacement of former Korean and Chinese imperial subjects to actualize the belief that Japan was an ethnically homogenous nation. This is not to say that the US military created the idea of Japanese 'purity' or uniqueness, but rather that the US military, Japanese government, humanitarian aid groups, intellectuals and ordinary people colluded to make that idea a reality (Oguma 2002; Morris-Suzuki 2007). These histories collectively show the complex, transnational, gendered and racialized nature of occupied spaces during the process of decolonization in Asia following the end of the Second World War.

In occupied Japan, Okinawa and Korea, the US military attempted to consolidate its own biosphere. This was to be a space that met the ideal hygienic and environmental standards that experts felt were attuned to the bodies of US military personnel. It also produced categories of difference that appeared to be based on medical science. When justifying the use of hydroponic technology, for example, the military used the language and science of hygiene

to hierarchically differentiate between non-American (unhygienic) and American (hygienic), and between 'non-white' and 'white'. While race was crucial to the development of hydroponic technology, the language of hygienic soil or space – or lack thereof – was a more palatable alternative to establish a hierarchical order while straddling the divide between occupier and saviour, or hegemon and ally.

The US military claimed the authority of scientific 'truth' to (re-)code occupied space as unhygienic. Their (re-)coding of space highlighted the supposed backward nature of both Japanese space and Japanese people. However, Japanese hygienists and officials themselves had a historical understanding of the risk of human faeces as a vector for disease. While night soil had been a valuable resource from the late Tokugawa period (1603–1867) through to the twentieth century, people were aware that unprocessed night soil could transmit gastrointestinal parasites between humans, and that a breakdown in collection services could lead to a foul-smelling Petri dish for diseases such as dysentery or cholera (Hoshino 2008: 194). Local governments had developed an infrastructure to manage this valuable resource. In the early 1900s, Tokyo Police Department regulations included how night soil was to be handled: it could only be transported in sealed buckets, and the containers could not be left out under the heat of the sun (*Kindai toshi no eisei kankyō, Tōkyō-hen* 2009).

Against the benchmark of a post-Second World War urban middle-class white ideal, Japanese agricultural practices were deemed backward and therefore a sign of medical and even civilizational deficiency. Occupied space thus also functioned as an abstraction through which to make a case for US stewardship. The rhetoric of deficiency, in hygiene and democracy, drew on a colonial logic of space: the military's role was to rehabilitate the unhygienic geography and people of their newly acquired territory. The maintenance of those spatial and racial categories relied on fear of medical threats and anxieties of white vulnerability vis-à-vis occupied people. This threat allowed the US military to gather considerable resources needed to construct cutting-edge technologies, such as hydroponic farms.

Hydroponics in the US military

Making Japanese soil safe to provide food for occupying forces and their families required creating a new sealed environment. In 1946, the General Headquarters

(GHQ) appropriated the former Imperial Air Force base in Chōfu-shi near Tokyo, and a similar area near Ōtsu-shi near Kyoto, to establish hydroponic farming depots. The soilless farms – 55 acres (22.25 hectares) and 25 acres (10.11 hectares) respectively – supplied personnel and families with ‘morale-building’ tomatoes, lettuce, radishes, Chinese cabbage, cucumbers, onions and spinach. By 1951, these hydroponic farming depots produced almost 5 million pounds (2,267,962 kilograms) of ‘salad-type vegetables’ for 153,000 individuals (Edwards 1949a; Edwards 1949b; Boardman 1962).

In its most simple form, hydroponic farming is the growing of plants without soil. Records of early civilizations in Mesopotamia, Mesoamerica, northeast Asia and North Africa describe the growing of plants in this fashion. Over the subsequent centuries, experts established that plants would grow in insoluble aggregates, such as gravel, when provided with appropriate chemical solutions (Hershey 1991). By the twentieth century, the focus on industrialized farming techniques stimulated interest in large-scale commercial applications of soilless agriculture. The US greenhouse industry was particularly interested in the possibilities of this new ‘nutriculture’. Nutriculture, a portmanteau word combining ‘nutrient’ and ‘culture’, refers to a hydroponic process whereby plants are grown in a sterilized neutral medium, such as gravel, and irrigated with solutions of nutrient chemicals. Between 1925 and 1935, the hydroponic industry struggled with high costs and long-term difficulties with soil structure, fertility and pests. While experts tried to scale laboratory techniques of nutriculture to meet an industrial farm’s needs, because of its chemical-, labour- and capital-intensive characteristics large-scale hydroponic farming remained out of reach (Resh 2013: 2).

One of the first economically viable applications was undertaken by William Frederick Gericke at the University of California during the 1930s. He named his backyard system of liquid-filled tar-coated redwood tanks ‘hydroponics’ – derived from the two Greek words *hydro* (water) and *ponos* (labour) (Resh 2013: 1–2). Large corporations took note. In 1938, Pan American Airways contracted Gericke to help build a hydroponic garden on its waypoint in the North Pacific, Wake Island’s Airways Inn. The sandy atoll suffered from a lack of arable soil and water. Greike’s controlled environment in tank gardens required approximately 10 per cent of the water needed for traditional soil farming and none of the soil. The gardens provided such a surplus of endives they began air freighting salad leaves to Midway Island (Taylor 1939: 14–15).

The Army Air Force (AAF) was also experimenting with nutriculture crops in the 1940s. It recognized the negative effect that a diet of canned rations and

dehydrated vegetables had on the morale and health of soldiers. The AAF was particularly interested in how fresh vegetables could influence the healing of injured soldiers. One of the first large-scale military nutriculture stations was built near the Pratt General Hospital in Coral Gables, Florida, as a part of the AAF rehabilitation programme (Quartermaster General 1946). For the military, salads were tied to the mental and physical wellbeing of soldiers, to the faster return of injured personnel to the front, and to the improved performance of the soldier on the battlefield.

The army's hydroponics manual states that independent farming stations were feasible only for troops at small, remote installations with limited arable land and supply prospects. The Pacific theatre fit these conditions. Supplying troops at installations on distant islands with fresh produce was challenging, if not impossible. The military was not enthusiastic about local soil-grown vegetables. In part, this was due to the acidic nature of soil on coral atolls, which made it difficult to successfully cultivate crops. The military also assumed that soil in these areas was 'infected with amoeba.' If any vegetables were, against all odds, grown and harvested, the army required that they be cooked (Boardman 1962: 3; Allied Operational and Occupation Headquarters 1945). The AAF proposed the establishment of hydroponic gardens alongside forces' isolated long-term installations as a solution. Researchers thought that a hydroponic farming process could guarantee an hygienic end product (War Department 1946). The AAF, however, found it difficult to find a hydroponic method that was efficient, cheap and reliable.

The initial method of hydroponics used sealed beds in which plants were suspended in a mechanically aerated nutrient solution. This 'water culture' was time-consuming and materially intensive. Moreover, the mechanics of circulating the solution proved expensive. Maintaining the balance of oxygen and nutrients also required the constant attention of well-trained personnel. The AAF thus found it unsuitable for their purposes. The second experimental method relied on a fine mineral aggregate. This 'sand culture' was relatively easy to set up, as beds did not need to be waterproof and plants could support themselves through their own root structure, unlike the previous water-culture. The main drawback of this method was that it required skilled labour to maintain uniform irrigation. Uneven watering led to nutrient-starved plants, which adversely affected yield and quality of produce. In addition, the leftover water and chemicals that plants did not absorb were wasted as they filtered into the ground. This was unacceptable for the military's needs.

The AAF eventually decided upon a third technique – the sub-irrigation method. In this process, beds were arranged in a simple terrace system. The first tier was flooded from an above-ground tank. When the nutrient solution reached the required level, a valve allowed the solution to drain into the next section where the process was repeated. After the lowest tier, the solution drained into a sump-tank (a below-ground, gravity-fed tank) where it was analysed by a technician, replenished with the necessary balance of water and chemicals, and then pumped back to the first tank.

The sub-irrigation method used fewer labour hours, produced relatively more uniform results and required fewer high-skilled supervisors. Moreover, as a closed system it was the most economically efficient at providing seedlings with nutrient chemicals (Boardman 1962). The waterproof beds facilitated a uniform spread of fertilizer and prevented nutrients seeping into the surrounding soil. The main nutrient loss was through evaporation. In addition, army medical officers believed that this method eliminated the danger of soil-borne diseases and provided ‘truly’ hygienic and ‘chemically pure’ vegetables (Pitt 1950).

A 1945 ‘Survey of Requirements for Hydroponics in Pacific Ocean Areas and Far East’ traces the initial spread of soilless farming through the military. The first overseas nutriculture facility was established at Ascension Island in the Atlantic. It cost \$44,000 to build this 1-acre (4,046 square metres) facility. In its first year, the garden produced 94,000 pounds (42,638 kilograms) of salad vegetables. While this seems high, year-round farming, higher plant density, specifically bred seed varieties, and the efficient use of fertilizer allowed for significant crop yields. With added protection from adverse temperatures and weather conditions, farms could see ‘4–10 times increase in yields obtained by soilless culture outdoors over conventional soil-grown conditions’ (Resh 2013: 6).

The next similar-sized installation was built at Iwo Jima in the Pacific for \$11,250. In the same year, the AAF also organized multiple survey trips by teams of military officers and civilian scientists across Africa, the Caribbean, as well as further into the Pacific. Small-scale stations were built in British Guiana (Atkinson Field) and on Coconut Island (or Moku o Lo‘e), near O‘ahu in Hawai‘i. By 1946, the military had come to recognize the potential for the technology across all theatres. Because of decreased appropriations and manpower, however, that same year the AAF turned over responsibility to the Quartermaster General (QMG) (Quartermaster General 1947). Their experiment had become a crucial project for the US military.

Building the biowall: public hygiene, governmentality and imperialism

The prohibitive costs of construction made opening new gardens a difficult proposition. The decision to create two of the largest hydroponic facilities in the world in occupied Japan was a radical undertaking – even if the army valued fresh vegetables for their effect on the minds and bodies of American soldiers. Their construction was facilitated by the US military's perspective of a hygienically deficient Japan as well as the intertwined histories of empire and preventive healthcare.

