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“Moving the Kitchen out”: Contemporary Bugis Migration

Mukrimin*

This article provides a description of Bugis and intra-island migration, analyzing the pattern of migration when Bugis settlers move from their home villages of Bone to the new frontier area of Baras in West Sulawesi, Indonesia. I argue that unlike migrants in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and their present-day contemporaries, Bugis in Baras are permanent migrants referred to as those who have *mallékké dapûrêng* (“moved the kitchen out,” in their language). This ethnographic study in Baras presents an alternative interpretation of migration patterns among the Bugis. The findings of this study indicate that farmers are the main participants in this permanent migration. Bugis in Baras commit to *mallékké dapûrêng* because of their traditional value of *siri*’ (self-esteem and honor), further influenced by environmental, economic, social, and political factors.

Keywords: Bugis, migration, *mallékké dapûrêng*, Baras of West Sulawesi, Telle and Timurung of South Sulawesi

Introduction

The Bugis people were originally from the lowlands of South Sulawesi, Indonesia, an area that they still dominantly occupy. Following Christian Pelras, in this paper I refer to the Bugis as people from major states (Bone, Wajo, Soppeng, and Sidenreng) or groups of petty states (Pare-Pare and Suppa’ regions of the west coast; areas around Sinjai in the south of lowland South Sulawesi). The lingua francas of these areas are very similar, with only minor differences, and are largely recognized by linguists as “constituting dialects” (Pelras 1996; see also Acciaioli 1989). The ethnonym Bugis may also be used for people who are descended from migrants of the aforementioned domains, settling permanently outside their homeland.

Migrants and wanderers are known as *passompě* in the Bugis language (Lineton

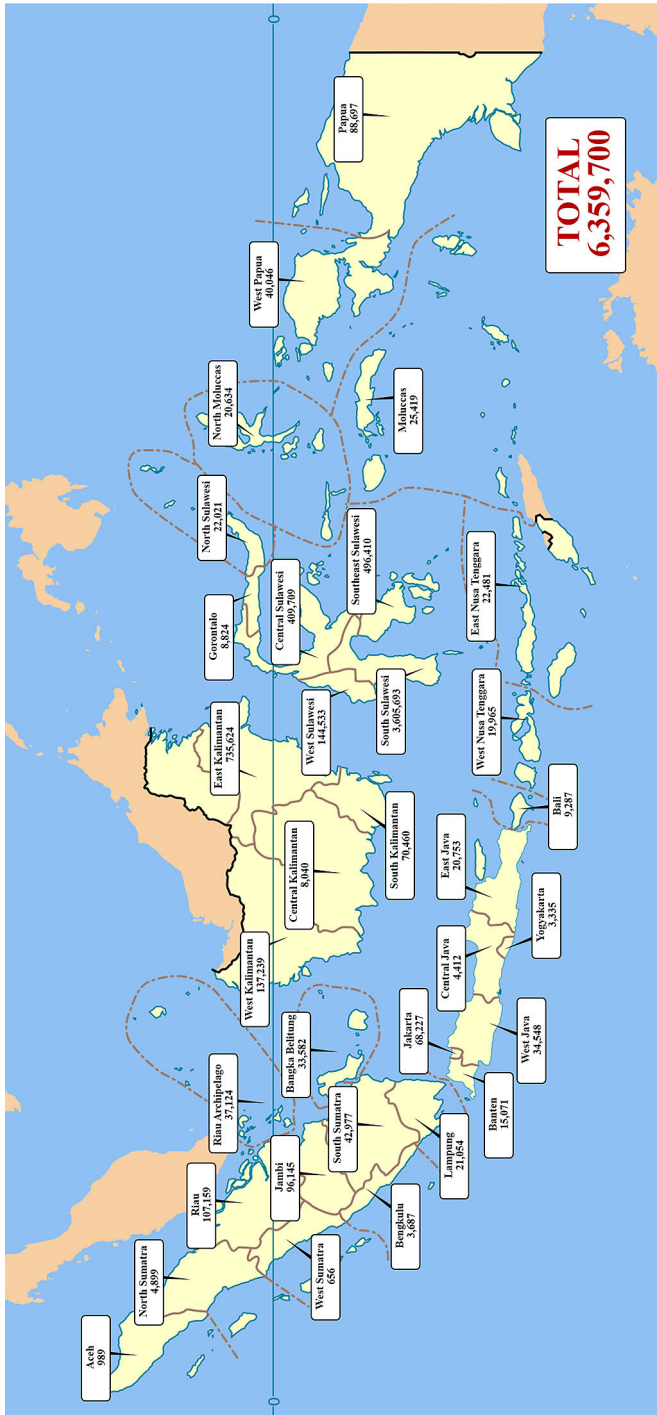
* School of Social Sciences, The University of Western Australia, 35 Stirling Highway, Perth WA 6009 Australia; IAIN Sultan Amai, Jl. Gelatik No. 1, Kota Gorontalo, Gorontalo 96124, Indonesia
e-mail: mukrimin@iaingorontalo.ac.id

1975a; 1975b; Maeda 1988; Acciaoli 1989; Pelras 1996; Kesuma 2004; Ahmadin 2008). Abu Hamid (2004, 46) elucidates how the word is derived from *sompě*, a noun meaning “sail,” with the agentive prefix *pa* before *sompě* further qualifying the word as “sailor.” According to Hamid, “not every sailor is a *passompě*,” although the Bugis anthropologist often defines *passompě* as a “sailor and trader, who sails across different islands and countries” (2004, 46–47). Hamid further states that the term is closer to a “wanderer” (*perantau* or *pengembara*) in Bugis migration (Hamid 2004, 47). Ahmadin (2008, 59) defines *passompě* as having the following characteristics: (1) leaving their homeland, (2) for a short or long period, (3) voluntarily, (4) in search of good fortune (*massappã dallè*) and knowledge, (5) having both a willingness and an unwillingness to return home, and (6) marked by the sociocultural character of the Bugis community. Excerpts from several texts show that *pallaong*, the Bugis word for “work,” originates from the root *lao*, meaning “go,” implying that one should leave one’s home or even *wanua* (home village).

This article provides a holistic description of Bugis migration, analyzing the pattern of migration of settlers under my care, who migrated from their home villages of Bone to the new frontier area of Baras, West Sulawesi. Proposing an additional type of Bugis migration, I argue that unlike migrants in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and present-day migrant contemporaries, the Bugis in Baras are permanent migrants who have *mallékké dapûrêng* (“moved the kitchen out,” in their language). The evidence in Baras presents an alternative interpretation of an additional type of Bugis migration, based on their traditional value of *siri*’ (self-esteem and honor) further influenced by environmental, economic, social, and political factors. The article is divided into three sections, the first of which discusses background information on historical accounts of Bugis migration covering the seventeenth century to the present. The second section is an analysis of contemporary Bugis migration, while the third deals with the findings of an alternative interpretation of Bugis migration (*mallékké dapûrêng*).

According to the 2010 National Population Census of the National Statistics Bureau (BPS), Bugis were ranked eighth among Indonesian ethnic groups, with a population estimated at 6.3 million (2.69 percent of the total population of Indonesia) (BPS 2011, 9, 31). More recent data showed 6,359,700 Bugis spread across the Indonesian provinces (BPS 2011, 153). The census data also indicated that more than 2.5 million Bugis lived in cities and 3.8 million in rural areas (see Map 1). Along with the approximately 1 million Bugis living overseas, there are more than 7 million Bugis worldwide.

As is evident from Map 1, millions of Bugis live outside their homeland in South Sulawesi; their main settlements are in the provinces of East Kalimantan, Southeast Sulawesi, Central Sulawesi, West Sulawesi, West Kalimantan, and Riau. According to a national survey (BPS 2017), there were more Bugis residing outside their homeland than



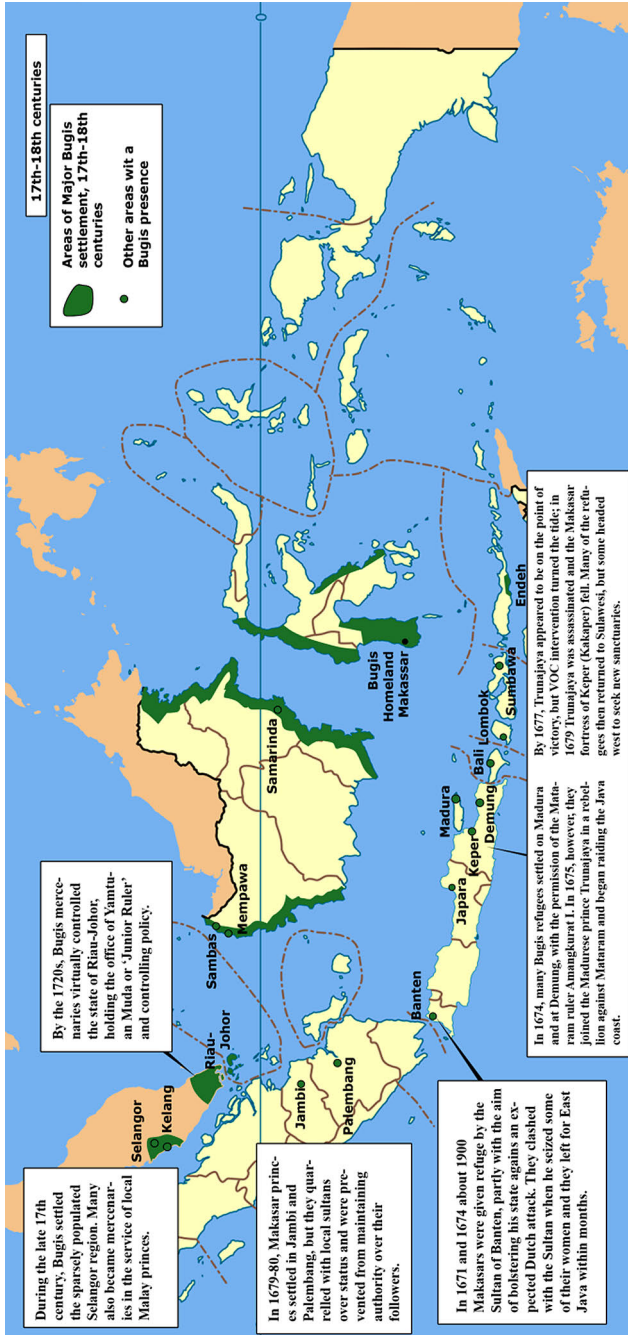
Map 1 Number of Bugis in Each Province of Indonesia
 Source: BPS (Statistics Indonesia) (2011, 40), adapted by author.

in South Sulawesi. There were approximately 728,465 Bugis living in Malaysia and more than 15,000 in Singapore (BPS 2017). A 1930 Netherlands East Indies census showed about 4,961 Bugis in the Malay Peninsula that year (Departement van Economische Zaken v.5 1930, 20–21, in Acciaioli 1989, 10). It is evident that Bugis are to be found in various parts of the globe.

Bugis Migration

A variety of evidence over time has demonstrated that migration is of paramount importance within Bugis society. One of the first scholars to conduct research on Bugis migration was Jacqueline Lineton (1975a; 1975b). Her groundbreaking research on settlers in Sumatra created a portrait of the *passompĕ Ugi* (Bugis migrants) as wanderers and migrants. Lineton traced the rivalry between the Portuguese and Dutch over the control of trade routes between the ports of Melaka (Malay Peninsula) and Makassar (southwest Sulawesi) from the 1500s until the end of the 1600s. According to her, the fall of Makassar to the Dutch in 1669 was the point when Bugis and Makassarese began engaging in inter-island trade from their base in South Sulawesi, which led to the establishment of the Bugis diaspora. During this period a large number of Bugis groups moved out to the Malay Peninsula, reaching the Siam areas (Lineton 1975b, 174–175; see also Andaya 1975; 1981), while many Makassarese settlers tended to move to Java, Sumatra, and the Bima region of eastern Sumbawa and farther eastward into Nusa Tenggara Timur and beyond. A majority of the migrants were merchants and peasants (Lineton 1975b, 174–179).

Thousands of refugees from Sulawesi, particularly among the Wajo people, were created as a result of the 1669 defeat of the Wajo kingdom (a close ally of Gowa and Tallo), the destruction of Tosora (Wajo's capital), and the burning of Wajo's fields in 1670 by the Dutch East India Company, while the Bugis Bone King Arung Palakka and his successors reigned in the South Sulawesi region (Andaya 1975, 116–117; 1981, 208–227). However, the most spectacular Bugis movements were noted by Robert Cribb (2000) (see Map 2) during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These refugees were the initiators of the Bugis diaspora in the Malay world (Andaya 1995, 120); there is concrete documentation of this in the form of the installation of five Bugis princes as local king and lords in Siantan, Johor, Matan, and Menpawah (Andaya 1995, 127). The waves of refugees continued across areas such as Aceh and Palembang in Sumatra; Sulu in the Philippines; Kutai, Banjarmasin, Pasir, and Sukadana in Kalimantan; and even Bali, Buton, and Flores (Anderson 2003, 70).



Map 2 Bugis Migration in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

Source: Cribb (2000).

In the 1970s Pelras, studying aquatic populations of the Malay Peninsula—particularly the Duano, Selatar, and Sama of Johor—observed that Kuala Benut (a Bugis village) had been established long ago. He also noted that Bugis had played important roles as merchants and politicians and had strong connections to Malay sultanates, particularly Johor (Pelras 1972).

The period of the Kahar Muzakkar movement (1950–65) in South Sulawesi saw another wave of Bugis emigration to Jambi, Riau, and Tanjung Priok (Jakarta), among other regions. This migration continued through the 1970s, to Lake Lindu and Donggala in Central Sulawesi (see also Lineton 1975b, 174–177; Ammarell 2002, 59–61). Accounts by Narifumi Maeda (1988; 1994) and Jan van der Putten (2001) highlight the Muzakkar rebellion as a significant factor in the movement of Bugis from their homeland to Malay regions. During this period of rebellion villages were attacked, cattle were stolen by *perampok* (robbers) at night, and villagers' limited supplies of rice were forcibly taken by the Muzakkar's men. The situation was compounded by compulsory military enlistment. Lineton (1975b) notes that most villagers, seeing no solution to their predicament, viewed *merantau* (migration) as the only means to survive (see also Acciaioli 1989, 55–59). The Bugis of Wajo (compared with the previous generation) did not dominate migration in this period, although the Bugis from Bone and Amparita in Sidenreng Rappang did take part.

From the 1980s, Greg Acciaioli (1989; 2000; 2004) studied Bugis settlers in Central Sulawesi as he expanded the conceptualization of migration motivation in Bugis society into the symbolic dimension of the Bugis notion of “searching for good fortune.” Holistically, what was noticeable about these Bugis settlers was their expanding patterns of occupation, as trading and farming were no longer dominant (Acciaioli 1989, 53). The most important feature among Bugis settlers in Lindu was that the quest for “good fortune” was seen to “draw people forth on searches outside their native region, through ancestral and local spirit beliefs, related to their homeland and new areas of settlement” (Acciaioli 1989, 325). The Bugis in Lindu “also seek to control their new surroundings, which includes its resources, people and spirit” (Acciaioli 1989, 325; see also Acciaioli 2000; 2004).

Similarly, Gene Ammarell (1999; 2002) investigated a community of Bugis ancestry in Balobaloang, Sabalana archipelago, located in the Strait of Makassar (just west of Makassar city). Exploring Bugis migration to Dili, Timor-Leste, he reported that Bugis and Makassarese immigrants made up approximately 80 percent of traders in Dili, hence dominating the trading scene. However, by the end of the 1990s the conflict in Timor-Leste had led them to leave for West Papua and Kalimantan (Ammarell 2002, 61). Bugis from Pinrang, Sinjai, and Bone were among these migrants, and they created “social

control through assimilation,” further “recreating their own social order to maintain political and moral authority.”

Previous scholars and researchers (e.g., Lineton 1975a; 1975b; Andaya 1981; Acciaioli 1989; Ammarell 2002) also linked the waves of Bugis migration to war, security, and economic reasons. Likewise, Pelras (1996, 320–326) emphasized the historic drivers of different phases of Bugis migration, linking the eighteenth-century wave of migration to Bengkulu and Riau in Sumatra and Pasir and Samarinda in Kalimantan with war, security, and economic reasons. Places such as Palu Bay and Valley (Central Sulawesi), Sumbawa, Indragiri, and Johor were also involved in this wave of settlement (as shown in Map 2).

Migration in the Indonesian context is rendered in Bahasa Indonesia as *merantau*, with John Echols and Hassan Shadily (1992, 449–450) translating *rantau* as “abroad, foreign country.” Thus, *merantau* means to (1) leave one’s home area to make one’s way in life, (2) wander about, and (3) sail across rivers. A *perantau*, according to Echols and Shadily, is (1) someone wandering about the country, (2) a settled foreigner.

Oftentimes, Bugis use several words related to the notion of *merantau* or migration. My informants told me about the phrase *mattana bare’*, which literally means “to go to the west,” implying migration to Sumatra and the western parts of the Sulawesi region. *Sompě* or *massompě* is another term mostly used for “going abroad.” The terms *mattana bare’* and *sompě*, according to the informants, are related to the *perampok* attacks in the early 1980s in Telle and Timurung villages. However, some migrants also went *sompě* and *mattana bare’* due to economic factors.

The term *mallékké dapûrêng*, often used by the Bugis (for examples of *dapûrêng* [kitchens], see Fig. 1), refers to migration, which is the focus of this study. In literary studies the term was initially mentioned by Benjamin Frederik Matthes (1864) in his *Boeginesche chrestomathie* (Bugis chrestomathy). He talked about *pao-pao ri kadong* as an old Bugis *lontara’* (alphabet), when the king (*mappajungè*) of Luwu was no longer trusted as an honest leader; this led to his people engaging in *mallékké dapûrêng*. In the *lontara’*, the people of Luwu said: “We the people of Luwu wish to *mallékké dapûrêng* to Palopo, as our border now is Baebunta” (*maelo’ni atanna mappajunge mallékké dapûrêng lâo Palopo, gankanna Baebunta*) (Matthes 1864, 2–3). Luwu’s capital city at the time was Malangke (now a subdistrict of Luwu Utara in South Sulawesi). The Luwu natives implied that they terminated their political contract with their king, as the *lontara’* of *pao-pao ri kadong, mallékké dapûrêng*, contrasted with the idea of *ipoppangi tana* (being expelled). In the past, if a Bugis king or leader did not like a person or a group of people, the latter faced possible banishment (*dusir*) from the kingdom. Important examples of banishment among the Bugis are the case of Arung Palakka in the late seventeenth



Fig. 1 A Traditional *Dapûrêng* (Kitchen) in Telle, Bone (Left); A Group of Bugis Women around the *Dapûrêng* in Motu, Baras (Right). Men Are Discouraged from Entering the *Dapûrêng*.

Sources: Photos by author.

century (Andaya 1981; 1995) and popular stories among South Sulawesi people concerning Kahar Muzakkar during the early period of Japanese colonization. The story of Muzakkar centers around the accusation against him by Luwu King Andi Jemma, who welcomed and collaborated with the Japanese army in Sulawesi before Muzakkar was banished to Java. Later Muzakkar returned to Sulawesi, and he led a rebellion against the new Indonesian government in the mid-1960s (on Muzakkar's movement, see Harvey 1974).

A *dapûrêng* (kitchen) is not only a place within the house for cooking but a socio-cultural symbol of status, with Bugis families focusing on the appearance of their kitchens. Hence, this study discovered that when a family moved out to the *rantau* world, there had to be agreement among family members, particularly from the wife, who was the "owner" of the *dapûrêng*.

Since the kitchen is usually located inside the house, it is regarded as a private and intimate space; in fact, the local word for "kitchen" is the same as the word for "inner" or "inside." Also, the way a *dapûrêng* is arranged symbolically reflects its owner's social status, as it is directly related to food supplies for the family, especially storage of rice (*pabbarésséng*). In a traditional house there is a ladder adjacent to the kitchen, providing direct access to the *rakkéang* (attic) above the ceiling, where rice paddy and other materials such as gold, implements, and heirlooms are stored (Lathief 2010, 72). According to Pelras (2003, 260), when there are male guests in old Bugis houses, the family's unmarried females sleep in the attic. Furthermore, in relation to the significance of the *dapûrêng* and *pabbarésséng*, there is a famous saying: "It is better to die in blood than to

die in hunger” (*lebbimi matè maddara’e, na mate temmanrè*). In other words, all activities, efforts, and achievements of a family in any profession are aimed at fulfilling needs symbolically represented by the *dapûrêng*.

Symbolically, the kitchen is culturally, economically, and socially the central focus of the family, besides being the *possî’ bola*, or the home’s navel. Pelras (2003, 260, 280) refers to the kitchen as “the hearth, which is always oriented transversally to the house’s axis.” The authority to arrange and manage the *dapûrêng* belongs to the woman or wife, as issues involving the kitchen are often referred to as “domestic matters.” Similarly, Susan Millar (1989, 26) states that the *dapûrêng* is “firmly under the authority of women, who share close and cooperative relations.” The *dapûrêng* is not only a symbol of household prosperity, it is also the core of the domestic household and therefore attracts the core attention of the family. Therefore, as we see in the next section, when a household’s family members move to another place, the first and foremost thing to be considered is an agreement between husband and wife over *dapûrêng* matters.

Contemporary Migration

Bugis migrants spread around the Indonesian archipelago (Map 1), encroaching on western Sulawesi (especially Polewali Mandar, Mamuju, Central Mamuju, and North Mamuju), where they played pivotal roles in the formation of West Sulawesi Province (Sulawesi Barat, or Sul-Bar for short). In Southeast Sulawesi, the Bugis dominated districts such as Kendari, Kolaka, North Kolaka, and East Kolaka, participating in the establishment of the new district of Pohuwato and eventually the new province of Gorontalo. Until very recently, they played pivotal roles in the transformation and establishment of these regions (Mukrimin 2019).

Outside Sulawesi, Bugis are concentrated in urban and relatively resource-rich areas. In Kalimantan, for example, they continue to take over Samarinda, Balikpapan, Pasir, Kutai Kartanegara, East Kutai, Bontang, Tarakan, Nunukan, and other districts. Andrew Vayda and Ahmad Sahur (1985, 95; 1996) note that Bugis farmers have continued to penetrate the area of Loa Janan since the early 1960s. These spontaneous settlers were active participants in deforestation in East Kalimantan, as they filled the farther eastern Indonesian regions of Sorong in Papua Island and Ternate and the newly founded city of Sofifi in Maluku. Bugis migration has intensified over the last two decades, complementing those generations who have been in the *rantau* world since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

It is safe to say that the Bugis (both permanent and non-permanent migrants) have

played important roles in transforming Makassar, Batam, Pekanbaru, Samarinda, Balikpapan, Sorong, and Mamuju into Indonesia's metropolitan cities (Mukrimin 2019).

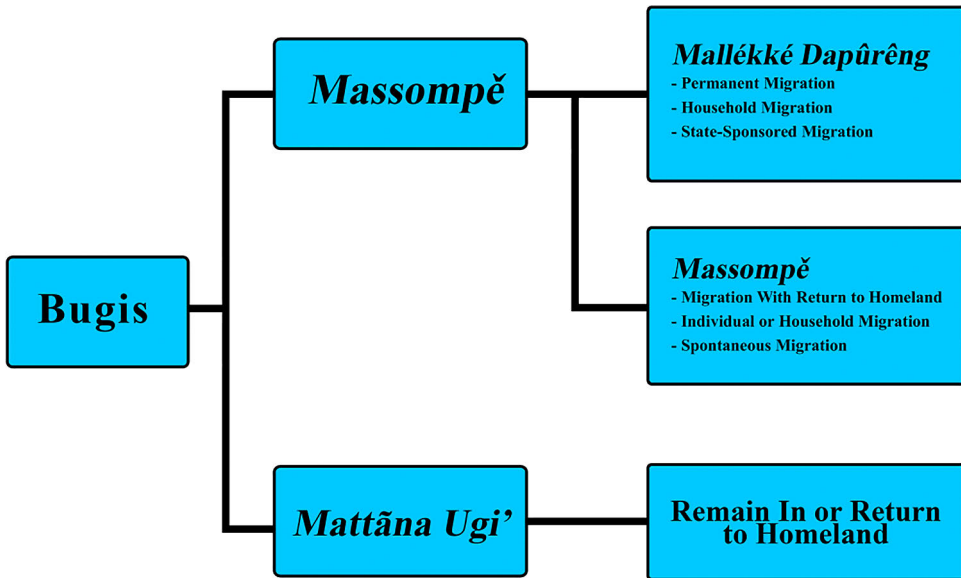
Outside Indonesia, the Bugis have long resided in various parts of Malaysia, such as Linggi (Hamid 1986), Sabah, Johor, and Selangor (Omar *et al.* 2012). Nurul Ilmi Idrus's study in Malaysia shows that there is a recent pattern of illegal migration labeled *makkunrai passimokolo*, which refers to "women who smuggle themselves into Malaysia under the cover of night by boat, in order to avoid Malaysian officials" (Idrus 2008, 155).

Bugis have had a significant impact on the trading and economy of the island-state of Singapore. According to my estimates, there are about 1 million Bugis settlers (both residents and newcomers) in Malaysia and Singapore. Indeed, I was surprised to find myself sitting with a group of youths from Sinjai on a plane to Western Australia to begin my studies in January 2013. They were working far from their ancestral homeland as miners in Pilbara. I was also impressed during my stay in Makassar, on the way back from my fieldwork research in November 2014, when I met with their labor leader from Pammana, who was preparing for his journey to Nigeria for oil-drilling activities.

Bugis migrants engage in various occupations ranging from entrepreneurship to agriculture, although a significant but smaller number go on to become *pegawai negeri sipil* (civil servants), contributing to the chain of migration when they receive postings far from their homeland. This itself has led to the spread of Bugis citizens everywhere, with horizons expanding beyond their homeland.

Previous researchers and scholars (particularly non-Indonesian ones) have not acknowledged the other type of migration among the Bugis, which is *mallékké dapûrêng*; instead, they generally label all migrants as *passompě*. However, local scholars have distinguished modes of Bugis migration as either *sompě* or *mallékké dapûrêng*. For example, analyzing the migrant behavior of Kalola villagers in Wajo District, Cik Hasan Bisri (1985) identified both seasonal migration (*sompě*) and permanent migration (*mallékké dapûrêng*) practices. For Kalola migrants, economic achievement was a crucial means to attain social status (Bisri 1985, 24), with Ida Bagus Mantra (1997, 12) translating *mallékké dapûrêng* as "*perpindahan kaum bersama-sama ke tempat atau negeri jiran*" (the movement of a family together with its members to a neighboring place or country).

Further study of Bugis migration in Johor (especially the migration led by Prince Opu Dang Rilakka) by Andi Kesuma (2004) clearly distinguishes the types of *mallékké dapûrêng* as being closer in connotation and motives to permanent migration than *sompě*. Kesuma (2004, 30–31) furthermore suggests that *mallékké dapûrêng* refers to "movement caused by a particular fundamental reason related to the Bugis value of *siri'*", while *sompě* is mostly motivated by the goal of obtaining a better life, with the intention to return



Scheme 1 Pattern of Bugis Migration

Source: Adapted by Author

home sometimes.” This statement is in line with the argument of Graeme Hugo (1982, 60), who suggests that the key difference between temporary and permanent migration “lies in the intentions of individuals, coupled with their level of commitment to particular places” (see Scheme 1).

One Bugis scholar characterizes *mallékké dapûrêng* as “protest through actions by citizens against their leader or king, expressed through moving out of their homeland to another country” (Mattulada 1995, 449). This action usually occurs if the people of a kingdom consider their king or leader incapable of solving their critical problems. Quoting from chapters 139 and 225 of *Latoa* (Mattulada 1995, 449), it is indicated that those committed to *mallékké dapûrêng* announced freedom from their king by declaring: “We the people discharge the king, releasing ourselves free from his power; and therefore, moving out from this *wanua*.” This implies that *mallékké dapûrêng* was not only an economic decision but also an environmental, social, and political reaction for Bugis.

Mallékké Dapûrêng to Baras

During my ethnographic study of Baras in North Mamuju, West Sulawesi Province, some

informants were able to tell me about their *merantau* experiences. For example, among the 100 Bugis I met at a field site, I paid particular attention to at least 12 people who had lived somewhere else before settling in Baras. For example, Daeng Mattirodeceng spent more than 6 years in Jambi and 10 in Palembang, while Daeng Pallontara lived in Palembang for about 7 years. Similarly, Ibu Hajja Tang lived in Sumatra before moving to Malangke, Luwu. Daeng Macuwa, the oldest man among the Bugis in Baras, spent more than four decades in Jambi, Palembang, Riau, and Kolaka. A rich man known as Pak Haji Tinulu was from Sumatra, and Pak Haji Ponggawa, a *kepala desa* (village chief) in SP 8, spent his youth in Makassar. Daeng Magado and Daeng Mappoji worked on an oil palm plantation in Malaysia for more than five years. Haji Daeng Mabonga arguably became the richest Bugis in Baras, living in Batunon, Kolaka, for three years and Tawau, Malaysia, for four. These informants are those Bugis who first began settling in Baras, West Sulawesi (Mukrimin, forthcoming 1). Most of these informants who had lived somewhere else before settling in Baras maintained that they would not move again or return to their home villages (see Fig. 2).¹⁾

It is important to note that with the exception of two or three settlers in Baras, about 80 percent of both men and women from Telle village possess the title of *daeng*. Therefore, the settlers in Baras are similar in social rank to many of those who settled in Lindu, Central Sulawesi, whom Acciaioli (1989, 54) classifies as “the lowest nobles and highest commoners.” These migrants (among my informants interviewed) are former transmigrants who have been in Baras since 1988 and 1989 (Mukrimin, forthcoming 1); they hail from Telle and Timurung, Bone District, and have notable *merantau* experiences.

Looking for confirmation of the distinction between the concepts of *sompě* and *mallekké dapûrèng*, I realized the interviewees often used the words interchangeably. But when I asked, “Do you intend to move somewhere else?” or even “Do you intend to move back to your homeland?” most of my informants answered, “No.” One informant even expressed his wish to be buried in Baras: “I have been here since 1988, and hopefully my *akhirat* will be here as well” (Daeng Macuwa, pers. comm., 2014). The only exception was Pak Haji Ponggawa, who expanded his lands by buying new properties in Palu for business; however, he is neither a genuine farmer nor a transmigrant, but a merchant who spontaneously migrated to Baras to establish a new business and on that basis enter into local politics (Mukrimin, forthcoming 1; forthcoming 2).

1) All informant names are pseudonyms. Hence, in order to avoid misnaming my informants, I use adjectives that simplify their character, job, etc. For instance, if someone is very brave I call him Daeng Parani. This is important due to the range of informants' numbers and the research field site: addressing someone frequently as “her/his” instead of by their first name would confuse both the writer and the reader. This was useful for the Bugis community participants as well as those with no ascribed social-rank name, who were ascribed with pseudonyms.



The author listens to an experienced Bugis wanderer from Telle.



A man in Baras who claims to have spent about 20 years in South Sumatra went *lao sala* [went about without purpose] across Sumatra.



A wife and husband, both from Telle; the man had been in Tawau for about 10 years.



A merchant couple in Motu, Baras. The husband spent about four years in Tawau, Malaysia, and two years in Batunon, Southeast Sulawesi.

Fig. 2 Some Bugis Migrants from Bone in Baras, North Mamuju

Sources: Photos by author.

The social rank of Bugis settlers in Baras has been one of the key ingredients to their successful migration. For instance, a 50-year-old man in Balanti told me: “*Iyyaro rekkanenge koe lalo tenggai risesena abbatirenge, de’ namatanre akka; jaji makawe dalle’e*” (Our families here have a middle-ranking social status, and therefore we do not show off our rank, which has resulted in good fortune for us). This rank system is similar to the distinguishing feature between the Bugis and Makassarese in the diaspora during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Andaya 1995).

In comparison, the well-known Indonesian ethnic group Minangkabau follows the concept of *merantau cino* (endless migration). Tsuyoshi Kato (1982, 29–31) differentiated the types of *merantau* into three categories: “village segmentation,” a type of migration

predominantly “from the legendary period to early nineteenth century”; “circular migration,” “from the late nineteenth century to the 1930s”; and *merantau cino*, “from the 1950s to the present day.” According to Kato, *merantau cino* is commonly practiced by nuclear families. And according to my colleague Donard Abu Hamdi (a University of Western Australia student researching Minangkabau entrepreneurship in the *rantau* world), it has become an important stage of voluntary migration, requiring men’s willingness to remain permanently in their new residences. In the past, a man usually set off alone as a wanderer in search of a better life, after which he came back to pick up his family. Nowadays, because life is harder in the *ranah* (hometown) while the *rantau* world offers better opportunities, there is a tendency for families to prefer *merantau cino* as their mode of migration. While they may have no intention of going back to West Sumatra, they may still feel connected to Minangkabau through relatives visiting during Hari Raya. However, such visits are no longer regular (Donard Gomes, pers. comm., 2015).

Minangkabau migrants tend to concentrate in urban areas or big cities, such as Jakarta and Bandung, while Bugis prefer to reside in rural or frontier areas. There are Bugis who move to cities such as Makassar and Palembang, but the numbers are less significant. Equally important are the occupations of these migrants: Minangkabau are usually merchants or traders (Kato 1982, 27), while most Bugis are farmers. This distinction is particularly interesting because the Minangkabau have a matrilineal system that creates “more pressure” for men. In this system, men are not tied to the hometown (unlike women), although they have to prove their worth as marriage partners to their spouse (Lyn Parker, pers. comm., 2015). By contrast, Bugis who are committed to *mallékké dapûrêng* often go together as husband and wife. Hence, in terms of “obtained properties” in the *rantau* or “acquired good fortune” (to borrow Acciaoli’s term) in the new settlement, Bugis couples have mutual ownership and responsibility.

The government’s political policy through Indonesia’s transmigration program was the main reason why people from Timuring and Telle moved to the frontier area (Baras). Answering my question “With whom did you come to Baras?” or “Are there any family members who came with you?” informants from among the Bugis settlers in Baras all responded, “My nuclear family,” which included their wife and children. The majority of first settlers came to Baras with their spouses, since it was one of the prerequisites of transmigration to have a man come along with his wife and children where applicable (Mukrimin, forthcoming 1). One informant stated:

I sold the only *harta* [property] I had along with my house in the *kampung* for pocket money. But now, my house here is actually twice as big as the previous house in my village. My wife and I are happy here. (Haji Daeng Macenning, pers. comm., 2014)

This further implies that *mallékké dapûrêng* is a political reaction to the conditions of the (particularly local) government at the time. Encountering situations where they could not expect any economic or sociopolitical changes from their local government, villagers were often motivated to migrate. A former village officer from Timurung told me: “In the 1970s and 1980s, we felt that there was no *tau mapparenta* [government], as we sought for prosperity in our *wanua (kampung)*” (Pak Sareppek, pers. comm., 2014).

Environmental factors were also a contributing factor to the migration of villagers from Telle and Timurung, when they found it difficult to eke out a living from their lands. What I remember vividly of these informants during my interviews is their cries when I asked “What made you to move to Baras?” The answers were always to the effect of “The lands in the *kampung* are no longer suitable to make a living.” Hence, *maddare'* (dry land farming) became the only way to survive, with the farmlands providing diminishing returns (see the left photo in Fig. 3, for example) and consequently motivating countless villagers to leave their homes. A 40-year-old man recounted his story in tears: “One thing I can tell you is that at that time I just thought if I did not leave Telle, my family might die from hunger.” His cousin Daeng Macenning (a 60-year-old widow) added to the story:



A house left by its owner in Timurung because the owner was *mallékké dapûrêng*.



A *passompe'* house in Bone.

Fig. 3 A Comparison of Houses between Those Who Go *Sompě* (Right) and Those Committed to *Mallékké Dapûrêng* (Left)

Sources: Photos by author.

Sitongenna ndi', wettunna leppe jataki, touki mangrasa-rasa, paina pai'e iruntu; tapi masiriki lisu kampong, gangkangna maddapi nenniya mengre'I ellinna cokla'e taung 1997. Mappamulani irasai cenninna gollana onronge ri Baras.

Actually, we really suffered a bitter life in Baras, particularly after the living cost stipends [subsidies from the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration] were stopped. This led to a shame of returning back to our ancestral homes (*masiri*). The situation continued until 1997, after which we started to enjoy the sweetness of life as a result of a boom in cocoa production and sales.

The dire environmental conditions in their home villages became the main reason for migrants to move out of Baras; an agricultural frontier provided them with massive lands and a promise of a better life (for further discussion on the frontier in West Sulawesi, see Mukrimin, forthcoming 1). Hence, environmental factors were a key push for Bugis in Baras to engage in *mallékké dapûrêng*. *Mallékké dapûrêng* was frequently mentioned among themselves as *matesiri*' (social death), implying the possibility of dying due to hunger because of a lack of land for cultivation. In a no-win situation, most Bugis prefer to die struggling to survive than to live in poverty, a testament to their spirit of survival in any kind of environment.

Another major factor distinguishing the concepts of *sompě* and *mallékké dapûrêng* in Baras is that *sompě* refers mainly to anyone (with any kind of occupation) who goes outside his/her homeland, while *mallékké dapûrêng* is enacted primarily by farmers who move to a new adopted homeland with no intention of going back home. This distinction can be traced by elaborating on the *perantau* houses from Timurung and Telle (see Fig. 3).

However, those engaged in non-farming occupations, such as gold mining in South Kalimantan or entrepreneurship in big cities such as Makassar or Jakarta, are mobile migrants, riding the wave of individual migrants.