The US military's use of hygiene is part of a story of state expansion into private realms of diet, medicine, water and housing that accelerated in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is also a story of class conflict and imperialism, as violent and coercive medical practices carried out in the name of modern health cut across national boundaries. As European governments, physicians, lawyers, clergy and other elites struggled to manage 'the barbarian within', colonial administrations provided country-sized laboratories for studying local populations, poverty and disease (Stoler 1995). Colonial elites used the perception of biomedical deficiencies to differentiate the 'West' from the 'Orient'. In doing so, they perceived Indigenous peoples and lands as diseased objects and pathogenic environments which in turn justified their use of coercive techniques (Arnold 1993). In many of the places that are discussed in other chapters in this volume – from British India to the colonial Philippines – Europeans and Americans embraced the idea that local people were inherently lacking when compared with Western-defined standards of health, and that white bodies were at greater risk in supposedly diseased colonial environments.

Entrenched beliefs in racial and geographical pathologies were compounded by microbiological principles. The laboratory revolution and advances in medical microscope technology at the turn of the nineteenth century brought about a sea-change in the understanding of the relationship between disease, environment and human bodies. The ability to visually prove the existence of disease-causing agents dismantled the idea of medically-deficient environs, while re-conceptualizing people as carriers of disease (Cunningham and Williams 1992; Lei 2014). In British and American colonies, the rise in germ theory strengthened the assumption that 'native' bodies were reservoirs of dirt and disease, and facilitated more rigorous surveillance as well as control of personal conduct and social interaction with local people to limit disease transmission (Harrison 1999: 22; Anderson 2006: 75). Under the biomedical

gaze, people – particularly poor and colonized people – did not appear as recognizable individuals or families, but as categories and objects in need of Western intervention. Medicine was thus a tool of imperialism (Lei 2010: 40–3).

The US military's understanding of occupied space drew on the experience of other colonial empires and its own colonization of the Philippines. In 1899, the Ninth US Cavalry's Captain George W. Read translated Ferdinand Burot and Maximilien Albert Legrand's *Les Troupes Coloniales* (1897) for the International Military Series by Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur L. Wagner, a prominent military instructor and scholar. 'Anything good or bad for a French soldier,' Read argued, 'will be beneficial or injurious to an American soldier serving under like conditions' (Burot and Legrand 1899). Publication of *The Hygiene of the Soldier in the Tropics* (1899) reflected a recognition of the heavy losses the environment and lack of hygiene wrought on camps behind the front lines during the Spanish-American War (1898). The hygiene manual drew on miasma theory – the outdated medical theory that held that diseases spread through noxious 'bad air' – warning of the febrile conditions of humid places, for 'in the tropics the soldier is always in campaign; if not against the enemy, at least against the climate'. At the same time, it explained that the soil was a 'receptacle of germs' which provoked endemic diseases such as paludism (malaria) (Burot and Legrand 1899: 7–9).

Colonial officials incorporated new germ theory to articulate the dangers posed by Filipino spaces and bodies. US sanitary officers in the colonial Philippines believed that the tropical environment was covered with a 'thin film of germs' in need of disinfection (Anderson 1995: 641). Much of this, white American health officers argued, was a result of local people's 'reckless' defecation. They warned Filipinos that they were poisoning the environment and thus posed a danger to American bodies. Filipino use of night soil as a fertilizer to increase crop yields had contaminated soil with 'mixed cultures of amoebae, cholera bacilli and other pathogens' (Anderson 1995: 661–3).

To American commanders in the Pacific theatre during the Second World War, Indigenous people were 'seedbeds of disease' and the environment ripe for a variety of fungal and parasitic skin infections. Conscripted Pacific Island labourers were segregated from US military units, subjected to regular hygiene inspections, confined to their camps at night, and forcibly administered the anti-malarial Atebrine. Engineers used dynamite or torpedoes to turn turgid rivulets into flowing waterways (to flush out malaria vectors) and local labour units liberally applied diesel or insecticides, such as DDT, to standing water. The military even introduced invasive minnows to better regulate mosquito reproduction (Bennett 2009: 50–60). The US military manipulated 'native'

bodies with pharmaceuticals and remade the wartime environment with chemicals, explosives and manual labour, creating areas that they imagined as more suitable for American soldiers' bodies.

The experience of the US military while colonizing the Philippines and in wartime theatres in the Pacific formed the basis of post-Second World War occupations in the Asia-Pacific region. Indeed, the US military began its occupation of Japan by regulating the germ ecology of the country. The occupiers secured borders, limiting the circulation of foreign pathogens, and managed or sterilized germs to build their hygienic empire. The occupation authorities' 'biowall' – that is, the use of bureaucratic, physical and financial mechanisms to control an ecological system and prevent the movement of particular organisms – was meant to quarantine pathogens and pests deemed detrimental to ecological systems. This bio-wall stretched to control the human and environmental vectors of parasites, and to prevent the spread of communicable and infectious diseases.

This is not to imply that Japan was in fact 'unhygienic' or behind in the race for greater control over sanitation of both bodies and environments. As Susan Burns has shown, linking individual health with public hygiene to create a national body was crucial to the Meiji state's project of building a modern nation-state (Burns 2000: 18). By the 1920s, Japan was using globally accepted biomedical technologies of public health administration as well as vaccines and nutritional science. During wartime it also had a sophisticated system of customs and quarantine to isolate foreign agricultural products. Yet to European and American powers, Japan was still considered a deficient non-white 'other'. As John Dower put it, Japan was perhaps 'the cleverest of the pupils of the West', but nevertheless a pupil (Dower 1993: 148).

The process of constructing an ideal occupation biosphere led to conflicting actions between military branches and eventually proved detrimental to its integrity. For example, the QMG had a mandate to provide forces with nutritious, familiar and hygienic meals. While the War Department had prohibited most imports, the QMG used a loophole that allowed the Subsistence Branch of the Quartermaster Corps to bring what the forces needed to eat directly from the United States, often without inspection at the port of arrival. Wartime procurement depots across the United States funnelled meat, fruit, seeds and plants to a central depot in San Francisco where goods were consolidated and re-routed to the Pacific (Hoffmann 1943: 27). A 1951 GHQ memorandum assessed that the largest quantity of prohibited plants in fact likely came into Japan through the military supply network (Higuchi 2010: 52). This systematic importation of foreign seeds and plants, particularly species that were common to North America, posed a

threat to the local ecology while being integral to the construction of the occupation authorities' ideal biosphere. In other words, the US military's own efforts ultimately punched holes in its biowall. Shipments of grain and seeds provided a medium through which foreign weeds and agricultural pests filtered into Japan (Higuchi 2010: 55). In the process of building a biosphere that suited the occupiers, the US military unintentionally helped introduce invasive species, proving that the imagined hermetic seal was not so airtight after all.

Contaminated Japan: a brief history of night soil

The US military was worried not only about foreign biological threats entering its occupied territory, but also about the hazards already *within* that territory. This made it difficult, if not impossible, to source provisions locally. US medical officers considered the very Japanese soil to be inimical to the health of American forces (Office of the Chief Signal Officer 1952; Allied Operational and Occupation Headquarters 1945). Medical officers warned that the soil was 'contaminated', and that locally grown uncooked vegetables were vectors for dangerous '... amoeba which cause[d] dysentery in humans who are not immunized' (Allied Occupation and Operational Headquarters 1946). American bodies were, in their view, not acclimatized to deal with local parasites, and soldiers and their dependents were repeatedly warned not to eat anything off base. Occupation authorities were particularly concerned with the local reliance on night soil. Medical officers held that produce grown in Japanese soil was highly unsanitary and especially unsuitable for raw consumption 'due to the age-old custom of utilizing human excreta as fertilizer' (Quartermaster General 1947). They were worried that contaminants and parasites in the soil could seep into germinating seedlings, making them unsuitable for occupier consumption.

Ironically, pre-war Japanese farmers had been amongst the most intensive users of chemical fertilizer (Cohen 1949: 365). The wartime demand for nitrogen-based munitions, however, had diverted ammonia toward arms manufacturing (Tsutsui 2003: 301). Wartime scarcity of chemical nutrients forced farmers to demand increased excrement collection in urban areas. There is a long history in Japan of using treated human waste as fertilizer. Japanese experts and officials understood that unprocessed human excreta carried risks of spreading disease-causing pathogens and parasitic worms since the 1910s (Kim et al. 2014; 62–7; Kreitman 2018: 348). By the 1930s, human excrement was usually chemically treated or cured in a sealed container before it was transformed

into night soil and was safe for use on crops. Wartime pressures destroyed this infrastructure. Fluctuations in the price of night soil and lower wages may have encouraged carriers to dispose of raw waste illicitly into bodies of water or cropland, thus contaminating produce. At the same time, the rationing of fuel and labour shortages drove many commercial collectors out of business. With cured night soil unavailable desperate farmers increasingly used raw excrement to fertilize fields.

Soil for salads

In December 1945, the US Army completed a survey of the 'Pacific Ocean Area and Far East' to establish how to provide food for military forces in the area. Subsequently, officers stressed that local produce was not suitable for American consumption even after washing; only a thorough boiling could sterilize such produce. The survey, conducted by Lieutenant-Colonel E.W. Elliot, cautioned that soil in Japan, Korea, Okinawa and the Philippines was 'contaminated with an amoeba that causes dysentery in humans. This preclude[d] the use, in the raw state, of many vegetables such as lettuce' (Allied Operational and Occupation Headquarters 1945). When read in conjunction with medical officers' concern over the use of night soil, the implication is that there was something deficient about Japanese soil. In short, Japanese bodies were polluting the soil, making it unsafe for occupying forces. Thus, the soil's connection to Japanese bodies through the use of night soil cemented the image of an unhygienic Japanese landscape in the minds of the occupation forces.