Most times, peasant migrants are committed to *mallékké dapûrêng* because they have to go with their nuclear family to a frontier area in order to kick-start a new life. This implies that the household, not the individual, is one entity. *Sompě* participants often leave their houses to relatives or friends, while *mallékké dapûrêng* participants often sell their houses (if owned) in order to raise capital for resettlement. When I visited Timurung and Telle, the village heads directed me to houses belonging to *sompě* and *mallékké dapûrêng* participants. The houses of *passompě* migrants were occupied by family members left behind (because those migrants occasionally came and went), while those of *mallékké dapûrêng* had been sold or left to rot.

The timing of the departure of Bugis settlers for their migration destinations sometimes follows a seasonal pattern. *Massompě* often stay in their villages during the rainy season in order to harvest rice paddies after the rains. In contrast, for *mallékké dapûrêng* there is no seasonal pattern, because they end up selling all their possessions (including

house, livestock, and farm). In fact, the first wave of settlers from Telle and Timurung moved to Baras *en masse* (*sekaligus*) (Mukrimin, forthcoming 1).

All in all, settlers still maintain contact and connections with their homeland through the mobile temporary migrants categorized as *passompě*. However, migration is not only about “gaining fame and success abroad,” as Andaya (1995, 135) observed among the Bugis who had *massompě* to Malaysia. For *mallékké dapûrêng*, the connection with their homeland is maintained by sending home funds or donations to build mosques or Islamic schools (*madrasah*). A village officer in Timurung mentioned that although the amount of funds from Baras was not significant compared to other places, funding from this region had been constant over the years. Meanwhile, in the case of Telle, the remittance of funds by those who have settled outside this village is like a competition for an annual championship (*pertandingan*). Until today, in Telle village during the month of Ramadhan, at night the village *imam* announces the list of donors as well as place of origin of the donations. For instance, he may make an announcement like the following: “Oh, the highest *sumbangan* (donations) this year are from Baras,” or “Unlike last year, Baras has now been defeated by donors from Batunon.” Therefore, in order to gain fame for their home village (if that is the intention), Bugis in Baras prefer sending home donations rather than going back home themselves.

During my short visit to Timurung and Telle, I noticed economic goals were essential to the Bugis settlers in Baras, as conditions in these places were relatively outdated (*tertinggal*) compared to neighboring villages. However, Timurung and Telle continue to rely on their *dare*’ (dry fields) and *galung* (wet-rice plots) for survival. Imagining how these villages looked in the 1970s and 1980s, I am able to understand the unwillingness of Bugis settlers in Baras to return to their homeland. A 70-year-old farmer from Laponrong, Timurung, described the situation in his hamlet:

Agapi riala mongro ri Laponrong; sero reppatona, salo metti tona.

There was no point staying in Laponrong because our river was empty and our tools to make a living were broken into pieces. (Pak Haji Cua, pers. comm., 2014)

Bugis settlers, particularly those categorized as *mallékké dapûrêng*, often achieve economic prosperity, as seen through the attainment of the *haji* title (e.g., *Pak* and *Bu haji* or *Daeng Aji* for both men and women). In fact, most of the first Bugis settlers and the following spontaneous migrants performed the hajj from this former frontier. The expanse of lands (either *jatah* [allotted] or purchased) that settlers now have shows the significance of their economic endeavors. Ultimately, for Pak Haji Cua and his fellow Bugis in Baras, the amount of oil palm farms they own cannot be compared to what they left behind in their *wanua*.

Conclusion

The Bugis are a sending society, like the Minangkabau of Sumatra, not a receiving society, like their neighboring tribes such as Makassarese and Mandar. Both the Bugis and Minangkabau are well-known Indonesian ethnic groups who, from generation to generation, like to migrate “in search of good fortune” (Acciaioli 1989).

In this article, I trace how the Bugis translate their symbolic values known as the *dapûrêng* (kitchen) into (permanent) migration. For the Bugis, their *dapûrêng* is the starting point to get involved in a larger society, i.e., to assimilate, penetrate, dominate, and rule an existing community. In many cases, such as in Baras, North Mamuju, the Bugis are even the initiators, shapers, and transformers of a frontier area (Mukrimin, forthcoming 1).

The Bugis in Baras exemplify the model of migration that is mostly composed of permanent settlers, unlike their fellow migrants who are committed to *mallékké dapûrêng*, a term that has not been sufficiently analyzed in the accounts of Bugis migration. The Bugis model of permanent migration in Baras is motivated by the government’s political policies, environmental challenges, agricultural opportunities, and economic endeavors.

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I alone am responsible for the conclusions drawn here.

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Did Jose Rizal Die a Catholic?

Revisiting Rizal's Last 24 Hours Using Spy Reports

Rene Escalante*

There is one issue in Jose Rizal's life that historians have debated on several occasions but remains unsettled. That issue is whether Rizal, on the eve of his death, re-embraced the Catholic faith and disassociated himself from Masonry. The matter is controversial because parties on both sides are affiliated with an organization that promotes moral values and the pursuit of truth. The pro-retraction camp is represented by the Jesuits, the archbishop of Manila, and a few other members of the Catholic hierarchy. Since they are all ordained priests, they are assumed to be truthful in their pronouncements. Their opponents are the members of Masonry, an organization that promotes brotherhood, integrity, decency, and professionalism.

This paper resurrects the retraction controversy in the light of the emergence of another primary source that speaks about what happened to Rizal on the eve of his death. This document was never considered in the history of the retraction controversy because it was made available to researchers only in the past decade. The author of the report is a credible eyewitness because he was physically present in the vicinity of where Rizal was detained. His narrative is lucid and contains details that cast doubt on the credibility and reliability of earlier primary sources on which previous narratives were based. This document needs serious consideration and should be included in the discourse on Rizal's retraction.

Keywords: Jose Rizal, Philippine Revolution, Philippine Masonry, retraction controversy, *Cuerpo de Vigilancia* collection

Introduction

The Philippines is known in history as the country that waged the first anti-colonial revolution in Asia, which it did from 1896 to 1898. Other Asian countries declared their independence either before or after World War II. The Philippine Revolution was a long process, and its success may be attributed not to one person alone but to many individuals who fought heroically against the Spaniards. One hero of the Philippine Revolution

* Department of History, De La Salle University, 1501 Taft Avenue, Malate, Manila, Metro Manila 1100, Philippines
e-mail: rene.escalante@dlsu.edu.ph

was Jose Rizal. He is regarded as the national hero of the Filipinos as well as the “pride of the Malay race” (Palma 1949). His writings awakened his countrymen and inspired them to wage the first anti-colonial movement in Southeast Asia. Decades after the Philippines ended Spanish rule, neighboring countries staged similar movements that resulted in the liberation of Southeast Asia from European rule. Rizal is popular among Filipinos and non-Filipinos alike; there are numerous statues and monuments of him outside the Philippines, built through the initiative of his non-Filipino admirers. In the United States there are statues of Rizal in California, Hawaii, Illinois, Florida, New Jersey, New York, Alaska, and Washington State. There are also Rizal monuments in Spain, Argentina, Belgium, Canada, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and Switzerland.

With Rizal being an international and national hero, his life story has been written and scrutinized by Filipino and foreign scholars for more than a century. Though there have been times when they agreed on their narrative, there have been instances where they differed significantly. One cause of disagreement has been the focus of the studies. Rizal was a versatile person, and his engagements were numerous. Hence, his biographers could not focus their narrative and analysis on just one aspect of his life. There have also been instances where researchers differed because they were viewing Rizal from different perspectives. Lastly, their differences may also be attributed to the primary sources on which the researchers based their narrative. All the variations are tolerable and sometimes even encouraged by the academic community because they give students various perspectives from which to understand Rizal.

There is one issue in Rizal’s life that historians have debated on several occasions but remains a hot topic even now. That is whether Rizal, on the eve of his death in 1896, re-embraced the Catholic faith and disassociated himself from Masonry. Scholars treated this as a fact, and it became controversial because the major protagonists were members of two organizations that both promoted moral values and the pursuit of truth. On the one hand, the pro-retraction camp was represented by the Jesuits, the archbishop of Manila, and other members of the Catholic hierarchy. Since they were all ordained priests, they were supposedly truthful and honest in their pronouncements. On the other hand, their opponents were members of Masonry, an organization that promotes brotherhood, integrity, decency, and professionalism. This paper revisits the retraction controversy in the light of a new primary source that gives an idea of Rizal’s activities 24 hours before he was executed. This document was not considered by previous retraction scholars because it was made available to researchers only in the past decade. The source of information seems to be a credible eyewitness because he was physically present in the vicinity of where Rizal was detained. His narrative is lucid and contains details that cast doubt on the credibility and reliability of earlier primary sources on which previous

narratives were based. This document needs serious consideration and should be included in the discourse on Rizal's retraction.

The Jesuit Version

Rizal's execution on December 30, 1896 was a major political event, closely monitored by local and international newspapers at the time. News reports that day covered not only his execution but also what happened in his prison cell on the eve of his death. A number of them reported that he had denounced his Masonic beliefs and re-professed his Catholic faith. Some even reprinted the retraction letter that he wrote, in order to prove that he did indeed die a Catholic. They also mentioned the Jesuit priests and other colonial officials who witnessed this controversial act by Rizal. The local newspapers that reported the retraction were *La Voz Española*, *El Español*, *El Comercio*, and *La Oceania Española*. The news correspondents of *La Voz Española* even claimed to "have seen and read his own handwritten retraction" (Cavanna 1956, 2). The Spain-based newspapers and magazines that covered the retraction were *El Imparcial*, *Heraldo de Madrid*, and *El Siglo Futuro*. They based their narrative on the testimonies of the Jesuits and other colonial officials who visited and talked to Rizal the day before he was executed.

The Jesuits figured prominently during the last 24 hours of Rizal's life because Manila Archbishop Bernardino Nozaleda asked them to take care of Rizal's spiritual needs while the latter awaited the hour of his death. In an affidavit that he issued in 1917, Fr. Pio Pi (the Superior of the Jesuits) declared that he had accepted the task because he considered Rizal to be Ateneo Municipal High School's "very distinguished and dear pupil" (Cavanna 1956, 15). The Jesuits he sent to Rizal's detention cell were Frs. Vicente Balaguer, Jose Vilaclara, Estanislao March, Luis Visa, Federico Faura, and Miguel Saderra (Cavanna 1956, 11). Fr. Pi instructed them to persuade Rizal to retract his anti-Catholic teachings as well as his affiliation with the Masons. The Jesuits were supposed to demand these two things before ministering the necessary sacraments. Fr. Pi also ordered that the retraction should be in writing using either of the two sample retraction templates approved by the archbishop.

Fr. Miguel Saderra (rector of Ateneo Municipal) and Fr. Luis Visa were the first emissaries to visit Rizal. Fr. Visa brought with him the figurine of the Sacred Heart of Jesus that Rizal had carved while a student of Ateneo Municipal. Rizal allegedly took it gladly, kissed it, and put it on his desk. In the course of their conversation, Rizal asked the visitors whether he could see his former teachers at Ateneo Municipal. The Jesuits

replied that only Fr. Vilaclara¹⁾ was in town (Arcilla 1994, 122). They added that Fr. Balaguer,²⁾ the Jesuit missionary whom Rizal had met in Dapitan, was also available in case he wanted to meet him (Arcilla 1994, 121). Rizal answered positively, and the Jesuits left to fetch their two confreres.

Of all the Jesuits whom Fr. Pi commissioned to deal with Rizal, it was Fr. Vicente Balaguer who wrote extensively about what happened in Rizal's detention cell the day before he was executed. His version of the story is narrated in a letter he sent to Fr. Pi in 1908 and in an affidavit he executed in Murcia, Spain, on August 8, 1917 (Cavanna 1956, 6–10, 260–266; Arcilla 1994, 121). In both documents, Fr. Balaguer used the first person pronoun, which suggests that he was personally present and involved in the negotiation. He even claimed that he “was the one who assisted Rizal most of that sad day's hours. I argued with him and demolished his arguments” (Cavanna 1956, 115). He also persuaded everyone to take his affidavit as a primary source because he had personal knowledge of Rizal's retraction. In his sworn affidavit he wrote:

Of all that has been narrated, I am positive by personal knowledge. I have personally intervened and witnessed it myself; and I subscribed and *confirmed* it with an oath. And lest, perhaps, someone may think that I could not remember it with so many details, after twenty years. I testify that on the very day of Rizal's death, I wrote a very detailed account of everything. The original of this account I have preserved, and from it I have taken all the data of the present narration. (Cavanna 1956, 10)

According to Fr. Balaguer, he and Fr. Vilaclara arrived in Rizal's prison cell around 10 o'clock in the morning. He mentioned in his letter and affidavit that their encounter with Rizal started with a discussion of some articles of Catholic faith. They debated on issues such as the supremacy of faith over reason and the dogmatic differences that divided Catholics and Protestants. Since time was not on their side, they persuaded Rizal not to spend so much time discussing faith-related issues and focus instead on how to die in the state of grace so that he could enter heaven. They explained to him that they could not

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- 1) Fr. Jose Vilaclara was born in Barcelona, Spain, on November 27, 1840. He entered the Society of Jesus on October 4, 1862 and arrived in the Philippines in 1874. He was assigned to Ateneo Municipal, where he taught Logic, Metaphysics, Ethics, Physics, and Chemistry. Later, he became the director of the Manila Observatory. In 1877 he was assigned to Dapitan, but he was recalled to Manila around the time of Rizal's trial and imprisonment. He left for Spain because of ill health on September 2, 1897 but died at sea off the coast of Aden 16 days later.
 - 2) Fr. Balaguer was born in Alicante, Spain, on January 19, 1851. He joined the Society of Jesus on July 30, 1890 and went to the Philippines in 1894. His first missionary assignment was in Surigao, and he was transferred to Dapitan in 1896. A year later, he was assigned to Davao. After the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1898, he founded the catechetical center in Tondo. He returned to Spain in 1899 and died in Orihuela on October 1, 1922.

administer the sacraments he needed without him signing a retraction letter and making a profession of faith. Fr. Balaguer mentioned that Rizal softened a bit when he warned him that his soul would go to hell if he did not return to the Catholic fold. He reminded him that outside the Catholic Church, there was no salvation (*Extra Ecclesiam Catholicam nulla datur salus*) (Cavanna 1956, 8). The two Jesuits left Rizal's prison around lunchtime, with Rizal still undecided over whether to sign the retraction letter or not. The Jesuits went straight to the archbishop's palace and informed their superiors of what had transpired during their first meeting with Rizal.

Frs. Balaguer and Vilaclara returned to Rizal around 3 o'clock in the afternoon and tried until sunset to persuade him to recant. They were still not able to convince him to sign the retraction document. Their third meeting with Rizal took place at 10 o'clock that night, and it was during this meeting that they showed Rizal the two retraction templates Fr. Pi had given them. According to Fr. Balaguer, Rizal found the first template unacceptable because it was too long and its language and style were not reflective of his personality (Arcilla 1994, 114). So Fr. Balaguer withdrew it and offered the shorter one. Rizal did not sign it right away because he was uncomfortable with the statement "I abominate Masonry as a society reprobated by the Church." He said he had met Masons in London who had nothing against the Catholic religion. Rizal wanted to emphasize that Philippine Masonry was not hostile to Catholicism and that Masonry in London did not require its members to renounce their faith. The Jesuits allowed Rizal to revise the retraction template, and his final version read, "I abominate Masonry as the enemy of the Church and reprobated by the same Church" (Cavanna 1956, 9). After making other minor changes to the draft, Rizal signed his retraction letter before midnight. Fr. Balaguer handed it over to Fr. Pi, who in turn submitted it to Archbishop Bernardino Nozaleda (Guerrero 1971, 459). The text of the retraction states:

Me declaro católico, y en esta Religión, en que nací y me eduqué, quiero vivir y morir. Me retracto de todo corazón de cuanto en mis palabras, escritos, impresos y conducta ha habido contrario á mi calidad de hijo de la Iglesia. Creo y profeso cuanto ella enseña, y me someto á cuanto ella manda. Abomino de la Masonería, como enemiga que es de la Iglesia, y como Sociedad prohibida por la misma Iglesia.

Puede el Prelado diocesano, como Autoridad superior eclesiástica, hacer pública esta manifestación, espontánea mía, para reparar el escándalo que mis actos hayan podido causar, y para que Dios y los hombres me perdonen

Manila, 29 de Diciembre de 1896

José Rizal

Jefe del Piquete
Juan del Fresno

Ayudante de Plaza
Eloy Moure (Retana 1907, 426–427)

I declare myself a Catholic and in this Religion in which I was born and educated I wish to live and die. I retract with all my heart whatever in my words, writings, publications, and conduct has been contrary to my character as son of the Catholic Church. I believe and I confess whatever she teaches, and I submit to whatever she demands. I abominate Masonry, as the enemy which is of the Church, and as a Society prohibited by the Church.

The Diocesan Prelate may, as the Superior Ecclesiastical Authority, make public this spontaneous manifestation of mine in order to repair the scandal which my acts may have caused and so that God and people may pardon me.

The Chief of the Picket
 Juan del Fresno

Adjutant of the Plaza
 Eloy Moure (Guerrero 1971, 458–459)

Challenges to the Jesuit Version

Days after Rizal was executed, some individuals expressed their doubts over the veracity of the news that Rizal had retracted and repudiated Masonry. For instance, Friedrich Stahl wrote to Ferdinand Blumentritt in January 1897, informing him that people did not take the retraction account seriously because “nobody has ever seen this written declaration in spite of the fact that quite a number of people would want to see it” (Cavanna 1956, 145). In a letter that Jose Alejandrino sent to Filipino expatriates in Hong Kong dated March 6, 1897, he expressed the same point. He wrote, “the Spaniards want to persecute him even in the tomb, since they slander him by imputing to him confessions and retractions which he himself could not have done” (Cavanna 1956, 147). Trinidad, Rizal’s sister, also attested that after her brother’s death the Jesuits invited their family to attend a Mass offered for the eternal repose of his soul. The Jesuits promised that after the Mass they would show them the original retraction. Until they parted ways, the promise did not materialize (Pascual 1959, 50–51).

After the Americans had assumed full control of the government, members of Masonry and some of Rizal’s followers started to question openly the veracity of the claim that Rizal had retracted. In the December 29, 1908 issue of *El Renacimiento*, Manuel Artigas y Cuerva considered the retraction document as “apocryphal.” His arguments

against it are summarized in the following lines:

It does not exist . . . It does not appear in the trial nor can anyone give an account of it in the Archiepiscopal Palace of Manila. Even in the Ateneo itself of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus it could not be found, although it was positively affirmed that it was there. And what is most exceptional is that, while documents about Rizal during all the time he had been in the Ateneo, are preserved, only the one of some twelve years ago cannot be found. (Cavanna 1956, 150)

From 1908 onward, Filipino Masons conducted a sustained campaign against the claim that Rizal had retracted. Every time they celebrated Rizal Day, they would come up with activities that debunked and ridiculed the retraction story. For instance, Don Juan Utor y Fernandez staged a drama in the Manila Opera House reenacting Rizal's death. Here the retraction story was explicitly rebuffed. Herminigildo Cruz wrote an article in *La Vanguardia* where he openly attacked the Jesuits. He could not understand how the Jesuits and the archbishop could have misplaced such a priceless document. Other Masons used the character of Rizal as their main argument against the retraction. They argued that Rizal was a strong-willed man of deep conviction and would not easily flip-flop even in critical times. They could not understand why Rizal would retract knowing that it would in no way affect the court's verdict. These arguments were popularized in the succeeding years, and because of this the Jesuits and the Catholic hierarchy were forced to come up with affidavits and other forms of proof to counteract the Masons.