The anxiety about Japanese dirt was not only a result of the use of night soil, however. While there is an argument to be made for naturally acquired passive immunity – Japanese people were immune to some local pathogens due to generations of environmentally acquired immunity – the military deemed that islands across the Pacific were suspect:

Much of the trouble stemmed from the nature of the soils found in the Pacific coral atolls. In other instances, the soil, although fertile, was highly infected and greens had to be cooked before being eaten, thereby robbing them of certain elements obtainable only in the raw state.

Lieutenant-Colonel P.W. Schubert 1944, cited in Boardman 1962: 3

This suggests that the US military had a broader racialized perception of a 'diseased east Asia' and 'infected Pacific'.



Figure 8.1 ‘The greenhouse section of the Hydroponic Farm at Chōfu, Japan; 20 June 1947. Courtesy of the US National Archives and Records Administration (SC-286153).

As a result, the military decided to grow hydroponic vegetables on an industrial scale. When the 8th Army finished building the hydroponic depot at Chōfu, it was the largest hydroponic facility in the world: ten 5-acre open-air plots and one greenhouse plot filled with eighty-seven 5 x 300-foot (1.5 x 91-metre) beds (Elliot 1949). The greenhouses themselves were a feat of modern architecture – they were two and a half times larger than any other in the world (see Figure 8.1). Most importantly, they produced ‘high quality’ vegetables that met army hygienic regulations. The US military was heavily invested in creating an ideal biosphere, complete with hygienic vegetables, for its personnel and their dependents.

The building of nutriculture gardens was a massive undertaking, requiring skilled technicians and a large capital investment. However, despite the expense, the occupying forces neither requisitioned local produce nor imported it from the United States. In addition to the issue of hygiene, a convergence of post-surrender economic and political factors made the installations possible. First, building nutriculture gardens served a political purpose, in that they helped avoid possible civil unrest. The US Army stressed that diverting any food away

from Japanese civilians and to Allied troops could lead to riots (Allied Operational and Occupation Headquarters 1945). Japanese food sources were limited, and the situation was exacerbated by the roughly 6 million returnees from the empire and the severing of food imports from former colonies. Indeed, the scarcity of food became a flashpoint for public dissent characterized by the May Day riots outside the Imperial Palace in 1946 (Dower 1999: 529). The QMG argued that building hydroponic depots lowered the potential burden on local food stocks, and thus avoided undesirable political consequences.

Secondly, the War Department prohibited the requisition of raw vegetables from the United States in 1946 because of the distance and time involved. In the mid-twentieth century, a ship to Tokyo could take around thirteen days from Seattle, and up to fifty-three days from Brooklyn via the Panama Canal (Van Staaveren 1994: 6). For most food that made its way to the shelves of a military commissary, a federally-funded military store providing discounted groceries and household goods such as canned foodstuffs and frozen meat, the journey was not a problem (Allied Operational and Occupation Headquarters 1946). Perishables, however, did not fare well. Even on refrigerated ships, almost half of all produce shipped to Japan spoiled before arrival (Quartermaster General 1947). Unable to sustain such losses, the War Department eliminated shipment of all 'salad-type vegetables' other than those that could be canned, frozen or dehydrated (Office of the Chief Signal Office 1952).

The QMG argued that they could produce vegetables such as tomatoes at 50 per cent of the cost of those imported from the United States. Using data from a small installation at Atkinson Field, British Guiana, however, their projections showed that even while accounting for a 30 per cent shipping spoilage and a 6 per cent export overhead, hydroponically-grown vegetables were three to five cents more expensive per pound (Quartermaster General 1947). A 1948 cost analysis memo found that vegetables 'produced nutriculturally' in 1947 cost \$901,837 for 2,391,382 pounds (1,084,713 kilograms). Commercially grown produce from the United States would have cost less than half of that provided it survived the journey (Quartermaster General 1948).

The QMG recognized that the major objection to the project was the cost of construction. The Chōfu plant alone came to ¥278,055,000 (Shigekazu 2011: 16–18) or \$5,561,100 million (at ¥50-to-\$1).³ They argued that this was not a factor, 'as it is recommended that materials and labor be furnished by the Japanese government' (Allied Operational and Occupation Headquarters 1945). Under the terms of surrender, the Japanese government was forced to bear the brunt of the occupation forces' total operating expenses. In 1946, around 30 per

cent of the Japanese government's regular budget was set aside for such 'war termination costs', while millions of Japanese families lacked homes (Dower 1999: 115). The QMG was able to leverage the US military's status as victor to lower, or even write off, construction costs. Occupied space as colonial space provided the money and '“elbow room” for experimentation' on a commercial scale (Prakash 1999: 46).

Nutrition, morale and spectacular technology

To justify expanded operations, the military used pre-war ideas of acceptable nutrition and the desirability of industrially produced commodities. The army's interpretation of the science of nutrition is key to understanding why the military went to such great lengths for raw vegetables. The use of produce within the army, as a part of preventive medicine, therapeutic procedure and as dietary requirements for all soldiers, has a history that pre-dates the First World War. Over time, nutritional scientists gradually moved away from a focus on calories and looked deeper into foods for 'hidden nutrients' (Levenstein 2003: 148). During the First World War, medical officers were able to isolate the compounds of vitamins A and C, thiamine, and other minerals, as well as link them to the health of the soldier (Department of the Army, Office of the Surgeon General 1976).

Advances proved important to the diets of soldiers. Mess halls and rations were important parts of the developing field of preventive medicine and were at the forefront of keeping soldiers in fighting condition. Inadequate intake of calcium and the water-soluble vitamins received from fruit and vegetables often resulted in weight loss. Slow clotting time, chronic fatigue, skin infections and oral conditions were all symptoms suggestive of soldiers' avitaminosis (chronic vitamin deficiency). Furthermore, beriberi and pellagra were amongst the fatal wartime conditions resulting from lack of adequate nutrition (Department of the Army, Office of the Surgeon General 1976). During the Second World War, this was solved by issuing multivitamin tablets when supply was available. Fresh produce, however, was preferable, more common and cheaper. For the military, sufficient consumption of vegetables, as a vehicle for vitamins, was critical to the effective operation of the armed forces.

The QMG experimented with industrial techniques of dehydrating, flash freezing and canning. Some of the resulting forms were psychologically, if not literally, unpalatable. Officers often received complaints about flavours and

forms from soldiers coming from the front line (Quartermaster General 1947). Army nutritionists had decided that the calorie-dense, pre-combat C Ration was the most effective meal for fighting men. Unfortunately, servicemen criticized its monotonous taste. The complete food-for-a-day Field Ration C was originally limited to three canned main meals: English-style stew, meat-and-vegetable hash, and pork and beans. It also included a 'D' chocolate-and-wafer-bar, crackers, hard candy, dextrose (sugar/energy) pills, as well as soluble coffee, cocoa and lemonade mixes. Sustained criticism of the diet led to revisions, however. The 1944 C Ration included ten meat varieties: meat and beans; meat-and-vegetable stew; meat and spaghetti; ham, egg and potato; meat and noodles; pork and rice; frankfurters and beans; pork and beans; ham and lima beans; and chicken and vegetables. The new pack was also supplemented with biscuits, compressed premixed cereal, candy-coated peanuts or raisins, soluble coffee, sugar, lemon- or orange-juice powder, hard candies, jam, cocoa beverage powder and caramels.

One item offered a burst of palate-cleansing diversity: a fresh salad of lettuce, cucumbers and radishes. The Subsistence Section of the Quartermaster General believed that the psychological effect of vegetables was just as important as the physiological benefits of the vitamins they contained. They argued that fresh fruit and vegetables improved troop morale – lettuce and tomatoes alleviated field ration-induced palate fatigue and minimized 'gripes' (Quartermaster General 1947). The stabilization of troop morale was paramount both during and after the end of hostilities, as military personnel settled into a foreign environment.

Diet diversity was balanced with standardization and routine. The armed forces attempted to portray the ideal face of 'America' by 'creating the illusion that the soldier [was] middle class, clean, well bred, and well fed' (Babic 2017: 163–4). There were strict requirements to adhere to: haircut, weight and dress standards (such as a fitted, starched-crisp uniform) were important components. Consequently, diet while deployed, as well as goods sold at commissaries, served as indicators of class status and social mobility. Like the soldiers' uniforms, the foods that they consumed acted as tangible and visible aspects of their American military identity.

The US military standardized diets to provide familiarity to soldiers spread across many theatres. The master menu for messes was created and sent from Washington, DC. Though these menus were meant to allow for some degree of flexibility, particularly when using fresh produce, they skewed heavily towards Anglo-Saxon and European foodways. Recipes from the Quartermaster Food and Container Institute for the Armed Forces in 1946 listed soups such as

borscht, corn chowder and cream of potato, as well as meat dishes such as spaghetti with meatballs, corned beef with macaroni, baked luncheon meat with mustard sauce, and various sausage dishes. There was also one recipe for a 'chop suey mixture' served with rice (Office of the Quartermaster Military Planning Division 1946).

The demographics of the armed forces during the war were more diverse than this menu implied. Out of 16.1 million personnel, around 1 million were Black servicemen, including a number of Puerto Ricans and Afro-Cubans miscategorized as African Americans (Green 2010: 11; Eschbach and Rivas-Rodriguez 2014: xii), while some 60,000 Puerto Ricans (Collins 2016) and over 33,000 Japanese Americans (Fujitani 2011, 19) enlisted. Around 21,000 Native Americans (Bernstein 1999: 40), 16,000 Filipino Americans from California (US Congress 2015; Schmidt 1982: 2) and 12,000 Chinese Americans also served in the armed forces (Wong 2009: 1). The label of 'white' also hides the complexity of that category. Around 1 million Polish Americans (Haiman 1946: 35), more than 1 million Italian Americans (LaGumina 2002, 92), over 500,000 Jewish Americans (Moore 2004: 9), and between 400 and 500 Latinx men and women, mainly of Mexican descent and considered 'white' by the military at the time, were part of the military (Eschbach and Rivas-Rodriguez 2014: xix). Despite the complex demographic nature of the armed forces, the QMG generally did not include their foodways or dietary restrictions while planning rations or diets for men at war. When military planners and administrators thought of the armed forces more broadly, the American soldier was synonymous with a white, middle-class, Protestant soldier of Anglo-Saxon descent. During and immediately following the war, those who did not fit into this rubric were expected to conform to that ideal and, in this case, diet.

During the occupation of Japan, the War Department ordered that central messes serve 'A Rations' – meals prepared using only fresh, refrigerated or frozen foods (Ishoy 1947). Cooks were supposed to provide familiar meals for soldiers and their families no matter where they were. The 'good American menus from the Office of the Quartermaster General [were] ready with meals of meat mashed potatoes vegetables and pie in the lands hot with Arab cousscouss [*sic*] and Indian curry' (Hoffmann 1943: 50). The implication is clear – while soldiers may have experimented with or even enjoyed local foods, the military as an institution rejected non-conforming dishes. Eating meat, mashed potatoes, vegetables and pie was a tool of military command to produce particular physiological or psychological benefits. At the same time, it was a tool to enforce an identity as a member, or dependent, of the American military (Babic 2017: 163). For many

working-class and non-white service personnel it was their first taste of the life they were supposed to lead as Americans.

The QMG also emphasized that salads contained beneficial nutrients and were the answer to morale issues with their 'taste of home.' Colonel C.E. Dovell, a surgeon in the 8th Army, noted that hydroponically farmed 'produce was "tasty nutritious, fresh, and highly acceptable by hospital patients"'. Moreover, the vegetables provided 'additional vitamins and minerals, and greatly increase[d] the palatability of the menu, with a resulting increase in efficiency and morale of the troops.' Colonel Dovell also alluded to the emotional effect of salads, concluding that 'the continuance of this nutriculture station is highly desirable in promoting and maintaining the health, morale, and well-being of occupational personnel, particularly troops and patients' (Edwards 1950). The psychological and physiological effects of fresh produce were crucial to the upkeep of soldiers in this new corner of the American empire.

There was also a psychological effect of hydroponic technology itself. David F. Noble argues that the military evaluated the efficacy of the technology it developed in three ways: performance, central command and modern approach. Noble (1998: 346) suggests that the military's interest in the 'modern' was a fixation with developing and using new technologies. The *need* to use hydroponic technology came not simply from nutritional or economic concerns, but also from a desire to use new, more modern, technologies that inspired wonder – a 'technological sublime' – to prove the superiority of the nation. This resonates with David E. Nye's examination of monumental technology. Nye argues (1994: 37–43) that the emotional reaction to an awe-inspiring sight of man transcending nature on a massive scale was a collectivizing experience. Through hydroponics, it was not only the US military that conquered Japanese space, but America writ large.

The spectacle of modern technology played a role in the use of nutriculture. This is particularly evident in the way that hydroponic farming was represented in the mass media. The army supplied news outlets with US Army Signal Corps pictures and kept track of reports. Domestic US press releases, reliant on access provided by the Signal Corps, stressed the salad's diversification of personnel's diet and its effects on troop happiness (Office of the Chief Signal Officer 1952). *The New York Herald Tribune*, *The New York Times* and the *Washington News* all ran articles on hydroponics in 1947.

CBS also made a brief announcement via radio in both the New York and Washington, DC areas (Schlabach 1947). Photographs, radio broadcasts and news articles were an integral part of educating the public about the US mission



Figure 8.2 Article from the *New York Herald Tribune* entitled 'Hydroponic Gardens Supply Army Bases with Food', August 1947. Courtesy of the US National Archives and Records Administration (RG 92, BX 2, FL 25).

during the occupation of Japan. They were also avenues through which the military could enjoin the public to connect with and celebrate the United States' technological ingenuity.

In November 1947, an American bi-monthly magazine, *Popular Science*, published an article entitled 'Multitude Fed Without Soil'. It opened its celebration of hydroponics in occupied Japan with a quote from the Gospel of Matthew: 'And when it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying: This is a desert place ... send the multitude away ... But Jesus said unto them: They need not

depart, give them to eat.' Using this religious simile, the magazine emphasized the spectacular aspect of the US Army's feat while simultaneously rendering Japan a barren land. The article boasted that a great multitude of occupation forces would be able to eat 'prime' celery with roots that had 'never been near the earth'. The author did recognize the expensive nature of the technology and the fact that even the army had strict limitations. The army usually only approved hydroponic technology for locations with no arable soil, or 'where the soil, through the use of human fertilizer (such as Japan and China), is unfit for the growth of vegetables that are eaten raw' (*Popular Science* 1947). Using cutting-edge technology, the military had managed to 'overcome' the nature of Japanese soil, an achievement the magazine suggests was of biblical proportions.

In Japanese, the English-language *Nippon Times* published an article on 6 February 1947 focused on the forward-looking nature of the technology. The 'super farm of steel, concrete and chemicals' was juxtaposed with Japanese farmers 'ageold [*sic*] methods'. The army's technology was to 'open a new door for the future' of agriculture to a 'new era of scientific farming'. It reduced 'soil borne diseases' and ensured that there were 'no weeds to contend with'. As far as the newspaper was concerned, this technology improved upon nature.

The farming depots were themselves sites of spectacle. At the Chōfu centre's opening in March 1947, Lieutenant-Colonel Elliot, head of the nutriculture project, feted Prince Takamatsu (brother of Hirohito), Mrs Douglas MacArthur, Major General C.E. Byers and other local notables. The US military also organized tours for servicemen and foreign nationals. The GHQ Information Center ran regular tours that visited Japanese porcelain and glass factories, movie studios and hydroponic farms (*Pacific Stars and Stripes* 1950). In 1956, the Argentinian ambassador Carlos A. Quiros and a delegation from the Royal Thai Air Force including Air-Vice Marshal Kamol Thejatunga separately viewed portable growing beds and sample crops. They also toured the packing facilities and ice plant.

The US military was, in a sense, 'staging science' to reinforce the hierarchy of power (Prakash 1999: 34). The military used public demonstrations of the hydroponic process to evoke a sense of wonder at the seemingly magical act of producing vegetables without soil. Simultaneously, soilless farming was a powerful weapon to demonstrate the military's mastery over Japanese space. This proved the ability of American technology to overcome the so-called backward occupied environment. The army positioned hydroponics as clean and contained, an answer to the messiness of the occupied space and its threatening topographies and microbes. Moreover, it took plant domestication to enclosed,



Figure 8.3 'Lt Col. Elliot explains to Hirohito's brother, Prince Takamatsu (far right), and the emperor's first cousin Prince Takida [*sic*] (third from right), and other important Japanese, the functions of the nutriculture laboratories at Chōfu', 20 March 1947. Courtesy of the US National Archives and Records Administration (SC-284369).



Figure 8.4 'Major Ross W. Crossley explains the details of the vegetable display to Carlos A. Quiros, Argentinian Ambassador to Japan', 3 July 1956. Courtesy of the US National Archives and Records Administration (SC-481538).

stacked readable levels, providing a 'legible grid that could be easily grasped at a glance and that could be repeated in every direction, ad infinitum' (Scott 1998: 108).

This technological presentation courted American soldiers, the American and Japanese press, and foreign visitors. It functioned as a means to impress upon an audience the benefits of the US presence. For the American soldier this was a monument to national ingenuity and the overcoming of nature itself. For the Japanese journalist, it was a means of liberation from the Malthusian trap of limited soil fertility. And for foreign militaries, it was a technology to perhaps use in their own military bases.

Conclusion

In December 1948, seemingly without discussion, the QMG authorized soil farming around hydroponic facilities. The area tilled only increased during the Korean War (Edwards 1949a). Since the Chōfu airstrip had become overgrown during the war, medical officers believed its soil was less likely to be contaminated by human waste. Just like that, Japanese soil had become trustworthy. It is unclear if the soil had been sterilized by trustworthy chemicals. However, the pressures of increased personnel in the theatre, a war on the Korean Peninsula and a changing relationship with Japan caused a shift in operations.

In the end, only eighty out of the combined 300 acres (121 hectares) at both farms were used for hydroponic technology. An increasing portion was cultivated using chemical fertilizer and powered equipment. Its output soon dwarfed the nutriculture project. Despite these developments, as late as January 1952, Brigadier General W.E. Shambora, chief surgeon of the Far East Command stated: 'In a country like Japan or Korea, where human excreta is used as a fertilizer, it is unsafe to eat uncooked vegetables, so that hydroponic products are of particular value' (Shambora 1952). Early in 1953, production of vegetables for the armed forces shifted to locally produced, conventionally soil-farmed crops. The reconstruction of Japan's chemical fertilizer industry made low-cost vegetables that met the military's idea of hygiene widely available. The military shuttered the Ōtsu farm the same year and returned the Chōfu airstrip to Japan in 1960 (Boardman 1962).

Food provisioning through environmental engineering was central to the construction of an American biosphere. However, while this chapter has traced the history of hydroponics, it is not a history of technology, but rather an

exploration of how new technologies are interpreted and integrated into social spaces (Nye 1994: xv). The use of hydroponic technology in the occupied space of Japan was founded on colonial ideas of race and racial hygiene. It was made possible by leveraging the status of the US-military-as-conqueror and its expanding military power. Through its position as occupier, the United States was able to force the Japanese government to bear much of the radical project's costs. Thus, the United States was able to appropriate the land itself and capitalize on labour costs depressed by war and defeat.