In 1935 the archdiocesan archivist Fr. Manuel Gracia, C.M. was sorting through folders of documents that he would later transfer to a newly acquired fireproof vault. While doing this, he found the "original" retraction document about Rizal in a bundle titled *Masoneria* (Garcia 1964, 31–43). Right away he called Manila Archbishop Michael O'Doherty, who at that time was in Baguio. The next day Fr. Gracia gave the document to the archbishop, who in turn showed it to President Manuel L. Quezon. That same day they asked Teodoro M. Kalaw, a Mason and the director of the National Library at the time, to examine the document. Kalaw declared that it was "authentic, definite and final" (Pascual 1959, ix). Then they summoned Carlos P. Romulo, who was then the editor of the newspaper *Philippines Herald*, to evaluate the veracity of the document. Romulo agreed with Kalaw's findings, and on June 15, 1935 he published the news in the *Philippines Herald* under the banner headline "Rizal's Retraction Found." To give more credibility to the newly found document, Doherty requested H. Otley Beyer, a professor of anthropology at U.P. Diliman and a known handwriting expert, to examine whether the document was genuine or not. Beyer concluded, "there is not the slightest doubt that every word on that sheet of paper was written by Jose Rizal" (Garcia 1964, 34).

The Masons regarded the retraction document that came out in 1935 as a fact, but

whether it was indeed written and signed by Rizal was for them a big question. The discourse during this time was no longer over whether Rizal had retracted or not. The debate was whether the newly found retraction document was genuine or not. Nonetheless, contrary to what the Jesuits expected, the document did not eliminate doubts about Rizal's retraction. Instead, it further put the pro-retraction advocates in a bad light because of the numerous doubts and objections it generated.

Rafael Palma, former president of the University of the Philippines and a prominent Mason, disputed the veracity of the document because it did not reflect Rizal's true character and beliefs. He regarded the resurrected retraction story as a "pious fraud" (Nido 2013). Dr. Ricardo R. Pascual, one of the persons who was given permission by the archbishop to examine the document, wrote: "it is better that such document should not have been discovered at all" (Pascual 1959, 4). Pascual scrutinized the document thoroughly and came up with a book that questioned its authenticity. First, he scrutinized its handwriting and compared it with other documents that Rizal had written days before he was executed. These included the *Mi Ultimo Adios*, the letter he wrote on December 15, 1896 titled "To My Countrymen," the *Defensa* that he wrote on December 12, 1896, and the dedicatory note found on the title page of the book *Imitacion de Cristo*, which Rizal gave to Josephine Bracken. Pascual identified inconsistencies in the slants of the handwriting, Rizal's signature, the inks used, the font of some words, the margin, and the way individual letters were formed (Pascual 1959, 7–30). All these observations led him to conclude that the newly found retraction document was a forgery.

Another objection raised against the authenticity of Rizal's retraction was the differences between the text of the 1935 document and the version of the retraction that Fr. Balaguer had presented. In the 1935 document *calidad* is spelled with a "u," while in Fr. Balaguer's version the spelling is *calidad* (without the "u"). Second, Fr. Balaguer's version does not have the word *Catolica* after the word *Iglesia*. In the 1935 and the newspaper versions, the word *Catolica* is present. Third, in the Jesuits' copy the third *Iglesias* is preceded by the word *misma*. This word cannot be found in the 1935 document. Fourth, with regard to paragraphing, Fr. Balaguer's version does not begin the second paragraph until the fifth sentence while the 1935 version starts the second paragraph immediately after the second sentence. Finally, the text of the 1935 retraction has 4 commas, while the text of Fr. Balaguer's has 11 (Retana 1907, 426–427).

Pascual concluded that the 1935 retraction document was a forgery, but he was not able to identify the forgers. It was Ildelfonso Runes who would do so in a book that he published in 1962. Runes wrote that on August 13, 1901, Antonio Abad celebrated his 15th birthday in San Isidro, Nueva Ecija. Roman Roque, a close neighbor of the Abads, was among the celebrant's well-wishers. On this occasion, Roque disclosed that he had

been fetched by Lazaro Segovia in San Isidro, Nueva Ecija, and later taken to Manila. He had stayed in the Hotel Quatro Naciones in Intramuros and been employed by the friars for 10 days. He was given the equivalent of his salary for two months in the government. For several days he studied Rizal's handwriting. According to him, he made about five copies of the retraction letter based on a draft prepared by the friars. He thought of keeping one for himself, but when he was searched upon departure, his copy was taken from him (Runes and Buenafe 1962, 107–128).

The saga of the retraction controversy continued even after World War II. It surfaced again as a side issue when the Rizal Law was under consideration during the 1950s. Known historians, such as the Jesuits Horacio de la Costa, John Schumacher, and Jose Arcilla, insisted that Rizal had retracted. The Masons, on their part, remained adamant in their stand and refused to accede to the arguments and evidence presented by pro-retraction advocates. Since there was no new evidence or primary sources presented, the debates during the postwar era were mostly philosophical and interpretative in nature.

The *Cuerpo de Vigilancia* Collection

Years before the celebration of the centennial of Philippine independence in 1998, Señor Enrique Montero offered for sale his *Cuerpo de Vigilancia* collection. These were archival documents that he had acquired from a descendant of a Spanish general who was assigned to the Philippines during the twilight years of the Spanish period. Octavio Espiritu, an executive of Far East Bank and Trust Corporation, was the first Filipino to express interest in buying the collection. Its original selling price was \$160,000, but for unknown reasons Espiritu did not buy the collection. A few years later, Philippine Ambassador to Spain Isabel Caro Wilson brought the collection to the attention of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA). Executive Director Carmen Padilla took the offer seriously and considered the collection a valuable addition to the existing body of literature that the country had on the Philippine Revolution. On December 12, 1995, NCCA commissioners passed Resolution No. 95-285 approving the purchase of the *Cuerpo* documents. The NCCA negotiated with Señor Montero to lower the price, and the two parties agreed to close the deal at \$145,000 (Escalante 2017, 453–458).

The *Cuerpo de Vigilancia* de Manila (Security Corps of Manila) was the intelligence service that the Spanish colonial government created in 1895. It was organized primarily to gather information on the activities of Katipunan members and supporters. *Cuerpo*

agents were tasked to monitor the activities of suspected Katipunan members. They were supposed to report all sorts of rumors, collect news reports, identify the financiers of the Katipunan, compile revolutionary papers, gather photographs, and intercept mail. The agents were also instructed to monitor foreigners who were sympathetic to the Katipuneros. In a span of three years, they were able to collect almost 3,000 documents containing eyewitness accounts of the activities of individuals fighting for Philippine independence.

NCCA officials labeled the *Cuerpo* collection as “Katipunan and Rizal Documents,” but this should not create the impression that the bulk of the collection deals with Andres Bonifacio—a prominent Katipunan leader—or Rizal. If one surveys the collection, one discovers that documents dealing with Rizal and the Katipunan form only a fraction of the total and do not exceed 30 percent of the collection. Among the Filipino heroes, it is Emilio Aguinaldo who figures prominently in the *Cuerpo* collection and was closely monitored by *Cuerpo* agents. For instance, the reports covering the negotiation for the Truce of Biak na Bato and the activities of the Hong Kong junta are more than the documents dealing with Rizal and Bonifacio combined. Aguinaldo’s prominence may be explained by the fact that Rizal and Bonifacio died four and nine months after the outbreak of the revolution respectively. Aguinaldo, on the other hand, outlived all his enemies and was considered the mortal enemy of the Spaniards until their regime ended. It was not surprising, then, that the resources of the intelligence community were concentrated on him.

The original title of the collection is *El Movimiento de Independencia de Filipinas*, or “The Movement for Independence in the Philippines.” The collection gives a detailed account of the revolution from the perspective of the rebels, Spaniards, and foreigners. It offers eyewitness accounts of actual events as well as major developments from March 1895 until the surrender of the Spaniards to the Americans in August 1898. Agents of *Cuerpo de Vigilancia* consisted of mestizos and native Filipinos under the command of Inspector Jefe Federico Moreno. The latter reported directly to Manuel Luengo, the civil governor of Manila, who in turn relayed the information to the governor-general. Initially, the *Cuerpo de Vigilancia* operated separately and independently from the Guardia Civil Veterana and Ejercito de las Islas Filipinas. But in August 1897, the *Cuerpo de Vigilancia* was put under the supervision of the chief of the Guardia Civil Veterana (Churchill 2011, iii).³⁾

Of the more than 1,000 reports found in the *Cuerpo* collection, around 30 are about

3) In the early 1990s, the NCCA requested the Committee on Historical Research to come up with a catalog that would serve as a finder’s aid to the *Cuerpo* documents. After almost a decade of delay, the catalog was finally completed and published by the NCCA in 2011.

Jose Rizal. Some of them deal with him directly, while others are about Josephine Bracken, Jose's elder brother Paciano Rizal, their parents, and some of Jose's in-laws. The bulk of the documents about Rizal focus on his trial and what transpired in his prison cell the day before he was executed. After the court convicted Rizal, colonial officials posted Cuerpo agents who watched him closely and monitored the individuals who visited him. There are at least eight *Cuerpo* documents that may be considered of great importance because they may be used as primary sources in clarifying certain controversies connected with Rizal's alleged "retraction" and other interrelated issues. These documents include a surveillance report written by Federico Moreno, two documents allegedly written by Rizal, and five newspaper clippings from *Diario de Manila* and *La Voz Española* (National Archives of the Philippines [NAP] Manuscript A-1, Doc. 81).

The *Cuerpo de Vigilancia* Version

The report of Moreno (NAP Manuscript A-6, Doc. 1) presents another eyewitness account of what transpired in Rizal's prison cell before he was executed. It contains several details that could be used for and against the claim that Rizal returned to the Catholic fold and renounced Masonry. The account may be considered more objective than earlier ones because Moreno was neither a member of the Catholic hierarchy nor a known Mason. He was in Fort Santiago not to serve a particular interest group but simply to perform a function connected with his work. Moreover, the fact that his report was written a day after the event lessened the possibility that it was edited to please a particular group. Since the report is not very long, a translation of it will be presented first before analyzing it:

Most Illustrious Sir, the agent of the Cuerpo de Vigilancia stationed in Fort Santiago to report on the events during the [illegible] day in prison of the accused Jose Rizal, informs me on this date of the following:

At 7:50 yesterday morning, Jose Rizal entered death row accompanied by his counsel, Señor Taviel de Andrade, and the Jesuit priest [Jose] Vilaclara. At the urgings of the former and moments after entering, he was served a light breakfast. At approximately 9, the Adjutant of the Garrison, Señor [Eloy] Maure, asked Rizal if he wanted anything. He replied that at the moment he only wanted a prayer book which was brought to him shortly by Father [Estanislao] March.

Señor Andrade left death row at 10 and Rizal spoke for a long while with the Jesuit fathers, March and Vilaclara, regarding religious matters, it seems. It appears that these two presented him with a prepared retraction on his life and deeds that he refused to sign. They argued about the matter until 12:30 when Rizal ate some poached egg and a little chicken. Afterwards he asked to leave to write and wrote for a long time by himself.

At 3 in the afternoon, Father March entered the chapel and Rizal handed him what he had

written. Immediately the chief of the firing squad, Señor [Juan] del Fresno and the Assistant of the Plaza, Señor Maure, were informed. They entered death row and together with Rizal signed the document that the accused had written. It seems this was the retraction.

From 3 to 5:30 in the afternoon, Rizal read his prayer book several times, prayed kneeling before the altar and in the company of Fathers Vilaclara and March, read the Acts of Faith, Hope and Charity repeatedly as well as the Prayers for the Departing Soul.

At 6 in the afternoon the following persons arrived and entered the chapel; Teodora Alonzo, mother of Rizal, and his sisters, Lucia, Maria, Olimpia, Josefa, Trinidad and Dolores. Embracing them, the accused bade them farewell with great strength of character and without shedding a tear. The mother of Rizal left the chapel weeping and carrying two bundles of several utensils belonging to her son who had used them while in prison.

A little after 8 in the evening, at the urgings of Señor Andrade, the accused was served a plate of tinola, his last meal on earth. The Assistant of the Plaza, Señor Maure and Fathers March and Vilaclara visited him at 9 in the evening. He rested until 4 in the morning and again resumed praying before the altar.

At 5 this morning of the 30th, the lover of Rizal arrived at the prison accompanied by his sister Pilar, both dressed in mourning. Only the former entered the chapel, followed by a military chaplain whose name I cannot ascertain. Donning his formal clothes and aided by a soldier of the artillery, the nuptials of Rizal and the woman who had been his lover were performed at the point of death (*in articulo mortis*). After embracing him she left, flooded with tears.

Rizal heard mass and confessed to Father March. Afterwards he heard another mass where he received communion. At 7:30, a European artilleryman handcuffed him and he left for the place of execution accompanied by various Jesuits, his counsel and the Assistant of the Plaza. Father March gave him a holy picture of the Virgin that Rizal kissed repeatedly.

When the accused left, I noticed he was very pale but I am very certain that all the time he was imprisoned he demonstrated great strength of character and composure.

God grant Your Excellency.

Manila 30 December 1896.

Chief Inspector Federico Moreno (Harper 1997)

Moreno's report contains details that are not consistent with Fr. Balaguer's affidavit. The most serious and obvious discrepancy is that Moreno never mentioned Fr. Balaguer in his report. All throughout the history of the retraction controversy, Fr. Balaguer consistently claimed that he was present in Rizal's prison cell and actively involved in convincing him to retract. All other pro-retraction advocates who came after Fr. Balaguer took his account as historical fact and argued their case using him as their primary source. The Masons attacked Fr. Balaguer's narrative, but they never questioned his claim that he was a witness to this event. However, in Moreno's account only two Jesuits are identified: Fr. Jose Vilaclara and Fr. Estanislao March.

In his affidavit, Fr. Balaguer declared that he talked to Rizal three times on December 29, 1896. The first time was in the morning, from 10 to 12:30. It was during this meeting that he presented the retraction template to Rizal but the latter did not sign. Moreno

confirmed this meeting, including the presentation of the draft retraction. But he reported that Rizal was talking not to Fr. Balaguer but to Frs. March and Vilaclara. Moreno also confirmed that Frs. March and Vilaclara returned to Rizal around 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Fr. Balaguer claimed in his affidavit that he was one of Rizal's afternoon visitors. Fr. Balaguer continued that the third time he talked to Rizal was around 10 in the evening. He had another lengthy and passionate discussion with him for more than an hour. It was on this occasion that Rizal finally signed his retraction letter. Moreno confirmed that Rizal had visitors after dinner, but the persons he identified were Señor Andrade, Señor Maure, and Frs. March and Vilaclara. Again, Fr. Balaguer was not mentioned, and the time of the meeting was 9 o'clock and not shortly before midnight. Neither did Moreno's report mention that they discussed issues concerning faith and the retraction. The narrative is short and ends with Rizal going to bed.

Moreno's report is a big blow to the credibility of Fr. Balaguer. The fact that Moreno never mentioned him in his report casts a cloud of doubt on the veracity and accuracy of the affidavit that he executed. If we are to believe Moreno, Fr. Balaguer did not have personal knowledge of what happened to Rizal the day before he died. If his affidavit contains accurate historical details, he might have gotten them from those who were with Rizal on December 29, 1896. If Fr. Balaguer was the chief negotiator who convinced Rizal to recant, and if he talked to Rizal three times that day, Moreno would surely have inquired who he was. There is a remote possibility that Moreno did not know Fr. Balaguer because he was a priest and not an ordinary visitor. Since Moreno was able to identify the names of Rizal's relatives and the other visitors who talked to him, there is no reason why Moreno would not mention Fr. Balaguer in his report if indeed he talked to Rizal three times.

Moreno's report may have damaged the credibility of Fr. Balaguer, but it did not refute the claim that Rizal retracted. It mentions that when Fr. March returned at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, Rizal handed him a document. Then it says that Rizal, together with Juan del Fresno and Señor Maure, signed the document. In the retraction document that Fr. Gracia found in 1935, one sees that the three persons Moreno identified were signatories of the document. Moreno did not provide details on the contents of the document, probably because he was witnessing the event from a distance. But that did not prevent him from presupposing that the document was Rizal's retraction letter. He simply wrote, "It seems this was the retraction [*parece que el escrito era la retractación*]."

The latter part of Moreno's report confirmed a few other controversial events that occurred before Rizal was executed. Moreno reported that right after Rizal signed the alleged retraction letter, he read the Acts of Faith, Hope and Charity as well as the Prayers for the Departing Soul. While kneeling in front of the altar, he also read his

prayer book in the company of Frs. Vilaclara and March. Moreno also reported that in the early morning of the following day, Rizal and Josephine Bracken got married. The ceremony was done *in articulo mortis* (at the point of death), and there were no sponsors or witnesses present. Moreover, Moreno did not mention that the couple signed a marriage contract. This should explain why this document remains unaccounted for until today, and therefore people should stop looking for it. All these details in Moreno's report are indirect forms of proof that Rizal retracted. Archbishop Nozaleda and Fr. Pio Pi's instructions were clear that Rizal should not be given the sacraments unless he retracted his anti-Catholic beliefs. The fact that the marriage took place is a confirmation that Rizal re-embraced his Catholic faith. Lastly, Moreno also reported that minutes before Rizal was brought to Luneta, he heard Mass, confessed to Fr. March, received Holy Communion, and kissed the image of the Blessed Mother. All these acts suggest, and may be considered evidence supporting the claim, that Rizal died a Catholic.

There is another thing Rizal did that is recorded in many history books and also confirmed by Moreno. He handed his family members his personal belongings when they visited him the day before he died. Unfortunately, Moreno did not specify the person to whom Rizal gave his personal belongings. Specifically, he did not mention to whom he gave the stove (others say lamp) where Rizal put his *Mi Ultimo Adios*. A number of biographies state that Rizal gave it to his sister Trinidad with the message "there is something inside" (Craig 1913, 240; Guerrero 1971, 480). Moreno simply wrote that his weeping mother left the chapel carrying "two bundles of several utensils belonging to her son." One can easily assume that the stove was one of the utensils that Teodora Alonzo brought home.