Food is not simply the nutrients that transform the energy of an ecosystem into the calories that power the human community. Food is also a bundle of ideas. A complicated cultural construct, how and what we choose to eat is intimately intertwined with what we think about food, its relationship with our bodies, our relationships with others, and our relationship with the natural world (Cronon 1990: 1124). Thus, a seemingly innocuous phrase such as 'hygienic vegetables' is not a neutral, objective measure of the contents of a dinner plate. Its definition is deeply subjective and influenced by beliefs that discriminate between people and spaces. The effect of this phrase's use was to render agricultural practices and eating habits of populations politically legible, classifiable and rejectable. The phrase was one of the tools that allowed authorities to supervise the conduct of people and render populations modern or 'unmodern'. US officers' mix of cultural presumptions about hygiene and data on plant growth were tangible enough to mould facts (Mitchell 2002: 80–3) and reduce the very environment down to one word: unhygienic. The development of the gardens at Chōfu and Ōtsu thus sits at an intersection between several aspects of occupied space: segregated space, colonial space and spectacular, or performative, space. These were tied together by the imperial dynamics of the growing US military base system – all through the supply of salad vegetables.

Notes

- 1 The author would like to thank Jordan Sand and Chelsea Hudson for the invaluable feedback that they provided on earlier versions of this chapter. Research was in part funded by the Japan Foundation Doctoral Fellowship.
- 2 This is the conventional periodization of the occupation of Japan led by the United States. Though the ability to make sovereign decisions was returned to Japanese authorities on 28 April 1952, the physical presence, and I would argue the spaces of occupation, remain. Formalized through Status of Force Agreements (SOFA),

military bases, uneven power hierarchies and US military installations still exist on the main islands of Japan as well as on Okinawa today – a topic that is explored by Sayaka Sakuma in this volume.

- 3 When the occupation forces landed, they adopted a ¥15-to-\$1 conversion rate which was then transformed into a complicated system of multiple exchange rates. What followed was an increasingly volatile exchange rate that was devalued on multiple occasions. In 1946, the rate changed to ¥50-to-\$1, in 1948, it was ¥270-to-\$1, and finally, in 1949, the rate became ¥360-to-\$1 and remained there under the Bretton Woods System until 1971 (Takagi 2015: 5–7).

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From Military Base to Conservation Site: Reimagining the Demilitarization of the Yambaru Forest in Okinawa

Sayaka Sakuma

Introduction

In early May of 2017, I joined a nature tour group to hike up to Mount Ibu in Kunigami Village, the northernmost village on Okinawa Island. The area called Yambaru is located approximately 100 kilometres from the capital city of Naha, where the dense forest remains despite rapid development on the island. The forest is increasingly branded as a destination for tourism, with several rare and endangered species inhabiting the area. The bright green leaves in the forest and the buzzing of cicadas indicated that summer was approaching, but the air in the woods was still much cooler than outside the forest. Our group – half a dozen curious visitors and nature guides who lived in Kunigami – walked up the trail to the chirping of birds.

The group was with an Okinawan-born guide who had moved to the village to raise his family in an area of abundant nature. As we continued hiking, he pointed out snakes, plants and old ruins that hinted at the complex ecology and human history of the Yambaru Forest. At one spot, he stopped and turned toward us to point to one of the trees. I expected he would point to a lizard or some other animal, but instead he pointed out letters that had been inscribed on the tree's trunk. Covered in green and white lichens, the faded letters in Japanese read: '*Amerika kaere, yama wo kaese*' ('Go home, America. Return the mountain'). The guide explained that the inscription on the tree dated from the time when villagers were protesting against the US military's construction of a live ammunition range on the mountain in 1970. Just like rare species crawling through the fallen leaves, the marks of military occupation are only legible to

those whose eyes are attuned to the significance of these subtle signs (see Figure 9.1).

By focusing on the spatial history of the Yambaru Forest, this chapter illustrates how different political, economic and ecological regimes express and materialize different meanings of the forest. When expanding our examination beyond the legal framework of occupation, the case of the Yambaru Forest shows that 'occupation' is not merely a legal status but a set of ongoing processes which makes meanings of a particular space.

Okinawa is a place in which many stories reveal the long-lasting impacts of colonialism, occupation, warfare and militarism. From annexation by Japan to the ongoing construction of US military bases, the stories of the Yambaru Forest suggest there is no clear mark of when occupation starts and when it might end. As the legal definition of occupation is a part of the Law of War (Benvenuti 2012), oversimplified use of the term can dismiss the complexity of lived experiences of occupation on the ground – as the editors of this volume note in the Introduction. By examining the spatial history of the Yambaru Forest, this chapter illustrates how multiple authorities and time periods have co-constructed Okinawa's landscape and its connection to multiple forms of occupation.

Okinawa is often described as 'peripheral' to Japan and the United States – the two states that persist in viewing Okinawa as instrumental to their respective security interests. Okinawa consists of over 100 inhabited and uninhabited islands, and its land area is only 0.6 per cent of Japan's entire national area. However, over 70 per cent of US military bases in Japan are located in Okinawa. Seeing Okinawa as 'peripheral' only fuels the security discourses in which 'passive' islands are subjugated and militarized. It is precisely through this discourse, being the periphery yet the keystone of the Pacific, that the United States and Japan can claim Okinawa's geopolitical utility.

This chapter draws on literature from the field of political geography, especially with regards the ways in which feminist geopolitics challenge the state's discursive and material construction of islands as peripheral while simultaneously assigning them with specific roles. In such a view, islands and archipelagos are 'powerful, recurring, and vexing to the spatial imaginary: highly unique, idiosyncratic, disparate and yet revealing, offering spatial form, pattern, and logics that are everywhere reproduced' (Mountz 2015: 638). Feminist geopolitics challenge the 'bird's-eye view' approaches of spatial arrangement and shift our attention to the scale of bodies to claim different realities on the ground. In such an approach, embodied experiences suggest different experiences of occupation.



Figure 9.1 Characters reading 'Go home, America. Return the mountain' inscribed on a tree trunk in the Yambaru Forest, May 2017. Photograph by the author.

Hau'ofa (1993) challenges the 'view-from-the-empire' with his reconfiguration of the Pacific as 'a sea of islands' instead of 'islands in a far sea.' This shift in perspective is important, as it challenges the colonial belief that islands are small, dependent and confined by water, thus needing to depend on powerful states. Instead, reframing islands as the centre requires seeing islands as a vast and rich

space connected through water – a point that is also made in Kris Alexanderson's chapter in this volume. Similarly, the Okinawan historian Hokama Shuzen (1986) calls for a reframing of Okinawa in a broader connection to the Pacific rather than as a region within Japan, as the Ryukyu Kingdom sought its expansion through trade with other countries and regions in east and Southeast Asia. Viewing islands as a 'sea of islands', this chapter provides a summary of how Okinawa has experienced different waves of political change across the centuries.

A brief history of Okinawa

The establishment of the Ryukyu Kingdom can be dated to 1429, when Shō Hashi took control of Okinawa Island. The kingdom relied heavily on trade as a key strategy, maintaining relations with Ming-dynasty China and Siam (now Thailand), as well as kingdoms in Malacca, Sumatra, Palembang, Java, Japan and Korea (Hokama 1986: 62). However, the expansion of European power in Southeast Asia and the establishment of direct trade between Japan and China in the sixteenth century put pressure on the Ryukyu Kingdom's trading strategy. In 1609, with the development of centralized feudalism in Japan and under difficult political as well as economic conditions, the Satsuma Domain in southern Kyushu Island undertook a military invasion of the Ryukyus (Hokama 1986: 76). The invasion by Satsuma led to the incorporation of the Ryukyu Kingdom as 'Ryukyu Domain' – a critical shift that registered Ryukyu as a part of Japanese territory. With the abolition of the feudal clan system in the country in the 1870s, over 200 years after the invasion, the Ryukyu Domain then became Okinawa Prefecture in 1879. The time lag between the invasion and abolition of Ryukyu Domain, even amidst drastic modernization projects in the rest of Japan, was due to the goal of gradually adjusting the elite class in the Ryukyus to the new system of Japanese control.

Under Japanese control in the twentieth century, the prohibition of Okinawan languages represented part of the larger project of developing a Japanese national identity in Okinawa and paved an important path towards the Second World War. During that conflict, the Japanese government conscripted Okinawan students through schools for war labour. Okinawa was also the site of one of the bloodiest conflicts of that war – the Battle of Okinawa (March–June 1945). More than 200,000 people died in this battle, including 90,000 non-combatant residents of Okinawa, and 28,000 people who had been conscripted as military workers in Okinawa.

After Japan's surrender in 1945, the United States issued the Navy Military Government Proclamation (the 'Nimitz Proclamation') to announce the end of the Japanese Empire. The proclamation enabled the United States to take control of Okinawa and to expropriate land there for military bases, thus beginning twenty-seven years of US administration in Okinawa. While the rest of Japan regained its sovereignty in 1951, Okinawa remained under the control of United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands (USCAR). This led to the disproportionate distribution of US military bases on the islands. While US military bases in Japan (excluding Okinawa) were reduced from 130,000 hectares to 30,000 hectares between 1952 and 1960, the size of the US military presence in Okinawa doubled with the relocation of the US Marines from Japan to Okinawa (Arasaki 2005: 20). The militarization of the islands led to the 'Reversion Movement' in the 1960s, with the hope to return the land used by the US military to Japanese control. Okinawa reverted to Japanese control on 15 May 1972. However, the issue of militarism remains to this day. The single term 'occupation' thus does not fully capture the impact of the multi-layered political influences that have been experienced in Okinawa. From the abolition of the Ryukyu Kingdom to ongoing militarism on lands that were expropriated in the aftermath of the Second World War, political changes in Okinawa have brought forth more than the mere demarcation of territorial boundaries.

The Yambaru Forest and the Battle of Okinawa

During the Battle of Okinawa, Yambaru served as a critical site for the evacuation of residents of Okinawa. In 1945, in preparation for American military landings on the island, Okinawan prefectural authorities designated Yambaru as a destination for the evacuation of 100,000 non-combatant residents from central and southern Okinawa. The prefectural government assigned Kunigami Village, the northernmost village, to accommodate 22,370 people from the southern part of the island. This was the largest number of evacuees assigned to any hosting village in Yambaru (Okinawa Prefectural Board of Education 2017). Villages in Yambaru were each assigned a specific number of evacuees and shelters, and were ordered to prepare food supplies for the evacuees.

However, these plans were disrupted after the US military began attacking Okinawa. On 1 April 1945, US troops landed on Toguchi Beach in Yomitan Village, 70 kilometres south of Kunigami Village, and divided the island between south and north. Escaping from approaching US troops, residents walked many

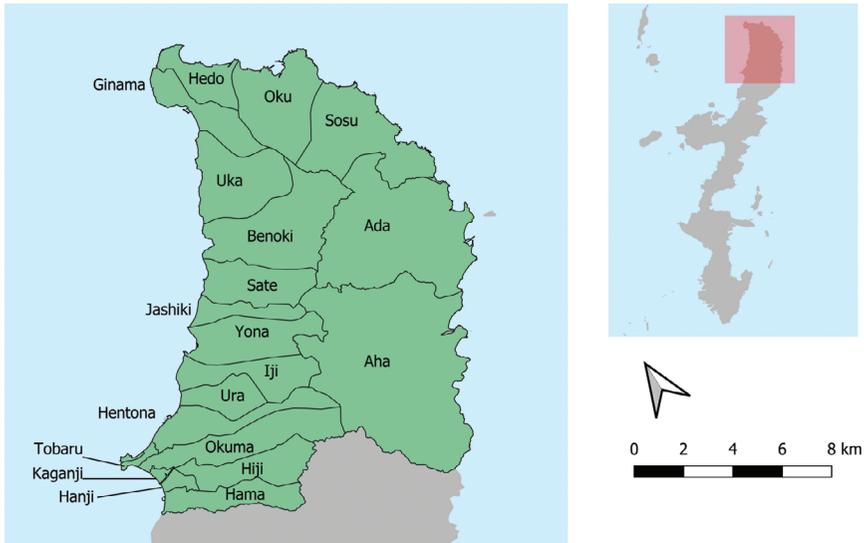


Figure 9.2 Map of Kunigami Village, showing its twenty communities. Map by the author.

days to reach Yambaru, from which they were pushed further into the mountains beyond the reach of US soldiers. Many testimonies of these residents reveal the varying forms of violence that they experienced while hiding in the forest. Slaughter by Japanese and US soldiers, brutal accounts of death from starvation, malaria and exhaustion, and various other traumatic experiences are all included in their stories. Some people continued to hide in the forest a few months after the war ended, while those who had been captured earlier went back into the woods in search of evacuees. US troops also conducted ‘mop-up operations’ through which soldiers walked through the forest to seek out hiding residents. While the public narratives of the Battle of Okinawa often focus on the brutal bloodshed in the south of the island, these other stories of survival deserve more attention and can be better understood through the history of the Yambaru Forest.

Forest as jungle warfare training centre

Under USCAR, the US military established Camp Gonsalves as the Northern Training Area in the Yambaru Forest in 1958. The forest was described as a ‘uniquely rugged’ and ‘forbidding’ jungle where 8,000 service officers trained

each year (Dawson 2000). The US military established the Northern Training Area as a counter-guerrilla centre to prepare US soldiers for warfare in Vietnam. The training centre included areas that simulated villages in the 'developing world', a missile launch site, and facilities imitating pharmaceutical factories (*Okinawa Times* 1998). The US military then renamed the facility the Jungle Warfare Training Center (JWTC) in 1998, a year before America's primary jungle warfare training centre in Panama, Fort Sherman, was closed down after forty-five years of operations. Although a US military spokesperson denied the existence of a replacement plan, the training features of the centre in Okinawa, as well as the need for such a training environment, were quite similar (Darling 1999). Since the training area has remained in operation long after the end of the Vietnam War (1955–75), the US military's ongoing operation in the Yambaru Forest suggests a fixation on the idea that land in Okinawa can provide strategic benefits well into the future.

The US naval magazine *All Hands* portrays the Yambaru Forest as a challenging jungle that can test the strength of soldiers with what is perhaps an overly dramatic depiction of the area:

The slippery red mud threatens to pull you down at every step. Vines reach out, and grab your arms and legs, no matter how careful you are. And the bugs – they bite and bite and bite. Don't even mention the snakes. But the worst thing of all, there's nothing you can do about it except suck it up, and keep putting one foot in front of the other. To most people it sounds like hell on earth, but for the handful of Navy Corpsmen and Marines assigned as instructors at the Marine Corps Jungle Warfare Training Center in northern Okinawa, this is home, and they love every minute of it.

Houlihan 2003: 1

This account reduces the forest ecology to vines, bugs and snakes that are indicative of the harsh obstacles and hazards soldiers face in a jungle environment. At the same time, the article extols soldiers who are able to embrace (and even love) such demanding conditions.

While the JWTC was established during the Cold War, its strategic utility today is ambiguous. Soldiers' references to the forest as a 'jungle' reflect the US military's geostrategic interest in the terrain and vegetation of Yambaru, where the dense subtropical forest provides a challenging terrain with steep hills and rivers. Although the US military embraces this physical environment, I argue that use of the term 'jungle' exoticizes the Yambaru Forest and sets it up as a dislocated space for survival training. From the US military's perspective, the

physical environment of the Yambaru Forest is a stand-in for harsh settings throughout the world. In other words, the forest is place-less in the US security consciousness, and the unique biophysical and ecological characteristics of the Yambaru Forest are dismissed. Operational plans and training maps erase endangered and endemic species as well as the sociocultural history of the forest. It is a jungle – any jungle – which is a proving ground for their boots and courage. With the placeless-ness of the Yambaru Forest, the JWTC serves as a space in which the material and discursive construction of military bodies that reinforces the geopolitical logics of security underpinning the expansion of the American military empire.

In discussing the training of servicemen in the United Kingdom, Woodward (1998: 293) argues that ‘becoming an infantryman requires new ways of being in space. It requires victory over the demands of the environment, its morphology and climate.’ In fact, the narratives in video clips published by the US military indicate that the key mission of the JWTC is to transform American soldiers into capable bodies. I use the term ‘capable bodies’ to refer to the specific abilities that enlisted Americans embody as they are transformed from civilians into soldiers. Such abilities include the physical adjustment to navigate obstacles in the jungle. Promotional visuals published by the US military reveal a wide range of activities such as rappelling, patrolling, overcoming traps, conducting first aid treatment and vehicle interdiction using dogs. Among the series of training programmes provided at the JWTC, the Endurance Course, referred to as ‘E-course’, consists of about thirty obstacles providing Marines and other joint forces with an opportunity to experience the treacherous jungle. Soldiers often mentioned the ‘hasty rappel’, where they go down a nearly vertical cliff using a rope, and the ‘pit pond’ where the soldiers fully submerge themselves in a stagnant pond to go through traps set underwater. Smith believes his training at the JWTC was beneficial:¹

I believe it’s a good training. It’s what all Marines need to do as far as getting out to the field. Essentially, this is what America pays us for is to get out here, or in the jungle, in the desert, whatever the case may be. Executing our craft to the best of our capabilities. And the more we can get out here, to get to the field and learn things we do, face adversity, overcome it. It just makes us *a better all-around product*.

*Jungle Communication Exercise 2018*²

A critical transformation enacted by the JWTC is the disciplining of soldiers to evaluate their bodies as military instruments. The soldier here describes himself

as becoming 'a better all-around product'. In multiple videos, soldiers refer to their bodies as weaponry. They not only develop selves with technical survival skills but also endure physical pain, transforming themselves into capable fighting bodies when they complete the training. The harsh training throughout the day and night, and their ability to 'overcome' obstacles, leaves soldiers' bodies with physical scars. An article in *All Hands* asks readers to imagine receiving scars on their own bodies as marks of accomplishment, an indication of successful bodily transformation:

Though the rounds won't kill you, they are sure to leave a nice pink stain and a welt you don't forget. Few come out unscathed, but everyone leaves with a better understanding of what it's like to be under fire in a jungle environment . . . The final mile was made more difficult, as participants constructed a field litter out of battle dress uniform tops and tree branches to carry the heaviest person in their squad to the end of the course.

Houlihan 2003: 32

The US military's rhetoric on training in a jungle environment conceals the specific geographical setting of both the militarized land and actual battlefields of Okinawa. This indefiniteness enables soldiers to imagine future deployments without focusing on *where*, *when* and *why* they would be. An article from the military magazine *In the Army Now* captures one of the scenes at the JWTC in which the soldiers train in thick bush away from their homes and from 'battlefields':

Pfft! Pfft! Pfft! Suddenly, a stream of shots spews out from a bunker. 'Watch your left flank!' shouts a Marine from a thicket. Seconds later, a buddy screams out: 'I'm hit!' As the patrol starts to disintegrate into chaos, the unit commander orders his men to keep moving forward. 'Second team, where you at? C'mon, push it up.' Boom! Somebody snags a tripwire, triggering a hidden paint bomb. The group gets low marks, but there's always next time – in training camp, at least.

Dawson 2000

Catherine Lutz (2001) calls this notion of the military seeking to always be prepared for future warfare as 'the permanent state of war readiness'. The narrative of developing soldiers ready for war commonly appears at military training sites, where the military's masculinity receives glorification. The JWTC is also a site where the soldiers embody their readiness through the obstacles that they set up in the forest. Without recognizing the next deployment destination, the bizarre fascination with 'the jungle' supports the belief that such an environment can equip them to be prepared for anywhere. As one Marine says in a video:

About 80 per cent of the area we operate in, in any Pacific region is a jungle environment. The reason we need to be proficient at our jobs here is because at any time, we can be called upon to those areas to provide aid, security assistance. Whatever the case may be.

Hard Training Makes Hard Marines in the Grueling Okinawa Jungle 2016

Another soldier training at the JWTC comments:

It's massive. You're just looking at double canopy jungle, rolling hills, well not really rolling hills so much as you're going like this one minute, you get two seconds of flat ground and you're going back down the hill . . . It gave me a much better appreciation for the guys who took the island and other islands like it during WWII and everybody who served in Vietnam. I don't know how, especially in Vietnam, thirteen months tours in the jungle . . . I don't know how guys did that because I was there for eight days and I was destroyed.