Aside from Federico Moreno's report, there are other documents in the collection that can enrich further the narrative of Rizal's final 24 hours. For instance, the collection has several newspaper clippings of what happened to him before and after his death. One is the account of *La Voz Española*, dated December 26, 1896, which reports the meeting of the Consejo de Guerra on the trial of Jose Rizal (NAP Manuscript A-1, Doc. 25). *El Diario de Manila* has a similar account of this topic and event (NAP Manuscript A-1, Doc. 26). On the day of his execution, the newspaper *La Voz Española* reported what happened in Luneta, and it also printed the text of the retraction letter that Rizal allegedly signed (NAP Manuscript A-1, Doc. 27). The *Cuerpo* collection also has a photograph of Rizal and the members of the execution squad (NAP Manuscript A-1 [9], Doc. 307). Finally, the collection has a three-page letter written by Juan Ferrer to a person he simply calls "Apolinario," dated two weeks after Rizal died. The writer states that Rizal was very brave during his execution. He also asks Apolinario to inform his friends in Imus that they will not stop fighting the Spaniards until Manila is independent. The

author claims that he was tasked to monitor Manila and buy clothes and arms. Moreover, he offers his help to Apolinario in case he organizes meetings in Vigan. He ends his letter warning Apolinario not to tell his parents about his involvement in the revolution and that he accepts that he will be arrested one day (NAP A-12, Doc. 9).

Conclusion

The controversy over Rizal's retraction is a recurring issue in Philippine history because the protagonists are members of well-established institutions that have been actively involved in the writing of Philippine history. The debate has persisted for more than 100 years because succeeding generations of protagonists took turns reviving it for various reasons. Since each side argued with so much interest at stake, each ended up uncompromising and close-minded to the evidence presented by the opponent. In cases like this, it is ideal to look for evidence outside the circle of the interest groups involved. It is in this context that Federico Moreno's report plays a vital role. Moreno's account may be considered more credible than the affidavits and evidence given by the Catholic Church and the Masons. Moreno was a neutral eyewitness and had no interest in protecting this particular issue. His presence in Fort Santiago was a call of duty, and the report that he submitted was a requirement connected with his job.

Moreno's report casts a negative light on both the Catholic Church and the Masons. On the one hand, it reduces Fr. Balaguer's affidavit to a secondary source by insinuating that Fr. Balaguer was not an eyewitness of Rizal's last 24 hours. For several decades, this affidavit served as the primary basis of people claiming that Rizal had retracted. Nonetheless, while Fr. Balaguer may not have been physically present in Rizal's prison cell, the substance of his affidavit is the same as Moreno's report. Both reported that Rizal retracted, although they expressed it in different terms. On the other hand, Moreno's report is a big blow to the Masons because it offers an eyewitness account that disproves their claim that Rizal remained a Mason until he died. Moreno may not have said anything about the contents of Rizal's retraction, but he provided the context for it. He also enumerated numerous events that occurred in Rizal's prison cell that would not have occurred unless Rizal had been converted back to Catholicism. These include the celebration of the sacrament of matrimony, his confession, his attendance at the Mass, his request for a prayer book, and his act of venerating the Blessed Mother. All of these acts are closely associated with the Catholic faith. Hopefully this paper has contributed to the settlement of the retraction controversy and enriched the existing literature on the Philippine national hero.

Going beyond the retraction controversy, it is interesting to note that some documents in the *Cuerpo* collection do not jibe with the present and popular knowledge about the Philippine Revolution. For instance, there are documents about the Katipunan that if proven true may lead to a revision of some details about the organization. Philippine history textbooks mention that the complete name of Katipunan and the meaning of the acronym KKK is Kataastaasan Kagalang-galang na Katipunan ng manga Anak ng Bayan (Agoncillo 2012, 156). But there is a document in the *Cuerpo* collection that says the name of the secret society is Katipunan, Kataastasan, Kalayaan ng mga tunay na anak ng bayan (NAP Manuscript A-1 [4], Doc. 162). There is another document, which allegedly came from Fr. Mariano Gil, saying that the name of the secret organization is Kataastaasan Katipunan Katagalugan (NAP Manuscript A-1 [1], Doc. 14). These two documents deserve serious consideration because they are primary sources and the second one is a document taken by Fr. Mariano Gil from the lockers of the Katipuneros in the Diario de Manila printing house.

Users of the *Cuerpo* collection should be cautioned that the reports of the *Cuerpo* agents have positive and negative attributes. On the one hand, they may be regarded as objective sources of information because they were written immediately after the event was heard or witnessed. Unlike the memoirs of participants in the revolution, which are mostly self-serving and written decades after the event, the reports of the *Cuerpo* agents were contemporaneous accounts of informants who were just doing their duty. Most of the reports are unedited, unadulterated, and not tailored to serve a particular interest group. On the other hand, scholars should be forewarned to use the *Cuerpo* collection critically because not all the reports are historically accurate. For instance, Agent Heriberto Fernandez reported that Aguinaldo returned from Hong Kong aboard a British ship on March 29, 1898, while in fact he arrived in Manila on May 19, 1898 (NAP Manuscript B-17, Doc. 12). Similarly, one *Cuerpo* report states that on February 18, 1898 Aguinaldo was allegedly murdered by his comrades who were not satisfied with the way he was running the Hong Kong junta (NAP Manuscript B-20, Doc. 37). There is another report stating that Aguinaldo was assassinated by forces loyal to Mariano Trias a few days after he returned from Hong Kong (NAP Manuscript B-17, Doc. 13). As recorded in history books, Aguinaldo died of natural causes six decades after the end of the revolution. Taking these facts into account, one can conclude that the *Cuerpo* reports should not be regarded as gospel truth.

The repatriation of the *Cuerpo de Vigilancia* collection and the subsequent decision of the National Archives of the Philippines to make the reports available to researchers will surely result in more studies on the Philippine Revolution. Aside from Rizal, the collection also has several documents on Bonifacio and Aguinaldo. Of the three known

heroes of the Philippine Revolution, Aguinaldo was the one most closely monitored by Cuerpo agents. This could be explained by the fact that Rizal and Bonifacio died four and nine months after the outbreak of the revolution respectively, while Aguinaldo lived longer than most other revolutionary leaders. Furthermore, he was considered the mortal enemy of the Spaniards, so naturally the attention and resources of the intelligence community were concentrated on him. It is hoped that this article will encourage more scholars to use the *Cuerpo* collection in enriching the narrative of the Philippine Revolution.

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Postscript

From the point of view of historiography, the discovery of the *Cuerpo de Vigilancia* collection invites contemporary scholars to explore nontraditional sources of history in their respective research projects. There is a big possibility that, like the Spaniards, other colonial and postcolonial powers may have created secret organizations tasked to monitor the whereabouts and activities of their enemies. There might well be similar undiscovered spy reports on Ho Chi Minh, Aung San, Mahatma Gandhi, and Sukarno. The historiographical value and importance of spy reports rest mainly on the fact that they are contemporaneous accounts and therefore promise a higher degree of accuracy and objectivity. Unlike the self-serving memoirs and biographies that are recounted years or decades after the event, spy reports are written immediately after the event was heard or witnessed. Spy agents are required to submit their report as soon as they witness or hear an event, and this gives them very little time to sugarcoat or think about the implications of their accounts. Ordinarily, agents do not analyze events. They are expected to report to their superiors on developments in the places where they are posted. Thus, their narratives are objective, unadulterated, timely, and not tailored to serve a specific interest group.

Nevertheless, it behooves scholars to use spy reports cautiously and critically. They should not be taken as gospel truth and therefore must be validated and subjected to further verification. There is always a possibility that because of their excitement and their commitment to submitting dispatches on time, agents ended up submitting reports that were historically inaccurate. The *Cuerpo de Vigilancia* collection has several erroneous reports. For example, Cuerpo agents had inaccurate reports about Emilio Aguinaldo. Agent Heriberto Fernandez, for instance, reported that Aguinaldo returned from Hong Kong aboard a British ship on March 29, 1898. The truth is that he arrived from Hong Kong aboard the American ship *McCulloch* on May 19, 1898. Interestingly, Cuerpo agents reported the death of Aguinaldo on two occasions. The first was on February 18, 1898, when he was allegedly murdered by his comrades who were not satisfied with the way he was running the Hong Kong junta. The second was a few days after Aguinaldo returned from Hong Kong, when he was assassinated by forces loyal to Mariano Trias. Both are inaccurate, because Aguinaldo lived a full life and died on February 6, 1964 at the age of 94.

It is hoped that after reading about the background, contents, value, and loopholes of the *Cuerpo* reports, more scholars will be stimulated to mine the collection and enrich the narrative of the Philippine Revolution. This article also invites non-Filipino scholars to follow a similar approach by looking for undiscovered primary sources that could enrich the life story of their respective revolutionary hero, in particular, and the grand narrative of their national history in general.

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Between State and Family: Biopolitics of Elderly Care and a Case of Emerging Community in Northern Thailand

Hayami Yoko*

In Thailand, from the beginning of this century, policies on aging, health promotion reform toward enlightening the public, and administrative decentralization have been taking place, leading to the reinforcement of biopolitics in elderly care. “Community” became a useful locus and tool to carry out governance of health and elderly care. At the same time, within state-initiated programs there is local agency at work, which mobilizes existing social networks while allowing the formation of new connections based on the old. Drawing upon observations from fieldwork in a suburban district in Chiang Mai Province, I argue that biosocial communality emerges from the interaction between the administration and local agents, and demonstrate how this operates by acting on the interface of the family and the community. I first look into how policies of health and elderly care have made use of the community or the discourse thereof. Then I introduce the case of a specific subdistrict to see how such top-down governance actually operates on the ground, how local networks can be reactivated, and, ultimately, how we find, among the participating elderly and caregivers, emerging biosocial communality at the interface of the family and community.

Keywords: aging, care, Northern Thailand, biopolitics, communality, health governance

I Introduction

In the beginning of the twenty-first century, Thailand launched its second—and more substantial—aging policy. Administrative decentralization began to take shape in the 1990s, and during the same decade Thailand launched a statewide program targeting the health promotion of its citizens. The cumulative effect of all of these measures is the conjoining of biopolitics with decentralized administration toward nationwide health promotion as well as the implementation of elderly care policy. Elderly care policy in

* 速水洋子, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University
e-mail: yhayami@cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp

Thailand states, first and foremost, that the elderly must help themselves; second, the family and community must provide support; and third, whenever these two measures fail, the state will provide support.¹⁾ Does this suggest a neoliberal turn in policy or simply a turn back toward traditional means? What is really happening? The family or household is, of course, where care is actually first and foremost provided, and yet the changing family in Thailand (Hayami 2012) forebodes the need for alternative support. What exists to fill this role between state and family, or at the interface of the intimate space of family and the wider space beyond? What is meant when state policy nominates “community” in the above context? And how do the elderly actually participate in community programs?

Once I began to look into elderly care in Northern Thailand, I often came across discourse on the community among officials, villagers, NGOs, and researchers. They would say, with a sigh, things like “The family and community are weakening in Thailand.” Yet just as often, I heard sentiments such as “in Thailand we still have community.” Whether the community is equivalent to the smallest administrative unit, or some kind of an autonomous homogeneous social unit that shares a traditional culture, or some metaphor of moral ideology, and whether something corresponding to this exists in reality, the repeated emphasis made me wonder what was going on.

What is this community that both officials and grassroots people refer to? How is elderly care actually practiced, and what kinds of social connections can we find at the interface of the family and beyond? These are the questions I hope to answer in this paper.

In the present century, outside of the immediate case of Thailand, there has been an emphasis and expectation among the earlier industrialized countries on communitarianism or community, and the socialization of care. In the face of global aging, the state, market, and family have all been found to be inadequate, and the community or civil society has been regarded as the possible solution, the “third way,” which seeks to reconstruct citizens as moral subjects of responsible communities within neoliberal policies (Rose 2000; Herbert 2005; Ueno 2011). The community that is the object of governance contains contradictory orientations: on the one hand it is a social space where individual self-management and self-control is constituted, and on the other it creates moral demands based on the traditional community framework (Tanabe 2008a, 108). Because of its moralistic demand, community as an idealistic discourse is criticized in the US context as being like a “trapdoor” for participating individuals (Herbert 2005). The state devolves its role by divulging it to the community with its benighted status as

1) See second national plan for the elderly (2002–21).

the locus of local agency, while demanding self-sacrifice from members of the community. Regarding the care scene in Japan, Ueno Chizuko emphasizes expectation on the role of the civic, yet points out how this is accomplished by the self-sacrifice of unpaid volunteer women (Ueno 2011).

In Thailand, especially since the 1980s, there has been much discourse on *chumchon* (community) by NGOs and researchers, as well as the administration, appraising it as the engine for development.²⁾ Community in this context refers to the smallest regional unit, as well as a social unit that is regarded with a firm sense of belonging and identity, a self-sufficient economic unit, and/or an autonomous social group that shares culture and value within itself (Seri 1986; Chatthip 1999). It was argued by both researchers and activists that the traditional “community culture” in agrarian Thailand was, or should be, the motor for development. Later, when *setthakhit phau piang* (sufficiency economy) was promoted in the face of the financial crisis in 1997, the community discourse was further reinforced through this ideology, which valued moderation, prudence, and self-immunity together with knowledge and morality for safeguarding local communities from adverse changes and crises. It was a rhetoric enhanced by its moralistic and normative tone, echoed and strengthened among the administration and civil society. Medical professionals, too, from the late 1970s had been involved in disseminating primary health care and enhancing district-level hospitals; and leading figures of *moo chonnabot* (rural medical doctors network)³⁾ such as Prawase Wasi had been involved in the community discourse from early on, effectively connecting community discourse with health concerns at the grassroots and the medical profession (Kawamori 2009, 155; Shigetomi 2013, 15).⁴⁾ In the 1980s district hospitals were referred to as “community hospitals,” and the district level was considered an important autonomous unit for creating a grassroots system of primary health and medical practice at the local level. In this context, community was equivalent

2) Shigetomi Shinichi (2013, 15–22) describes and analyzes communitarianism in Thai thought, which he traces along three lines of development that influenced each other: rural development NGOs, with scholarly foundation in the work of Chatthip Nartsupha, which eventually connected well with the state sector; anti-state social movements, which advocated for the rights of the people; and social reformists led by medical professionals such as Prawase Wasi.

3) See Illan Nam for how the health care regime in Thailand was built from the 1980s through to the 1990s based on medical professionals and bureaucrats, many of whom were former student activists of the 1970s who had nurtured networks especially through the rural medical doctors network (founded in 1978) and its Sampran Forum (begun in 1986). These networks enabled a vertical alliance between NGOs and bureaucrats of the Ministry of Public Health, connecting state resources with resources of societal actors (Nam 2015).

4) Prawase’s vision of the community is one where schools, hospitals, and volunteer organizations form a local and functional network for the welfare of the community, supported by a sense of unity based on religious ideals (Kawamori 2009, 153).

to the administrative unit and associated with the grassroots.

Looking back, the moralistic discourse on community was itself an effective instrument of governance from the era of development to that of post-financial crisis recovery (Kemp 1991; Rigg 1994; Reynolds 2009). Community has been an effective instrument for governance, including—and especially regarding—health governance, precisely because it is envisioned as distinct from the state, being an autonomous entity with moral overtones. The pronounced dependence on the community in the policy discourse on elderly care today can be considered as a continuation of this.

Recent scholarly discussions on community in Thailand have paid more attention to the processes by which community is formulated rather than presupposing a community with moral baggage and clear boundaries. Andrew Walker endeavors to liberate the modern Thai community from local traditional village ties, forms of subsistence, and indigenous wisdom and rather to reconsider it as a “concept that represents specific practices, meanings and political potentials that provide a firm basis for empowerment” (Walker 2009). He points out that even in the fluidity of global consumerism and the development of the nation-state, communal emotions and the significance of a sense of belonging are not lost. Walker postulates that it is unfortunate to view only the negative aspect of the state’s role in community formation and cautions that negatively dismissing every involvement by the state and administration as a paternalistic and authoritarian imposition of power would be dismissing all kinds of possibilities. To be sure, Thai villages today abound with state-initiated projects undertaken as joint initiatives of both the local administration and residents, and it is from such contexts that we find emerging and sustained initiatives. This is true especially in the various health-related programs where the community has become a ubiquitous concept or tool.

Komatra Chuengsatiansup (2008; 2013) questions the existing flat understanding and approach toward the community by the administration and social activists. By reflexively considering community, he encourages local society to make use of its own potentiality. As a medical anthropologist at the Health Systems Research Institute, he is in a position to connect the Thai public health administration on the one hand, and civil society on the other, and while he is critical of existing community discourse, he believes that by borrowing administrative power and intervening in the community, local connectivities can be transformed. In either case, community is envisioned as being well within and essential to the state project.

In discussing control over forests in Himalayan communities, Arun Agrawal (2001) critically examines state formation within community spaces where he sees the relationship as being “inclusive and subversive . . . [where] the management of forests is becoming a phenomenon in which state and community actors take joint part, undermining their

presumed division.” He continues:

state formation in community spaces is not just about the reproduction of state structures and logics through coercive acts initiated by states. It is as much about how this reproduction relies on the willingness of locally situated actors to use new laws to extend state control over themselves. (Agrawal 2001, 33)

While his discussion is pertinent to our case, we do not see a replication of state structures and programs on the community level, but rather multilevel involvement and articulation by various agents within the emerging network of the state’s subjects. In the Foucauldian sense, as pointed out by Nikolas Rose and Carlos Novas (2006), governmentality in health care has called upon community as a convenient locus of biopower, infused with a sense of moral obligation and warmth of intimacy. Yet at the same time, can we not find within the face-to-face process self-emergent communitality among the elderly who gather to share their physical, mental, and social experiences?

Tanabe Shigeharu (2008a; 2008b), who researched self-help groups formed among HIV-positive patients in Northern Thailand, examines the dynamic process of self-formation and transformation by people who share physical pain or risk and the common task of survival. These self-help groups were varied in their foundation: some were managed autonomously, while others were supported by government medical institutions, NGO support, or local organizations such as Buddhist temples or Village Health Volunteers (see below). Tanabe analyzes how this community evolves with internal and external power relations. While locals are all subject to governance from above, they also demonstrate agency through what he calls “governance from below.” Intimacy that is engendered within the community, especially a community sharing concerns of life and survival, guarantees relationships of care and consideration among individual members, so that there is the possibility for HIV-positive patients to seek a new life and healthy living in a “biosocial community” (Rabinow 1996; Rose and Novas 2006; Tanabe 2008a, 129).

Among the HIV groups, then, Tanabe found an emerging connectivity in action based on this community of intimacy. In considering the case of elderly care in Chiang Mai, I have found a similar process taking place. To differentiate this from the community in the foregoing sense of a closed, bounded moral community, which corresponds to a particular geographical locus and which is the object of top-down governance, in this paper I use the term “communitality.” Even if it is true that this communitality has emerged from processes of top-down community reinforcement, I want to differentiate the sense of actor-centered embodied connectivity that emerges among those involved.