Hard Training Makes Hard Marines in the Grueling Okinawa Jungle 2016

These narratives resemble each other in admiring the demanding physical environment that brings forth the masculine bodies of soldiers. The expressions of their preparedness for future deployment reflect the institution's claim for the legitimacy of securitization through the occupation of others' land in Asia and the Pacific. Exoticizing foreign lands, the US military re-imagines these lands as being full of dangers which only soldiers can handle.

Normalization and the provision of such training settings are part of the larger work that the US Department of Defense facilitates by mobilizing resources throughout its network of securitization across the world, such as Fort Sherman in Panama (closed in 1999), the JWTC in Okinawa and the Jungle Operations Training Course that the US Army has offered on O'ahu Island in Hawai'i since 2014 (Vergun 2017). In Okinawa, the counterpart in the 'hosting' country – the Japan Self-Defense Forces – also visits the JWTC to observe the training programme and to develop joint training sessions (*Japan Ground Self Defense Force Considers Marine Jungle Training* 2016), indicating the continuing expansion of the multilateral and collaborative militarization of Okinawa.

Protesting construction of a live ammunition training range

The history of the Yambaru Forest, however, is far more expansive than the narrow perspective of US military operations and security objectives. Okinawans

have long resisted US militarism on the ground. Scholars such as Bhowmik and Rabson (2016) suggest that Okinawa be viewed as 'islands of protest' because of residents' ongoing resistance to the US military presence. There is a long history of struggles against US militarization in Okinawa that challenges the dominance of the American military (Ahagon 1992; Akibayashi and Takazato 2009; Uehara 2009; Figal 2012; Davis 2015). Chibana (2018) demonstrates how people in Yomitan Village tend their agricultural land that is enclosed within a US military base, shedding light on how the act of farming becomes a form of everyday resistance. Even if such activities are not recognized as forms of political protest, recognizing such actions as resistance creates powerful counter-narratives about the politics of land used by the US military. Koopman (2011: 280) argues for 'alter-geopolitics' to name a 'more grounded and localized' form of challenging geopolitics, bringing forward practices held in spaces not commonly recognized as being political, such as streets, homes and jungles. In the case of Yambaru, the forest becomes the site of protest where residents' bodily actions challenge the US military's claims.

One major protest took place in Kunigami Village, literally in the 'backwoods', in the forest where residents had not noticed the secretive construction of military training batteries. On 22 December 1970, the mayor of Kunigami Village received notification from USCAR that US Marines would begin live ammunition training from 31 December that year at Mount Ibu, a 350-metre-high mountain located next to the Ada and Sosu Districts. While the news shocked village residents, the US military had already constructed the batteries by transferring construction materials and bulldozers by helicopter about ten months before the notification (Kunigami Village 2016; Mori 2015). Batteries for 105-millimetre howitzers had been set up to simulate the field artillery used by the US Army in Vietnam (McKenney 2007). On receiving the notification, the Kunigami Village Assembly convened an emergency meeting on 26 December 1970. In 1955, the assembly had previously requested the US military not to conduct training that included live ammunition. Following the discussions of 1955, members decided to directly confront the planned military training in the forest.

During an interview at his office in 2018, Kinjo³ recalled how he had walked through the thick forest to mobilize the residents in Sosu District, an area where the surrounding roadless forest makes it 'inaccessible land' (*riku no kotō*). On 31 December 1970, 600 residents and supporting citizens from outside Kunigami Village sat in at the training site. Some broke into the area that was blocked with barbed wire, directly confronting US soldiers at the ammunition launch site. Elementary and middle school students from the districts of Ada, Aha and Sosu,

where the potential hazard of fire and bomb impact was prominent, also joined the protest. Those who entered the area where the live ammunition was targeted to fire made smoke and waved flags to warn US soldiers of their presence in the targeted zone. Kinjo described the intense interactions between himself and a US interpreter, as he held a transceiver and waited to give a cue to the people standing by:

Would the military break their promise and sacrifice residents? I would not tolerate that. So I said 'I will never step back until the military completely leaves the site. I am ready to die for this, and I will do anything I can do, so watch me.' Then I told the others, 'Charge!' (*totsugeki!*).

Interview, 16 January 2018

Kinjo depicted the crowd climbing up the steep slope where the soldiers had placed sandbags and pulling on the legs of soldiers. The confrontation continued for over an hour, with approximately 200 residents gathering at the launch site and between thirty and fifty US military personnel there also, the military finally leaving the site at around 11.15 am. One person broke his ribs and others sustained minor injuries, but there were no casualties. The US military abandoned the training site, meaning the villagers' protest had been successful.

The history of this protest is now commemorated quietly with a plaque and an engraved stone erected at the entrance of the trail to Mount Ibu. Yet the conflict between residents and the US military around the Yambaru Forest continues, with the construction of a pad for the Harrier military aircraft completed in 1987, the construction of a helicopter pad in Takae in 2016, and the ongoing reclamation of Ōura Bay at Henoko. The tree trunk upon which the words reading 'Go home, America. Return the mountain' were inscribed remains relevant to this day – more than seventy years after the first landing of US troops on the island. The writing remains as a reminder that the declaration of the end of the Second World War, and the US occupation of Okinawa, only defines the occupation in the context of international politics, while the impact of war and militarization continues to shape the landscape of the Yambaru Forest.

From military base to conservation site

A unique characteristic of the spatial history of occupation in Yambaru is that the forest continually adapts as a space animated by an evolving ecology. Unlike the military bases in the other parts of the islands enclosed by barbed wired, the

JWTC is open to the changing environment of the forest. The nexus between non-human species, militarism and conservation thus emerges as a unique form of spatial arrangement within the Yambaru Forest.

Although the origin of the description is not clear, government organizations and tour companies often refer to the forest area as the ‘Oriental Galapagos’ – a branding strategy that signifies the exceptional biological diversity of the forest, referencing Ecuador’s Galápagos Islands, famous for their concentration of rare species. The name ‘Oriental Galapagos’ evokes the notion of a ‘discovery’ of new spaces and species by those whose scientific gaze gives validation to not only the ecological but also the economic value of the forest. The Ministry of the Environment’s Yambaru Wildlife Conservation Center, located in Kunigami Village, emphasizes the location, climate and topographic formation of Yambaru as contributing to the concentration of rare species; situated in the path of typhoons and the Kuroshio Current, the forest receives more than 2,000 millimetres of precipitation per year (Government of Japan 2019). According to the Yambaru Wildlife Conservation Center (2010), roughly ten mammal, 2,000 insect, 1,000 plant and 110 bird species inhabit the Yambaru Forest. Approximately 80 per cent of the fourteen amphibian and eighteen reptile species found in Yambaru are endemic to the forest.

Following the reversion of Okinawa to Japanese rule in 1972, the forest was newly opened for Japanese scientific discoveries and there was a boom in recognition of natural species there. The ‘discoveries’ of the Okinawa rail (*Yambaru kuina*) in 1981 and the Yambaru long-armed scarab beetle (*Yambaru tenaga kogane*) in 1983 led to national publicity for Yambaru as having ‘birds that do not fly’ and ‘Japan’s largest beetle species’. National recognition of the rare species that thrive in Yambaru coincided with the state’s emphasis on biodiversity in conservation politics during the 1980s and the early 1990s. Following the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, Japan established its Biodiversity National Strategy in 1995 with the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries implementing laws and initiatives to categorize and protect biodiversity in Japan. The most famous bird species in Yambaru include the Okinawa rail, the Okinawa woodpecker (*noguchigera*) and the Ryukyu robin (*hontō akahige*). The first two species, the Okinawa rail and Okinawa woodpecker, are endemic to Yambaru (Yambaru Wildlife Conservation Center 2018). As of 2012, the Japanese government had registered sixteen species from the Yambaru Forest using the conservation designation of ‘natural treasure’ (Minato 2012).

While a focus on non-human species in the forest appears to be apolitical, the history of conservation politics in Yambaru is inseparable from US-Japan

security negotiations. In 1996, amidst a surge in island-wide protests following the rape of a schoolgirl in Okinawa by US servicemen, the Special Action Committee on Facilities and Areas in Okinawa produced a plan to return 3,987 hectares (out of 7,543 hectares) of the US military-occupied Northern Training Area in the Yambaru Forest (Ministry of Defense 2016; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 1996). In 2003, the Japanese government publicized its intention to nominate the forest as a World Natural Heritage Site. In 2013, the state formed a scientific committee to define the ecological value of the area. The forest was officially designated as Japan's thirty-third national park in 2016. This designation placed a limit on logging and other development activities, and was a prerequisite for the forest's nomination to the International Council on Monuments and Sites that decides on World Heritage status.

Kunigami Village's environmental education centre – the Yambaru Discovery Forest – is an example of the transition of land from military use to wildlife preserve. The United States returned the former Aha Training Range to Japan on 22 December 1998, releasing 525 hectares of land that included several sites registered as natural monuments for rare plant species. Since 2007, a non-profit organization, the Kunigami Tourism Association, has provided various outdoor programmes such as camping and hiking in the area.

In an interview at the Yambaru Discovery Forest facility, which is surrounded by dense woods, a nature tour guide called Oshiro described how US forces used the area for their training:

The US military leaves Marine soldiers with their bags filled with food. It's survival training, so they are left in the forest for a week or so. It's not like they damage the forest, unlike Kin town and Ginoza where they have live ammunition training. The training is just to endure in the forest, so the forest is not harmed. There are still some areas where US forces' helicopters land sometimes. Occasionally, Ospreys [MV-22 aircraft] land. When they fly, although they rarely land in the forest, you can tell the mark of their landing right away. Their engines are facing this way [pointing vertically] but the engines face up and inject heat when they descend, which leaves the area burnt.