In this paper I look at the relationship between the state and the reactivation and

formation of local connectivities at the interface of the family, in relation to elderly care. I will first demonstrate that health-related policies and later elderly care policies in Thailand have been means of state penetration into the lives of Thai subjects, backed by global slogans such as “Active aging.” Thai communities are themselves reinforced by the state as receptacles and transmitters for top-down governance, which has been especially effective after administrative decentralization. The governance processes related to health promotion and elderly care are arranged through various programs that formulate and reinforce communities and health promotion programs. Indeed, health and aging is today the foremost stage for biopolitics in Thailand, most effectively through the community. In the following main section, I will introduce a case study from Northern Thailand and argue that within state-initiated programs, we see various local agents that mobilize existing social networks as well as form new connections based on the old. In local care practices that are carried out in response to the policies emphasizing community care, there is an emerging sense of communality through embodied interaction. I will argue that in response to state-initiated projects and policies, local networks for elderly care are formed from within the mutual interaction between the local administration and various agents, and demonstrate how this operates by acting on the interface of the intimate family space and community space where we find emerging biosocial communality. Ultimately, I question whether the belated (relative to the industrialized countries) “aging” in Thailand means simply that Thai society is following the foregoing experiences of the industrialized countries, or whether Thailand is following a different pathway.

II Biopolitics of Health, Aging, and Elderly Care in Thailand

Thailand is aging rapidly. A low birthrate and aging trend began to take shape in the 1990s, and by 1992 the total fertility rate had fallen under 2.0 and life expectancy had exceeded 75. It is expected that one-third of the population will be elderly (in Thailand, defined as those above age 60) by 2040. Government policies began in earnest from the first decade of the twenty-first century, accompanied by an increasing use of the formal term *phuu suung ayu* (person of a higher age) rather than the local and informal *khon tao khon kae* or, in the north, *phau uui mae uui*. Economists have declared that Thailand risks becoming an aging society before attaining a sufficient economic level to support its elderly. In other words, the government must design its elderly policy with the awareness that social security will not cover the entire population.

Policies geared toward an aging society began in 1982, the year the United Nations

World Assembly on Aging was held in Vienna.⁵⁾ Stimulated and urged on by this congress, the Thai Ministry of Interior founded the Thai Elderly Committee, with high-ranking officials from various ministries as well as medical professionals, and launched the first national plan for the elderly (1982–2001) (Piyakorn 2011, 2–30). In 1982 the Ministry of Interior ordered provincial governors to establish senior citizen clubs (*chomrom phuu suung ayu*) at the regional level (Worawet *et al.* 2014), and since then the Department of Public Welfare has called nationwide for elderly clubs to be founded locally. The department took the lead in activating these nationwide elderly clubs, and in 1987 the Senior Citizens Council of Thailand (from 1989, the Thai Senior Citizens Association), constituting mostly medical professionals and elites, was founded to oversee these elderly clubs, which in 1994 were registered in a nationwide network (Banlu *et al.* 1996).⁶⁾ In 1993 a monthly allowance for the elderly (*bia yang cheeb*) was instituted; its financial burden was later taken over by local administrations. State-initiated activities to promote community participation began in earnest in the first decade of the twenty-first century.⁷⁾

It was after the 1997 constitution, which referred to rights of minorities as well as the elderly, that the Thai government began to tackle the issue in earnest.⁸⁾ In 2002 the second national plan for the elderly (2002–21) was laid out, and in 2003 the Elderly Act was promulgated.

The elderly clubs mentioned above function as the foundation for implementing various elderly policies locally. At present, there is at least one elderly club in every tambon. Activities of these clubs include health promotion events, sports (such as petanque and tae kwon do), cultural events, and various mutual-aid programs (funerals,

5) According to Worawet Suwanrada *et al.* (2014, 33), the first senior citizen center (formerly called senior citizen assembly) was established in 1962 by the Neuroscience Research Foundation, but its operations were quite limited. Worawet refers to it as a “senior citizen center.” Due to the Thai term *chomrom*, I opt to use “club.”

6) By 2008, according to the Senior Citizens Council of Thailand, there were 19,475 senior citizen centers (Senior Citizens Council of Thailand 2008, in Worawet *et al.* 2014, 33).

7) A pilot survey was conducted in 1996 to ascertain the needs and methods for community participation in providing care, services, and activities for the elderly, with the aim of setting up Senior Citizens Clubs (Centers), commissioned by the Department of Public Welfare and the Senior Citizens Council of Thailand (Malinee *et al.* 1996).

8) In the 1997 constitution, it was first stated that those above the age of 60 without any income had the right to receive state assistance. It was also specified that the state must support the elderly, the impoverished, and the disabled so that their standard of living was secured. In 1999 the Thai Elderly Declaration was announced, stating that the Thai state must make all efforts to secure the rights and living standards of the elderly. However, two of the nine articles also mention that the elderly must live with their families, maintaining ties of co-residence, love, respect, understanding, and support and that the elderly and their families must attend to each other.

etc.). The clubs' founding is led by district hospitals, local administration, or civil servants. According to recent statistics, one-third of the elderly population participate in such elderly clubs, especially those in their 60s and 70s (Knodel *et al.* 2015, 3).

Another government-initiated nationwide organization that was founded earlier and is well rooted in local society is the Village Health Volunteer system (*aasaa-samak saathaanasuk muubaan*, best known by its acronym for *aw saw maw*, hereafter ASM). The Ministry of Public Health founded this system in 1977 to mobilize local agents to promote primary health care, and 800,000 ASMs were designated nationwide. Their role was to visit their assigned households, check on health conditions, provide information and knowledge, attend monthly meetings and seminars, and connect the households to various services. At the same time, the ASM became an instrument for rule and governance when there was a strong drive for development in the name of public health in the 1970s and 1980s. While the health and medical system was monopolized by modern biomedicine specialists, the ASMs became instruments for the government to disseminate and extend health-related governance to every corner of the country (Komatra and Paranat 2007). ASMs were appointed by the village head and often reflected local social hierarchies and political factions.

Over the four decades of their existence, ASMs have undergone considerable debate and change in their roles and effectiveness.⁹⁾ Into the twenty-first century, female ASMs have become dominant in number, and decentralized administration has given them a more substantial role. In 2007, of the almost 800,000 ASMs throughout the country, 70 percent were women, whereas in 1993 the ratio was 1.76 women to 1 man (Komatra and Paranat 2007).

In 2003 the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security instituted a system of home care for the elderly, designating Elderly Home Care Volunteers (otherwise called elderly volunteers, in Thai *aasaa samak phuu suung ayu*, or *aw phaw saw*, hereafter APS), modeled on the earlier ASMs of the Ministry of Health. This system was piloted in two

9) ASMs have often been objects of criticism (Kauffman and Myers 1997; Kowitz *et al.* 2015). It has been pointed out that they constitute and reinforce the local hierarchy, and especially since 2010, volunteers have been criticized as acting out of self-interest as they began to receive a monthly allowance of 600 baht—not as salary but to support their activities. Indeed, they can be mobilized politically since they are by definition able to go into the intimate space of each household. Since they are assigned from above (usually the village head), and now that they receive an allowance, it is rather contradictory to call them “volunteers.” It was after the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 that citizens began to provide assistance on their own initiative, and the words “volunteer” and “volunteerism” became quite popular in Thai society. Those who participated on their own initiative began to call themselves *jit aasaa* (volunteer spirit) to differentiate themselves from the designated Village Health Volunteers (ASMs).

provinces from each of the four regions, and by 2013 the APS project for the elderly covered every district in the country. Some of the APSs are chosen from among ASMs, many of whom are younger elderly and/or caregivers for their own family members at home. Each APS volunteer is assigned five housebound or bedridden elderly persons and is expected to visit, give advice and encouragement, and provide knowledge and information.¹⁰⁾ The APSs connect the local administration and hospital with each household, relaying information and providing support (see next section).

In 2008, with the revision of the second national plan on the elderly, a *phuan chuai phuan* (friends helping friends) program¹¹⁾—a system of mutual assistance at the community level—was initiated in the senior citizen centers. Both ASMs and APSs were mobilized to provide integrated community-based long-term care (Worawet *et al.* 2014). The annual main budget derives from the Tambon Administrative Organization, while the budgets for specific activities derive from the tambon health fund initiated in 2006 (expanded nationwide by 2011 with support from the National Health Security Office).

As we have seen, the primary actors in executing elderly policy at the community level were local elderly clubs, district hospitals and village-level health promotion hospitals (formerly clinics),¹²⁾ volunteers (both ASM and APS), and the Tambon Administrative Organization.

Regarding health more generally, a National Health System Reform initiative was begun in 2000. It included creating a knowledge base for reform, mobilizing civil society, and creating a legal framework (Komatra 2008; Kawamori 2009). Led by the Health Systems Research Institute (founded in 1992 under the Ministry of Public Health), it

10) Their jobs are designated as follows: (1) making home visits, (2) overseeing diets, (3) taking care of medicine, (4) helping with exercise, (5) providing transportation to the doctor, (6) bringing the doctor home for treatment, (7) taking the elderly to join events in the community, (8) arranging for relaxation outside the house, (9) helping the elderly join in religious activities, (10) providing assistance in adjusting living conditions inside the home to be more suitable, (11) forming groups of elderly to conduct activities, (12) providing information to the elderly and their families, (13) advising the elderly when they have a problem, (14) providing knowledge to the elderly about accessing their rights, (15) providing information concerning services that are beneficial to the elderly, (16) coordinating with authorities that provide help to the elderly, (17) collecting data, (18) following up on problems encountered, (19) helping to take care of errands or doing errands on behalf of the elderly, and (20) conducting activities that are beneficial to the elderly (Worawet *et al.* 2014).

11) This was preceded by a similar program with the same name among people with HIV (Tanabe 2008b, 176), where home visits that included advice and gifts of food, etc., were carried out by people with HIV.

12) Located in the tambon, they were in contact with the district hospitals and involved in primary health care.

aimed to form networks among civil society and interest groups as well as local administration, connecting them to a framework of knowledge, technology, and governance for reconstructing the health system and reconsidering health conceptualization and health-related policies hitherto dominated by the specialized knowledge of modern medical professionals.¹³⁾ Toward this end, citizens of all levels—including NGOs, researchers, religious leaders, private enterprises, various associations, and local administration—were invited and mobilized with the goal of revising the legal system basic to health. Self-responsibility and management were emphasized in the making of a healthier nation. Behind this was the awareness that Thailand was undergoing an epidemiological transition from infectious diseases to non-communicable lifestyle diseases, extended average life expectancy, and soaring medical expenses. Health promotion on the individual level led to an increased awareness among Thai citizens of vital indices such as blood pressure and body fat percentage.

The Thailand Health Promotion Foundation (popularly called *saw saw saw* from its acronym or “ThaiHealth”)¹⁴⁾ was founded in 2001 and the National Health Security Office in 2002. Health promotion programs for elderly constitute an important part within this movement, and health- and elderly-related projects are supported by such newly instituted quasi-government agencies. The local administration at the tambon level receives budgetary support by applying to these agencies. Since the foundation of ThaiHealth, some budgeting related to health promotion and elderly care has been distributed on an application basis to the tambon level, which allows local residents to formulate new activities and networks. Various policy-based schemes become open opportunities for budget application at the tambon level. One could say that the administrative decentralization that began in the 1990s¹⁵⁾ was a turning point in the biopolitics of Thailand.

In 2007 the Thai National Health Act was passed. From around this time, awareness spread regarding food, folk medicine, exercise, and various such health-related issues, and health-related public discourse was reinforced. Some were aimed toward the

13) Many of the medical professionals involved in the institute and the reform were bureaucrats from the rural medical doctors network who were also promoting the community approach in medical practices for the grassroots (Kawamori 2009).

14) Founded in 2001 under the Thai Health Promotion Act and funded by “sin tax” (tax on tobacco and alcohol) by the Ministry of Health as well as nongovernment specialists as an “autonomous state agency,” it boasts of being the first of its kind in Asia, an autonomous quasi-government organization. It has been known for its vociferous nationwide anti-smoking and other health-related campaigns with moral overtones. For an overall view of Thai health promotion/prevention funding, including ThaiHealth and the National Health Security Office, see Watabe *et al.* (2017).

15) Put in motion by the Tambon Administrative Authority Act (1994).

coexistence of varied forms of medical knowledge, including Thai traditional medicine and various types of local medicine that are adopted in elderly care activities. Health policies now have come to emphasize the responsibility of communities, civil society, and individual citizens rather than relying solely on medical specialization.

To sum up, while the Thai state allegedly leaves all responsibility for elderly care in the hands of the “family and community,” the elderly clubs and APSs that lead the local scene in elderly care actually constitute nationwide systems of governance. Seen in this light, both public health and elderly care are, in a sense, not only ends in themselves but also ideal tools by which governance can reach the grassroots. Health and medical policy has, in modern times, become the most effective means of governance in Thailand, enhancing the state’s governing power under emerging concepts of health at the grassroots into the twenty-first century. Community becomes an effective instrument in biopolitics, and increasingly so in the present century. Health-related policies and institutions, such as elderly clubs and volunteers, are governance processes by which state power feeds into local practices, in the mutual on-the-ground daily relationship between the state and community.

How, then, is elderly care actually practiced on the local scene? We will now look into this through the case of a Northern Thai peri-urban district.

III Case of Tambon Y in S District

This section introduces the case of Tambon (subdistrict) Y in S District, Chiang Mai Province. S District is about 25 kilometers away from Chiang Mai City. It is rural but within commuting distance. It has 5,500 households with a population of 13,000, of whom 3,000 are elderly (amounting to 23.1 percent, which is quite a bit higher than the national average of 13 percent). In the Thai administration, elderly are classified into three primary groups: the bedridden (*tit tiang*), who constitute 1.56 percent of the elderly in S District; those who stay in their homes (*tit baan*), 5.37 per cent; and the socially active (*tit sangkhom*), 93.05 percent. In this district, elderly activities are designed primarily according to these three categories.

Elderly activities in S District began in 1989, when the village-level elderly club was founded by the head of the local cooperative. In 1999 the club was publicly registered with the provincial branch of the Senior Citizens Council of Thailand, under the guidance of the district hospital. Subsequently, the district elderly club came under the charge of the original founder’s wife, Mae B (Mother B, as the villagers call her), an 84-year-old former primary school teacher. In 2007 the elderly club’s funding from ThaiHealth

increased,¹⁶⁾ so under the *phuan chuai phuan* program the elderly club, together with the hospital and the local administration, was able to initiate APS volunteer activities. The budget from ThaiHealth was then taken over by the tambon administration. Below, we shall take a look at the activities at the time of my fieldwork in 2016.

Elderly School for the Socially Active

Activities for the socially active elderly began in 2012 as a “school for the elderly” (*rongrian phuu suung ayu*). The school holds classes every Friday at the tambon meeting center. Around 20 participants, mostly women, gather weekly. They sit at several tables making handicrafts, then gather in the hall for aerobics and exercise or dance, after which they listen to lectures and talks. After sharing lunch prepared by volunteers, they disperse. The handicrafts are sold at various local events. Mae B leads the participants, who are former teachers and/or wives of local administrators, i.e., mostly rural and suburban middle-class women.

Elderly schools of various types have become popular in Thailand in the current decade. They have been founded in many localities, with varying formats and sizes. Membership ranges from 40 to a few hundred, and activities include physical activities, handicrafts, excursions, and/or lectures and classes. The management of these schools also varies in the way the administration and civilian members connect.

To demonstrate the variation, I will introduce a case from Tambon D, north of Chiang Mai City, which was the liveliest of the several elderly schools I visited. In 2014, C, a community development worker in the tambon, mobilized volunteers, mostly themselves elderly people who were retired teachers. Participants were not only former white-collar professionals but had also been laborers, traders, and farmers. This tambon (population 15,000) has an elderly population of 1,700 (11.5 percent of the population, of whom 70.29 percent are socially active, 28.46 percent housebound, and 1.25 percent bedridden). Every week they gather at a meeting hall in a local temple. In Tambon D, the elderly school is called a “university.” The class has a familial and lively mood throughout. An open-air bus (a repurposed truck) starts from the town hall and makes its rounds from house to house picking up elderly participants and taking them to the temple. As each elderly participant steps onto the bus, there are cries of welcome, and C leads the jovial mood.

16) From 2011 to 2013, the tambon elderly club was awarded 560,000 baht for its home care program. Through the founding of the rehabilitation center and the elderly school in 2013, Tambon Y was elevated to “advanced-region” status in terms of its public health and home care. As a result, from 2015 to 2017 ThaiHealth and the Senior Citizens Council of Thailand selected Tambon Y to join the potential development plan for elderly clubs promoting active aging (*phaawa phrutipalang*).

C explained that the purpose of the school was to gather the socially active elderly to form a network, and to provide them with a place for economic activities, such as selling vegetables and various products, and social and cultural activities, while fostering a spirit of volunteerism. By joining in such activities, the elderly become conscious of helping other elderly who are housebound or bedridden and activating the lives of the elderly in the locality. As with Tambon Y above, they mobilize ASMs and APSs, the hospital, local administration, civilian groups, and elderly club members. The curriculum at the school comprises four subjects: religion (Buddhism), health (bodily, mental, and social), recreation, and social welfare. Every semester the school issues a certificate of completion, although “students” can enroll as many times as they like. When participants arrive at the school, volunteers measure their blood pressure, weight, height, and pulse and hold simple health interview sessions to record their health status. Then, out in the yard, they gather to observe the raising of the national flag. Once they return to the hall they start prayers and sutras, followed by the monk’s sermon, and then classes begin, mixing physical exercises, lectures, and much fun and games.

A 74-year-old woman said the elderly school was the highlight of her week. She lives at home with her family but often feels left out, as she is slow to catch onto the conversation, but here she feels younger. By the end of the school gathering, participants all look animated and satisfied.¹⁷⁾

These elderly schools promote the global ideal of “active aging”¹⁸⁾ (*phaawa phrutipalang*),¹⁹⁾ encouraging the elderly to get out of the house and be active in the community. What is notable, however, in the case of Tambon D, is that the school promotes social activities and networks among the elderly, so that rather than simply promoting individual health, it encourages the formation of elderly networks of mutual assistance.

Rehabilitation Center for the Housebound

Coming back to S District, the district’s most notable elderly activity is the rehabilitation center, which was founded before the elderly school. In 2007, the local elderly club applied for funds from ThaiHealth, adding to its budget to train local APS volunteers for

17) During visits to similar elderly schools and elderly clubs within Chiang Mai City and its outskirts, I met many middle-class women who participated in more than one such clubs and schools set up on different days of the week to keep themselves busy.

18) Active aging as defined by the WHO is “the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age” (WHO 2002, 11). There have been criticisms of active aging, from both industrialized countries for its neo-liberal overtones, and later aging regions questioning its applicability (Moulaert and Biggs 2012; Van Dyk *et al.* 2013; Lamb 2014).