Interview, 9 February 2018

As we walked, the guide pointed out the remaining dug-outs in which soldiers were said to have hidden during the training. He then moved on to describing trees, insects, soil and rare species in the forest. He crafted his explanations with quizzes, narratives and photographs to help visitors interpret the landscape and stimulate their imagination. However, the political history of conflict in and over

the land was not mentioned, other than acknowledging that the land was formerly used for US military training.

The nature guide's description highlights the intriguing emergence of nature tourism on what was formerly military land. While he acknowledges the historical use of the forest as a training site, the programmes at the Discovery Forest do not cater to touring either a military site or a 'dark tourism' site. This is significant, because dark tourism, which is defined as visits to sites of 'genocide, holocaust, assassination, crime or incarceration that have served to attract visitors' (Lennon and Foley 2000: 2), is common in other former battle sites on the island. Instead of drawing attention to the forest as a political instrument or a site of past deaths, the tour guide focuses on re-centring visitors' awareness of the forest landscape and its ecological value. This approach is intriguing because it points out two major issues in tourism representation of the Yambaru Forest. First, such an approach rejects the co-optation of war and militarization as the image of Okinawa, suggesting an alternative geopolitical imaginary of Okinawa beyond that of militarized islands. Second, it indicates the US military's ability to blend the social, political and even ecological environment despite extremely different functions of each in the surrounding space. I would argue that these two dynamics are not as contradictory as they may seem, because the elimination of an open military presence in the everyday landscape can achieve both. David Havlick (2018:9) calls out such forms of overlapping geographies of militarization as 'the ubiquity of militarization', in which militarized landscapes can be familiar yet concealed, so that we do not recognize our surrounding space as militarized. The emergence of nature tourism in what was formerly (and still is currently) militarized land in Yambaru exemplifies such hidden, ubiquitous effects. Havlick (2007: 154) argues that the conversion of military land to wildlife conservation sites is often presented as a 'win-win' situation in which 'nearly all the parties orchestrating or examining such conversions at some point describe them as both good for local economies and good for the environment'. Furthermore, Havlick examines how maintaining biodiversity as the core land value often sidesteps the question of contamination, since conservation land use, unlike commercial development, does not require a thorough environmental assessment for military-induced environmental issues, but leaves the landscape as it is (Havlick 2007).

Protecting biodiversity as a driver for military-to-wildlife conversion can obscure ecological costs and other socio-cultural, economic and political costs incurred by the military use of the land (Gaynor et al. 2016; Havlick 2007). Laurel Mei-Singh (2016) points out how the transition from military land to

conservation at Ka'ena point in Hawai'i brought forth carceral conservationism: the fencing of ex-military land; the imposition of capitalist land control; the removal of Indigenous land practices; and the construction of a tourism destination. Repurposing militarized land to land that is to be conserved shows the powerful congruence of militarism and conservation.

Contested paths towards UNESCO World Heritage site status

The Japanese Ministry of the Environment announced its plan to nominate the Yambaru Forest as part of Japan's fifth UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site: the 'Amami-Oshima Island, Tokunoshima Island, Northern Part of Okinawa Island, and Iriomote Island'. Various campaigns have since been put forward to promote the area as a potential UNESCO World Heritage site while developing conservation projects such as the eradication of invasive species. With the Ministry of the Environment promoting the idea that designation as a UNESCO World Heritage site would provide a powerful branding tool for declining rural communities, the ecological value of the forest is closely connected to its economic value through developing ecotourism opportunities. The Ministry of the Environment launched an office in Kunigami Village to educate visitors about the area's rare species, while also conducting various programmes for surveying and conserving rare species such as the Okinawa rail.

However, while efforts to designate the forest as a UNESCO World Heritage site continue, the presence of the Northern Training Area and the militarization on Takae and Henoko have emerged as friction points for this biodiversity hotspot. Two members of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) conducted site visits to all the nominated islands in October 2017. During their visit to Yambaru, several English-language banners appeared around the nominated forest and a group of people waited for the IUCN representatives to arrive to protest the continued presence of the US military in the area (see Figure 9.3). The process of heritage designation emphasized iconic species, yet the presence of the US military in the area had not been addressed by the state government. A group of representatives from the Ramsar Network in Japan published a request for the IUCN committee to include part of the Northern Training Area in the World Heritage site and examine the impact of the military base being constructed at Ōura Bay in Henoko (Ramsar Network Japan 2017).



Figure 9.3 A banner protesting against the US military base in the Yambaru Forest, 2018. Photograph by the author.

In May 2018, the IUCN's decision to defer examination of the islands for World Heritage status shocked some stakeholders who had expected to launch glorious media coverage of the confirmation of such status. The IUCN concluded that Yambaru's "wholeness" will not be fully satisfactory without the inclusion of the areas of greatest significance within the returned Northern Training Area on Okinawa' (IUCN 2018: 43) and suggested waiting for the government of Japan to incorporate the returned land into the national park. Furthermore, the request to consider ongoing militarization projects was declined because they were 'distanced from the nominated property'. Speaking to concerns about the introduction of invasive alien species through construction projects in which materials that could contain invasive species would be used, the IUCN proposed 'as a separate matter to the World Heritage nomination' to provide technical guidance if requested by the government of Japan (IUCN 2018: 46). The remaining training range was further described as following:

For the time being, the remaining NTA [Northern Training Area] remains under US control but acts as an important de facto buffer zone to the nominated property, contributing to landscape connectivity and also supporting important

habitats for key species. The IUCN mission confirms in general terms the great apparent significance of these areas, but it is notable that at the time of the mission these areas were not accessible and so were not visited – thus IUCN cannot fully evaluate them at the present time.

IUCN 2018: 43

The IUCN's decision was that the military land covered a crucial zone that contributed to 'landscape connectivity' and 'important habitats for key species'. However, due to a lack of access because of the US military, the advisory board was not able to evaluate its full account. The statement further indicates how this international conservation organization adopted a passive attitude to the ongoing militarization.

Furthermore, the contestation over the transition from military base to biodiversity sanctuary suggests the lack of villagers' perspectives on the state-led campaigns of land transition. One prominent nature photographer ('Kudaka') in the village holds a critical view towards the missing link between ordinary life on the ground and the biodiversity campaign:

People just claim the forest as 'the wonderful forest where Okinawa rail live' and 'the rich forest', but that doesn't help to tell the reality of the forest. Many people didn't even care to know what the forest is really about, and that's where I question the environmental education in Japan that tells 'the place is important because it is a special place' or 'this place is precious because this place is different from other places'. The question is, for whom is it special? For the communities where such 'special places' locate, it is just a normal landscape. There is nothing special about it. People in Kunigami don't see Mount Yonaha as special. Many people may say the Okinawa rail is special, but do you think they honestly think so? Same goes for Pryer's woodpecker. People think the bird is an important species because there are not many of them and many people have never seen them. But for us, they're not at all special. They are ordinary species. It is just that there are people who want to see them as special. You must think about what's behind such a view. Most projects are about money, because their businesses get easier if they emphasize how special those species are. For the government, seeing species as special makes it easier for them to implement projects. Yet do those people really hold a consciousness to conserve the species that they claim to be special? No. They only see the species as a resource that benefits their projects. They do not think protecting the species is actually their job, so they don't utilize their profit for conservation. In their views, conservation is someone else's job. That's the biggest issue. You can brand the species, you can use the species for your business, but if you use them as resources, do work on conservation. That's obvious if you have that as the core of your livelihood, but

even the government does not do that. I have never heard anyone explaining the reason why exactly this place must become a world heritage site.

Interview, 30 November 2018

As someone who ‘grew up in the forest’ and who was long committed to promoting conservation of the forest, the comments of this photographer depicts the accumulated frustration towards the exclusion of the local population. Despite meeting with numerous consultants, researchers and government officials who came and left Yambaru, he felt that they failed to answer the central question: ‘Why should this place become a world heritage site?’ The photographer talked with deep frustration and emotion, and worried about the objectification of the forest he loves.

Conclusion

The Japanese government portrays the relocation of US military bases in Okinawa as ‘lifting the burden.’ However, since the total concentration of the US military on the islands has hardly decreased, the burden has not been lifted but rather shifted to harm other lives and ecologies. While both the Japanese government and the United States celebrated the return of the forest land, the ongoing militarization of Okinawa underscores that we need to carefully consider the relationship between occupation, militarism and conservationism. We not only need to consider the lingering impacts of occupation but also to ask what *demilitarizing* the islands might mean for different people and different interest groups.

This chapter has illustrated how the political history of Okinawa has influenced the construction of values around the Yambaru Forest, be those political, ecological or economic. In examining how the United States and Japan interpret the forest, we can determine overlapping interests that seek to assert control over the land. In exploring how the returned land is claimed, the question arises as to who has the ability to define land use after militarization. The transition of land in Yambaru sheds lights on the legacy of exclusion – the exclusion of residents and local history – in the dominant narratives of the forest. What this chapter highlights are the different forms of legitimacy for claiming control over this land on the part of both the US military and Japan. The US military’s security discourse legitimizes the presence for US troops and the continued use of expropriated land, while biodiversity conservation creates room for launching conservation efforts without addressing militarism.

The spatial history of occupation in the Yambaru Forest thus challenges us to engage with the seemingly apolitical space of the forest as a focus of the political contestation over land management. Doing so requires us to re-centre our focus on Yambaru, with its history of evacuation, militarism and ongoing protests against militarization. These are faded memories in a public narrative that now depicts the forest as a jungle warfare training centre, a space for diversity, or a potential World Heritage site.⁴ Seeing the forest as political, we need to engage with the question of how to commemorate the history of the forest without further excluding people on the ground. Just as hikers walk through the fallen leaves in the forest, patiently searching for signs of animal and insect life, so the forest landscape holds rich stories of occupation and resistance that are waiting to be uncovered.

Notes

- 1 All soldiers appearing in the clips are cited in this chapter with pseudonyms.
- 2 Emphasis added by the author.
- 3 This is a pseudonym.
- 4 At the time of writing, a decision on World Heritage site status has been suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

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