19) There are different Thai terms for “active aging,” such as *phruto phalang*, *Suung wai yang mi sukhaaphaap*, and *phuu suung ayu thi mii sakhayaphaap*.

home care. When the state administration chose 10 elderly clubs from each province to enhance home-care activities, Tambon Y was one of the selected localities in the province. The plan was to hand over budget responsibility to the local administration after two years. With this funding, the elderly club, with the support of hospital staff and the local administration, first trained 30 members as home-care visitors. These members were recruited from among the ASMs as well as APSs. These trained members began to visit the bedridden and housebound elderly, together with other club members, at least twice a month. However, after a few years of this, Mae B, the club's representative, consulted with Dr. P, a former professor and medical doctor at Chiang Mai University—who was an executive member of the National Elderly Committee and a representative of the northern region—and decided that rather than merely visit house by house, they might gather the elderly in one place for rehabilitation activities, at least those elderly who could be persuaded to step out of the house. Thus, in 2010 Mae B consulted with the abbot of a local temple and founded the rehabilitation center using the temple meeting hall. Every Wednesday morning the center opens for a gathering supported for the first two years by ThaiHealth funds, and subsequently by the local administration. In the afternoon, APS volunteers visit the housebound elderly. Mae B and her husband's connection with Dr. P could have been a factor in the tambon and district's success in being chosen as a model case and receiving funds. The activities at the rehabilitation center are supported by the local administration and other donations, and the management is assisted by the district hospital. The main purpose is to bring the housebound elderly out for physical rehabilitation activities so that they become as self-supporting as possible.

At the rehabilitation center, the housebound elderly gather every Wednesday at around 9am. Also in attendance are ASMs, APSs, nurses, medical therapists, Thai family doctors, the driver of the "taxi" (a cart attached to a motorbike hired by the center to transport the elderly), a masseuse, and other members of the district hospital. The elderly have at their disposal a variety of herbal treatments, massages, and locally devised exercise equipment. They can attend advice sessions with hospital staff as well as traditional specialists. Participants choose their own activities and talk to each other as well as the specialists. Every week there are about 30 to 40 elderly and disabled participants. They are able to rent wheelchairs and other equipment, as well as various exercise appliances. Some of these have been purchased and others donated. Some are brought in from similar centers in other districts that are known for their rehabilitation activities.²⁰⁾

20) There were frequent mutual visits in the name of training, to observe other successful local organizations with similar programs. Tambon Y also received many observers from as far as the north-eastern provinces.

Each participant does his or her own exercises, and then from 10:30am there is communal activity.

Everyone is seated facing the front of the hall, where the Buddha statue is situated, and the elderly leader Mr. W begins to chant sutras. The attendees participate in whatever posture that their bodies allow, some standing, some seated on the ground or on chairs, and some lying down. After the exercise session, announcements are made, guests are introduced, and information is disseminated, and there is a short talk on health issues. This is followed by lunch, prepared by volunteers along with Mae B, with carefully chosen food and organic ingredients for a health-conscious menu using locally produced vegetables. After lunch the participants go home: some are picked up by their family, some walk slowly using walking aids, and others make use of the “taxi.”

Mr. W, the jovial man leading the chanting, is 64 years old. He used to work as a guard for a company in Chiang Mai but became bedridden after a traffic accident. He recounted to us how he became a regular participant at the center. After the accident, he was taken to the district hospital, and after returning home he received regular visits from the hospital medical team. The team members realized that he had not only physical but also mental problems. He had iron bars placed in his legs, so initially he was unable to walk and also suffered from severe depression. He needed help in his daily life, but his wife had left him, his son was in prison, and he was left to fend for himself, relying on help from his neighbors. L, a hospital nurse and public health worker, repeatedly invited him to come to the rehabilitation center. Initially he was unwilling and lacked the confidence to leave his house, but the team brought him out for rehabilitation activities a few times. Gradually he recovered, and once he learned how to help himself he became more mobile. His mental state improved, and he was able to live on his own. He said, “If it hadn’t been for Nurse L and the team, I would have been dead by now.” Currently, he participates in rehabilitation center activities, takes care of other participants, leads the sutras, and works as a volunteer.

Another regular participant, 74-year-old Grandma A, who always sits on the bed nearest to the front altar, recounted her story. She used to work at the village co-op, but then she was afflicted with Parkinson’s disease and became bedridden. She was socially isolated and did not want to meet anyone. Since her family members all worked during the day, they left her necessities around her bed so she could spend the day on her own. Her niece, who is an APS volunteer, consulted Nurse L at the hospital and persuaded Grandma A, who was initially unwilling, to go to the rehabilitation center. She took Grandma A in the communal “taxi,” and Grandma A began to go regularly. Gradually she regained her strength and progressed from bedridden to housebound, moving about the house on a wheelchair. Now she willingly comes to the center, enjoying the oppor-

tunities to meet and talk with other elderly people, and she joins in the exercises in her own way. Not only physically, but also mentally and socially, the center's activities contributed to her recovery.

These stories suggest how initially some elderly were unwilling participants, but through prompting and soliciting and after initial tentative participation where they experienced mental and physical improvement, they became active participants in the center's activities, assisting and volunteering where able. The major role of the rehabilitation center is to bring more elderly out of the house and connect them with one another.

The hospital team emphasizes how the center's activities have helped to reduce the percentage of bedridden and housebound elderly. Participating in the center's activities gives the elderly strength, especially through meeting and exercising with others who also spend most of their days alone at home. This is the primary reason they want to come here. They find their own solutions and, in a way, perhaps even discover a path to transformation in the presence of other elderly. While the experience is individual, it would never happen if there was no communal gathering. While the purpose of the center's activities is to provide effective rehabilitation exercises and advice, the actual effect is wider, providing social and mental care. It nurtures a new communality beyond the simple physical effects of the rehabilitation. In this sense, I apply the term bio-social communality (Rose and Novas 2006, 442) to understand what is taking place here.

Supporters of Elderly Activities

There were several regular participants who showed up for all the elderly activities in S District. They were the elderly club leaders, core members among the volunteers, district hospital personnel, and public health specialists in the local administration. These people, all of whom happened to be women, worked in close coordination with each other, with Mae B functioning as the nodal person.

Nurse L, a public health specialist at the district hospital, is herself a resident of Tambon Y, and her mother is also a housebound elderly. Nurse L has worked as a public health specialist for over 30 years and is a leading figure in all of the district-level activities for the elderly. There are also young elderly volunteers who are former pupils of Mae B, such as V (64 years old). V is a former primary school teacher and an APS. She participates in the rehabilitation center's weekly activities and the elderly school. As the accountant of the elderly club, she sits weekly at the hospital club office to receive the club members' annual payments toward the mutual accumulative aid fund, which is used primarily for funerals. H, the younger social worker in Tambon Y's local administration, also participates in these activities and is in close contact with Nurse L and Mae B.

Mae B, as the head of the elderly club, spends her time and energy in the district's

elderly activities. She lives with her bedridden 86-year-old husband (the original founder of the elderly club) and her daughter's family. Many of the volunteers helping in the activities are her former pupils, so there is a strong network formed around her that functions as the engine for these activities. She was born in one of the established local families, and many of her relatives are high-ranking officials or professionals. She was educated in Bangkok, a rarity at the time of her youth, and both she and her husband have long been involved in the elderly club and are close to Dr. P. Through their joint efforts, S District has been receiving budgetary support as one of the model tambons and districts in the north for piloting projects. Mae B took over from her husband the role of elderly representative of the district, and she serves as the secretary of the subdistrict elderly club. She is often called upon by the local administration to attend meetings at all levels, from the district down to the village. She participates in all activities—including lunch preparation—at the rehabilitation center, which was founded by her own initiative. She has a wide personal network, is a good orator, and has a strong personality. She said, “We want the elderly here to be high quality. That is, rather than be *phaara* (a burden), they should have *palang* (power).” In an interview, she clearly stated that she advises everyone to be an elderly person with quality (*phuu suung ayu mii kunnaphaap*), and that the three factors contributing to this are exercise, food, and *aarom* (affect or emotion). This is perhaps her own version of the active aging concept. At 84, she works hard and is the nodal point of the network and the emerging communality. No doubt there are political factions involved in the formation of such a network, and she is definitely at the top of the traditional local social strata, yet the members involved in the activities cross political and other divides. Furthermore, the personnel involved are fluid, never stable or permanent. Since Mae B has a bedridden husband, she is aware that she herself may one day be in need of care.

Thus, care at the district and village levels activates older relationships and existing traditional ties upon which are formed new ties and networks. Locating the rehabilitation center at the temple, a feature of the traditional social-cultural base, makes it easy for the elderly to gather. Mae B is somewhat like a patron figure of the old system, but centered around this figure is a new network of civilian groups, district hospitals, the administration, as well as the temple, all of which work in coordination without boundaries. The elderly school and the rehabilitation center both provide an impetus for the elderly to step out of the household and their daily lives and motivate and encourage them to become not only physically but also mentally and socially active.

It should be noted that a significant number of active members supporting the community elderly care, as we have seen, are themselves elderly. This suggests that many of the top-down policies and projects are taken on not only by local administrators and

hospital staff, but also by local elderly, who in turn mobilize other elderly. Such elderly activities are supported also by professionals from the hospital, administrators from the local tambon office, volunteers (both official and unofficial, such as the “taxi” driver), local traditional healers, and monks on occasion. The knowledge that is exchanged is varied, from biomedicine to traditional medicine. Another notable factor is that much of the work is shouldered by local women (e.g., paid administrators, hospital workers, volunteers, and unpaid local leaders).

Bedridden Elderly and Home Care: On the Interface with Family

One afternoon after the rehabilitation center activities, I joined a team of elderly volunteers and Nurse L to visit a housebound elderly couple not far from the temple where the center activities are held, bringing some home-made sweets as gifts. Grandma T, 83 years old, and her husband, 79, live with their adopted daughter and her son. The daughter works as a nurse’s aide in a hospital near Chiang Mai, and her son is in high school; so during the day, the older couple need to take care of themselves. Grandma T broods that her walking aid is too heavy and makes her feel exhausted. The visiting team members propose exchanging it for a lighter one from the rehabilitation center rental facility. They measure Grandma T’s blood pressure and talk to her about her daily life. Upon their request, she reluctantly rises and walks with the walking aid with a little difficulty. The team members watch and encourage her, telling her she is doing well and that she should visit the rehabilitation center (which is a few hundred meters away) with her husband. Nurse L compliments her that her eyes, ears, and mind are good and strong, telling her she would improve even more if she could come to the center. Grandma T lights up on hearing these words. She says, with tears in her eyes, “No one told me I could do things like you say. But if you tell me so, I think I can, and I’ll try.” A few weeks later, we found her at the rehabilitation center with her husband.

On another occasion, I joined a home care unit visiting 10 households in two days.²¹⁾ In some households there were family members, especially daughters, looking after the

21) While volunteers had collected data on the households of the elderly, in 2017 the district received support to renew and refine the existing data on bedridden elderly needing care so that further necessary measures could be taken. A team of professionals (hospital staff, namely, the family care unit comprising social welfare workers and nurses) together with volunteers made rounds to the bedridden cases for this purpose. The economic strata of the households were varied, from middle class to impoverished (at least as judged from observation). The main purposes of this particular round of visits were to make inquiries about the elderly’s physical abilities, memory and mental abilities, medicine administration, meals, living conditions, sleeping quarters, physical accessibility inside the house (steps, slopes, etc.), and posture during the day, and to give advice on these aspects. The team used a checklist developed in Japan and provided by the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

elderly, while in 4 of the 10 cases an elderly person was looking after a bedridden spouse—at least on the day that we visited.²²⁾

The case of Grandma K and her husband provides some insight into the kind of stimulus such visits can bring to family care. Grandma K is 89 years old, and her youngest daughter is the main caregiver. Due to glaucoma, her eyesight is very weak, so she stays immobile on a bed in the living room of her daughter's newly built house. Since her eyesight began to fail before she moved into the new house, she is afraid to move around by herself and depends on her daughter. Her daughter places drinking water near her bed, and Grandma K calls her when she needs to go to the bathroom. Grandma K has no other health problems and has a clear mind and memory. During our visit we found out that her husband, 90-year-old Grandpa P, lives in the old house, which is in the same compound. He is completely blind and refuses to move to the newly built house as he feels confident moving about only in the old house, where he spent many years of his life while his eyesight was good. He spends his days on a bench in front of the old house, and at night he goes up a ladder to sleep. Since his eating habits are different from Grandma K's, he is taken care of by an older daughter who lives in the neighborhood.

The distance between the new house and the old one is only about 30 meters, yet Grandma K and Grandpa P have not been together for three years—since the building of the new house. Our team persuaded Grandpa P to visit Grandma K in the new house. Initially he refused, saying that he had not stepped out of the old house since he lost his eyesight and that even the 30 meters was too far for him, which was why he had refused to go for three years. There were surely other reasons unbeknownst to us for his stubbornness on this matter, and his daughters had not been able to persuade him, so the couple had been spending their lives apart in these two houses. Our team encouraged him to attempt the walk and accompanied him to the new house, supporting him on both sides. When he safely reached the new house, the couple sat side by side on Grandma K's bed and held hands with tears in their eyes. It may have been that there were some family issues, and the couple's vision problems, their own fears and refusals, and the caregiving daughters' concern for efficient care had resulted in the three-year separation. As the visiting team brought the couple together, the daughters discussed how they

22) According to the district record, the distribution of caregivers for the elderly was as follows: those who were capable of taking care of themselves (88.5 percent); those who needed care but did not have a regular caregiver (1.1 percent); and of the remaining 10.4 percent, those cared for by daughters (40.5 percent), spouses (28 percent), sons (12 percent), a child's spouse or niece, nephew, or grandchild (10.2 percent), siblings or other kin (5.2 percent), and others (4 percent). Even those who lived with their children were cared for during the day by their elderly spouses.

might bring their parents together during the day from then on.

In both of the cases above, the elderly continued to live in their habitual closed circle of relationships and practices, where the law of inertia seemed to take hold in the family care setup. The team's visit broke into this closed circle. While I had no chance to discuss the visit itself with the receiving family members, I can say at least that the visit intervened in the habitual circle of care, even if temporarily. I was told a few months later that Grandma K had an eye operation after which she was able to regain her eyesight. In this way, family care was activated through the interface of interaction with the visiting home care team.

The team visit was an occasion to access the household and not only assess the conditions of the elderly but also give advice to caregivers. Daily care is, after all, in the hands of the regular caregivers in the family, while volunteers and occasional visits such as this one constitute an interface with the outside world. The visits bring opportunities to change and improve the daily care routine in the household by creating an interface between family care and the outside, and acting on it.²³⁾

IV Discussion

As we have seen, when Thai state policies and programs emphasize community in elderly care, it is enabled by the mobilization of apparatuses such as local volunteers, elderly clubs, and other measures that have been instituted nationwide in every locale. Health promotion campaigns have raised health consciousness nationwide to a level totally unexpected prior to the 1990s. Various programs are supported financially and morally by state institutions such as ThaiHealth and strengthened by decentralized administration. Thai governmentality in elderly care has thus constructed a national network of professionals and administrators as well as civilian networks, promoting national health consciousness and disseminating funds. While the network was formed in response to governance from above, from there it was able to draw upon local participation and initia-

23) Admittedly, among the 10 cases we visited, there were extreme caregiving situations too, such as a wife immobilized in bed with an injured backbone, taken care of by her husband who suffered from dementia. In another case, an elderly man was taken care of by a daughter who had chosen to place him in a child's pen due to his faltering legs and dementia, since she could not keep watch over him 24 hours a day. In two cases, elderly wives were taking care of their husbands during the day. Unable to lift their husbands to a seated position, they were feeding them lying down. The team gave advice and encouragement to the caregivers on how to administer medicine, how to feed, what posture was optimal, and how to arrange the bed, etc., encouraging the elderly to stand up and walk whenever possible.

tive. Elderly care is thus becoming—and will increasingly be—a crucial locus of biopolitics, along with other public health issues, through the everyday lives and health of the elderly population. Newly designated APS volunteers constitute another attempt at social welfare penetrating not only the community but also the household level, enhancing surveillance and normalization of elderly care (Biggs and Powell 2001).

We have seen how this operates on the local level. Top-down programs have fostered local networks founded on existing ties. In this aspect, community is a locus for enhancing the elderly's self-management through their own participation in elderly schools and volunteers' home visits. Moreover, as we have seen, where networks are thus formulated, they nurture emerging communality and empowerment among the gathered elderly.

How sustainable is this network, and who is supporting it? The success of top-down policies depends on mobilizing local inhabitants, who, as we have seen, are mostly local women. Being well connected with the everyday lives of residents, tambon level officials, social workers, and nurses—especially women—are in a position to form and be part of civil society networks.²⁴⁾ So far these networks are sustainably based on the newly formulated connections that have fed on existing local social relationships.

In S District, at the nodal point of the network are local figures such as Mae B, whose position in local society suggests that her family has always been at the top of the local social hierarchy. The activities at the elderly club, the district, and the tambon surrounding the elderly could be said to be feeding on the blessings brought about by that social status. Mae B's connection with Dr. P is an important link to the national network of medical professionals in key positions in the elderly care program, and this facilitates the effective management of the public care network and application for funding from Thai-Health. Traditional local patron-client relationships and various local ties, especially the women's networks, are reactivated and reformulated while new networks are formed, connecting them to medical as well as administrative institutions. The dynamism between state governance and local society is what has formed this emerging network. The local elderly club is managed by people such as Mae B and others in her network, behind which are both the nationwide elite organization of the Senior Citizens Council of Thailand and its branch, as well as the local network.

The network, especially in the rehabilitation center, is indeed based on local social

24) After administrative decentralization, 65 percent of tambon-level officials in the country are women. They constitute a large portion of the local staff working on public welfare and health-related activities, together with volunteers and networks of elderly people, who are also in large part women, as I observed in my fieldwork (see also Etoh 2019). Juree Vichit-Vadakan (2008) analyzes local women's political leadership after the localization of administration.

ties and initiative. Mae B herself is quite advanced in age. She is extremely active and energetic in the center's activities but is nevertheless aware that at any point she might become housebound or bedridden, and she herself, along with her family members, is taking care of her bedridden husband. Participating in local elderly activities is, for her, deeply connected to her own daily life and future. The volunteers surrounding her are younger elderly women who also are not participating simply out of sympathy and compassion. Rather, they also provide care in their family or neighborhood while aware of their own near future. The activities are in keeping with the recommended state program where elderly help other elderly, and as they do so, they are able to support each other physically, mentally, and socially. Mae B's emphasis on exercise, food, and emotion is an important aspect of biosocial communality that emerges among the elderly at the interface of family care and community-level care.

By taking a step out of their own domestic sphere and family life to join in elderly schools and rehabilitation centers, participants find their daily lives reactivated. Those coming to the rehabilitation center seek mutual interaction through which they find connectedness in life, acquiring power that they cannot find in their daily family care. The elderly participants find that they are empowered and transformed through joining in the communality.

While the activities conform to the global active aging ideals, the elderly participants are much more concerned with finding connections that make them feel confident. It is not the self-managing, self-responsible individual who comes to the fore here, but rather elderly individuals who find renewed strength through intersubjective relationships with other elderly folks. In turn, at home with the receiving of volunteers and home care teams, daily care practices are modified and reactivated. The care and cooperation or collaboration reactivate family care. Thus, through these activities, the interface of the intimate family space with community-level activities is reactivated. Participating elderly and caregivers each have their difficulties and distress over their own conditions, with their families, etc., and find themselves enlightened and transformed through the communal activities, where they find ways to transform themselves.

In S District, housebound elderly become involved in the rehabilitation center activities, and socially active elderly are mobilized to visit housebound and bedridden elderly. At the interface of the intimate family caregiving situation and community activities, we see empowerment and transformation occurring through various interactions, the process of which I have termed biosocial communality. Meaning is formed in shared activities of care, where the issue is not so much individual autonomy, self-management, or responsibility, nor a return to traditional intimate spaces for care such as family, but a newly formulated communality. This biosocial communality locally forms an effective

interface from the bottom up, between the family care space and the persons and network outside.

Concluding Remarks

Earlier industrialized parts of the world are now seeking alternatives in communitarianism and socializing care. In the neoliberal politics ascendant since the late twentieth century, the community has been a most useful policy-bearing institution, where moralistic demands are made by idealistic discourse, so that local members experience the community as a “trapdoor” imposed by the state (Herbert 2005).

Thailand came later on the scene, although the aging process is taking place rapidly and simultaneously with industrialization and economic development. Experiencing aging while still midway in economic development might mean a severe burden as well as an opportunity. In spite of the rapid rate of aging, we have seen that so far rather than a trapdoor, there is potential for the emergence of biosocial communality at the interface of family and society, in the process of both top-down governance and bottom-up networks.

We need to be wary of overburdening locally active women, and about the existence of elderly at home in dire conditions beyond the reach of such care activities and that care in the family is already precarious in many cases. Even so, there is also the potential for communalizing practice in its supporting network. This might lead to the enhancing of new and old social potential in Thai society. Therein, we find the possibility of formulating governance into the future while also nurturing communality.

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Defeating a Political Dynasty: Local Progressive Politics through People Power Volunteers for Reform and Bottom-up Budgeting Projects in Siquijor, Philippines

Hara Tamiki*

Despite its much-touted agenda to fight poverty and corruption, the Aquino administration was not able to produce good results during its term at the national level. However, some political forces and policy reforms that emerged with the administration achieved remarkable change at the local level. This paper explores the case of Siquijor Province, where an entrenched political dynasty was defeated in the 2013 and 2016 elections by candidates supported by the Liberal Party and its allied forces, Akbayan, and analyzes factors that brought this change by focusing on activities of People Power Volunteers for Reform, the impact of bottom-up budgeting projects, and the mobilization of powers of the national government through personal relationships. It also notes achievements of the Aquino administration at the local level, provides a critical perspective to the elite democracy discourse that sticks to a static view of Philippine politics, and clarifies local practices by progressive forces that confront oligarchy.

Keywords: political dynasty, oligarchy, local politics, progressive politics, People Power Volunteers for Reform (PPVR), bottom-up budgeting (BUB)

Introduction

“*Panahon na para ipasa ang isang anti-dynasty law* (It is time to pass an anti-dynasty law),” Philippine President Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III said in his last State of the Nation Address on July 27, 2015 (Sabillo 2015). Despite the provision in the 1987 Philippine constitution prohibiting political dynasties, no law has been enacted to implement it.¹⁾ Aquino’s statement was interpreted mainly as an implicit criticism of Vice President

* 原 民樹, Faculty of Commerce and Economics, Chiba University of Commerce, 1-3-1 Konodai, Ichikawa-shi, Chiba 272-8512, Japan
e-mail: tamiki.h.1985@gmail.com

1) In general, the term “political dynasties” is defined as “traditional political families or the practices by these political families of monopolizing political power and public offices from generation to generation and treating the public elective officers almost as their personal property” (Park 2008, 120).

Jejomar Binay, who was seeking to lift term limits for elected officials and planning to run for the next presidential election in 2016.²⁾ Aquino's appeal for the enactment of the law sounded ironic because he himself was a scion of the Philippines' most famous dynasty. Nevertheless, Aquino knew well that his supporters were calling for some form of an anti-dynasty policy. Columnists and scholars often criticize political dynasties in various media, and it is a common view that political dynasties in the Philippines have too much power and need to be constrained in some way.

From a general point of view, political dynasties' influence has been strengthened rather than weakened over time. Table 1 shows that ratios of members of Congress who belong to political dynasties have increased as a long-term trend since the People Power or EDSA (Epifanio de los Santos Avenue) Revolution.³⁾ The anti-dynasty bill proposed by the 16th Congress (2013–16) was shelved due to opposition from powerful lawmakers (many of them dynasts themselves).

This has sustained a framework that regards the post-EDSA period as the restoration of elite democracy. As JPaul Manzanilla points out:

what has been achieved in the Philippines thus far is the return of formal democracy, oftentimes called “oligarchic politics,” “cacique democracy” and “elite democracy” where a freewheeling democratic system has further entrenched the landed and business few who made officialdom bow to their interests. (Manzanilla 2016, 13)

Certainly, elite democracy has continued until today, and political dynasties have retained control over the formal democratic system that people regained through the revolution.

At the same time, however, elite democracy is neither static nor changeless. While recognizing the limited possibilities for change during the post-EDSA period, several studies focus on positive changes after the revolution: “The Philippines may, in fact, now be entering a potentially significant phase as popular forces, challenging the rule of oligarchic elite, strive to deepen the democratization process and institutionalize people power” (Quimpo 2008, 7). On the other hand, many studies view the People Power Revolution as a political event with a clear beginning and end. Scholars such as Nathan Quimpo think of it as a long-term development of progressive visions created during the anti-Marcos movement.

When we consider the legacy of People Power today, the Aquino administration

2) Aside from his well-known aspiration to be the next president, Binay was building his own political dynasty in Makati. This seemed to be another important reason why he wanted to lift term limits.

3) The EDSA Revolution was the popular political movement that toppled the dictatorship of President Ferdinand Marcos in 1986. It is also known as the People Power Revolution or February Revolution. This movement supported Corazon Aquino as the new president and led to the restoration of democracy in the Philippines.

Table 1 Political Dynasties in Selected Philippine Congresses

Congressional Term	Number of Representatives with Relatives in Elective Office (House of Representatives)	Number of Senators with Previous Senator Family Members (Senate)			
		%		%	
8th (1987–92)	128	62	6 (of 24)	25	
9th (1992–95)	128	64	–	–	
11th (1998–2001)	136	62	–	–	
12th (2001–4)	140	61	7 (of 24)	29	
15th (2010–13)	155	68	10 (of 23)	43	

Source: Bello *et al.* (2014, 265).

(2010–16) is a remarkable time to be examined because Noytoy Aquino was an icon of “New People Power.” Corazon Aquino, his mother and the original icon of People Power, passed away in August 2009. The subsequent national mourning and memory of her era pushed her son to become a presidential candidate and gave him a strong support base. On May 10, 2010,

Noytoy Aquino was elected president of the Philippines with a landslide margin. The media and civil society agreed: it was “People Power masquerading as an election.” Indeed, for many Filipinos, the elections sparked memories of the recent past, specifically the bloodless revolution of 1986. (Claudio 2013, 2)

Noytoy Aquino became not only the new icon of national memory but also a catalyst of common political agendas among his support groups through the election campaign. While some people were skeptical about his main promise of poverty reduction, his active support groups took it seriously and hoped to contribute in a practical way to reducing poverty. Aquino’s New People Power vitalized grassroots organizations and created the possibility to “deepen the democratization process and institutionalize people power.”

Even after Aquino finished his term, these aspects of his administration were not well analyzed. It is necessary to examine how New People Power, vitalized through the election campaign of 2010, has materialized itself and what political impact it has had. Therefore, this paper will argue the case of Siquijor Province, where a political dynasty was defeated in elections by Aquino’s Liberal Party (LP) and its coalition party, Akbayan.⁴⁾

4) The Liberal Party is the second oldest extant political party in the Philippines. Founded in 1946, it made up one side of the two-party regime together with the Nacionalista Party after independence and has produced many presidents, such as Manuel Roxas, Elpidio Quirino, and Diosdado Macapagal. While it has been led by wealthy elites, not a few members of the party are liberal and pro-development. Akbayan (Akbayan Citizens Action Party) is a social democratic party founded in 1998. Unlike the Communist Party of the Philippines, Akbayan has held an unfavorable opinion on armed struggle and focused on activities within formal democracy that revived after the EDSA Revolution. The party has had a few congressmen in each national assembly, mainly through party-list elections. Its main agenda is the pursuit of participatory democracy and participatory socialism.

Akbayan was a primary working force in Aquino's election campaign and sought progressive reforms within the formal democracy. In its General Program of Action, the party stated that it would intensify its "engagement in the mainstream political arena and towards continued mainstreaming of Akbayan as an alternative national political party" (Akbayan 2009, 1); by doing so, "Akbayan can gain more influence and have better chances of having its policy proposals implemented on the ground" (Akbayan 2010, 5).

This case study will clarify how the New People Power initiated by this coalition during the Aquino administration worked—with progressive forces confronting political dynasties and the dynamics of Philippine politics. Specifically, three aspects of the local politics of Siquijor will be discussed. First, People Power Volunteers for Reform (PPVR), which was established primarily as a support group for Aquino's presidential election campaign, organized local people for local elections in the province. This contributed to the defeat of the political clan in the 2013 elections and prepared the stage for the effective operation of new policies created by the Aquino administration. Second, the bottom-up budgeting (BUB) project, which was designed to improve transparency of government projects and meet local demands more effectively by promoting local associations to join the decision-making process, consolidated LP-Akbayan's support base and secured their second victory in the 2016 elections. Third, those grassroots efforts became successful with support from the national government through personal ties. Joel Rocamora, the local campaign manager of the LP-Akbayan camp in Siquijor as well as the chief of the National Anti-Poverty Commission, played a crucial role in this.

Political dynasties have been a major topic in the literature on Philippine politics. Alfred McCoy's *An Anarchy of Families* (1994), a prominent and classic work in this field based on intensive historical research, clarifies how political clans emerge, succeed, and entrench themselves. While arguing how clans mobilize various means such as guns, goons, and gold—the so-called 3Gs—in order to maintain their power, the book focuses on the key role of family and kinship in organizing political forces in this country. It made a significant contribution to revealing the central characteristics of Philippine politics, which compose a framework of the elite democracy discourse. However, it hardly mentions the cases where political families lost their power. When it refers to those cases, the loss of power is always attributed to inter- or intra-family conflicts. During the era the book discusses, reformist forces that challenged political dynasties were still underdeveloped.

While McCoy describes political dynasties mainly as social forces, Sheila Coronel and her co-authors in *The Rulemakers* (2004), edited by the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, treat them more as legislators. As is well known, both houses and local governments in the Philippines have been dominated by a wealthy few since

colonial times. Holding seats in Congress from generation to generation, political families have made full use of their legislative power to sustain their dominant positions. By examining the many roles legislators play, such as making laws, vetting presidential appointments, examining the budget, and spending pork barrel funds, the authors of this book give us a comprehensive picture of how Philippine politics works between politicians and their constituency. Moreover, they pay attention to the emergence of progressive forces through party-list elections. In spite of its institutional limitations, they conclude that the party-list system paved the way to change a political landscape dominated by a few elites.⁵⁾ However, they were not able to find clear changes or outcomes as of 2004. Therefore, they rather emphasize the reality that reform-minded legislators elected from party lists are absorbed into traditional politics.

More recently, Raymund Rosuelo (2017) argues how long-standing political dynasties can erode, using the case of the municipality of Cainta in Rizal Province. I agree with his following observation:

While there have been a large number of scholarly contributions to the study of political families in the Philippines, a vast majority of past and recent scholarship has tended to focus on the dynamics that lead to the perpetuation of political families in power. Academic discussions have tended to privilege the durability aspect of entrenched political clans. (Rosuelo 2017, 192)

Emphasizing the impact of socioeconomic changes such as urban migration, he points out that the influx of new settlers into middle-class communities made room for new political actors to challenge dominant clans. This social factor is undoubtedly important to explain recent changes in the political geography of the country. However, in Rosuelo's study the actor that defeats the entrenched clan is another political clan. The erosion of a political dynasty is attributed only to inter-clan competition, like McCoy's argument. Although Rosuelo is well aware of social factors that displace old rulers, he dismisses new political factors such as the emergence of progressive forces.

Despite the aforementioned dominant tendency in Philippine political studies, there have been some studies on progressive change in local politics. Focusing on changes in socioeconomic situations such as urbanization, Kawanaka Takeshi (1998) takes the case of Naga City and elaborates Mayor Jesse Robredo's progressive style of organizing constituents. This is a pioneer work in this field. However, although Kawanaka discusses the progressive characteristics of Robredo's governance, he makes the assumption that

5) Party-list election is a system that aims to ensure that marginalized sectors are represented in Congress. Twenty percent of seats in the House of Representatives are allotted to candidates from registered parties organized by various social groups such as indigenous people, urban poor, and peasants. Each party can get a maximum of three seats based on the rate of votes obtained.

political power is monopolized by elites. In this sense, his argument is a sophisticated version of the political machine discourse, which is still within the elite democracy discourse. Contrary to that, this paper will focus on the dimension where the monopoly of political resources is dismantled by democratization from the bottom up.

Quimpo (2008) also provides rich case studies on progressive practices in local politics. In a broad context, this paper might just add a new case to his argument. Yet there has been an important change in the institution of local politics after Quimpo conducted his research: BUB.⁶⁾ While he mentions several local institutions by which Akbayan organized people, those institutions were still insufficient to confront oligarchy at that time. As discussed below, after the Aquino administration began, Akbayan gained a strong institutional weapon that could be made use of for its local practices. This paper will treat the new stage of local politics after Quimpo's study and clarify the evolution of the institutionalization of New People Power.

In a broader context, this study will shed light on a new dimension of Southeast Asian politics. In considering political contestation in the region, two common factors have been recognized. First, historical legacy—defined mainly by the Cold War—has hindered the development of large-scale, independent civil society organizations linked to political parties. Second, powerful elites have tried to block political opposition by various methods (Rodan 2015, 117). Relatedly, many political scientists studying Southeast Asia have emphasized the persistence of clientelism despite the progress of modernization (Tomsa and Ufen 2013). However, recently each country in the region seems to be transforming its traditional political structures on various levels and in various directions. This paper makes a remarkable case for how a political force can break those shackles. It will help to understand the reform emerging in Southeast Asia.

The first section gives an overview of Siquijor Province and the Fua clan, a political dynasty in the province. The second section focuses on the activities of PPVR and examines why the Fua clan lost in the 2013 elections. The third section discusses how BUB projects were conducted on the island and how they contributed to the Fua family's second defeat in the 2016 elections. The fourth section looks at Rocamora's role in

6) Making the budgeting process transparent and participatory was a very important and long-awaited reform. However:

Despite the Local Government Code passed in 1991, experience has shown that engaging civil society in the budgetary process has yet been fully operationalized. Unlike civil society participation in subnational planning, civil society participation in subnational budgeting is still lagging behind. The Institute for Popular Democracy points out that "the budget process in many local governments across the Philippines remains prone to patronage, corruption and abuse of power, being highly dependent on informal processes and power relations within and outside the municipal building halls." (Brillantes 2007, 56)

mobilizing the power of the national government. In conclusion, I argue some implications of the case of Siquijor and the emerging dynamics of Philippine politics.

Overview of Siquijor Province and the Fua Clan

Siquijor is a small island in Central Visayas, south of Cebu Island. It is ranked 79th of 81 provinces in terms of population and land area. It had 95,984 residents and 68,988 registered voters in the 2016 elections (Commission on Elections 2016). Agriculture is the biggest source of employment on the island, which produces coconuts, corn, root crops, bananas, and mangoes. Though small in scale, fishery is also an important source of income, with Siquijor having around 6,000 fishermen. There used to be some mining sites in Lazi and Maria, but all operations have been closed down because of poor reserves. Siquijor has only some small-scale enterprises engaged in trading, metalworking, food processing, etc. (National Economic and Development Authority 2008, 29–30). Although the island is becoming a major tourist spot, it still receives far fewer tourists than neighboring islands such as Cebu and Negros. Currently, Siquijor is classified as the fifth income class, which means that it is an economically small-scale province along with many other provinces.⁷⁾ In the early 1990s Rocamora, a political scientist born in Siquijor, described its social class composition:

Siquijor has a small “upper class” of politicians, senior bureaucrats, a few professionals and Chinese traders who would be “middle class” in the larger islands. The majority of the people barely survives on rocky, hilly land and depleted fishing grounds. In between are government clerks and teachers and petty traders moldering in frustration and boredom. It would be difficult to organize class struggle on the island because income differences are not large. But there is a large pool of educated young people waiting to be tapped for socio-economic projects. (Rocamora 1992, 10)

These characteristics were fairly consistent until recently. The province’s economy remained underdeveloped over the decades, and people suffered from poverty and a lack of economic opportunities.

The clan that governed this stagnating island for 27 years until 2013 was the Fua family. The Fua clan started to gain dominant political power in the province immediately after the People Power Revolution. Orlando Boncawel Fua Sr. was appointed as the officer-in-charge governor of Siquijor in 1986 by the Corazon Aquino administration

7) A fifth income class (out of six) is a province whose average annual income ranges from 90 million to 180 million pesos. The number of members of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan (municipal council) is determined by this classification.

because he had belonged to the anti-Marcos camp until Marcos was ousted.⁸⁾ He ran for the 1987 congressional elections, defeated his rivals with an overwhelming majority, and was reelected in 1992 and 1995. His background was not that of a traditional landed elite but that of an emerging professional and businessperson. He first became a lawyer and later began to manage a transport company in the province.⁹⁾ Because means of transportation between Siquijor and the other islands were limited, shipping services were very profitable during that time (Teehankee 2001, 61).

Fua Sr.'s son, Orlando "Shane" Anoos Fua Jr., also started his career as a lawyer and then held a post in local office in 1995. Because his father finished three consecutive terms in 1998, he ran for congressman and won. In the typical way that political dynasties reproduce themselves, the Fua family continued to take the congressional seat over generations. In addition, Fua Sr.'s siblings and relatives consistently occupied important local posts in the province until 2013.

Although the clan had been in power for 27 years, and even though its members had a background in business, they did not succeed in establishing a strong economic base on the island. This can be symbolically understood by the fact that the municipality of Lazi, where the Fua clan is based, has been the poorest area among the municipalities in the province (Table 2). In addition, Lazi has the lowest number of households with electricity (Table 3). Rocamora points out the following:

The Clan mainly engaged in petty corruption focused on "SOP" [standard operating procedure] from public works, and illegal economic activity, gambling, drugs and smuggling. Its attempts to develop businesses, shipping and gasoline and diesel distribution, have failed. Because the Clan blocked investments that it could not make money from, the Siquijor economy has stagnated for most of the last two decades. . . . As a result there is a palpable sense of frustration and a hunger for change among the people, especially the middle class. (Rocamora 2013, 1)

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- 8) "Officer-in-charge" refers to a temporary post in local government appointed by President Corazon Aquino to replace Marcos loyalists. This practice continued from the ouster of Marcos until the local elections in January 1988.
- 9) Julio Teehankee categorized political clans into three groups: traditional, new, and emerging. He placed the Fua family as an emerging political clan. He defined the categories as follows:

Traditional political clans are those who have had more than two generations that served in the legislature; and/or have been politically active since the American colonial, Commonwealth, and Post-War Republic periods (1907–1972); and mostly belong to the rural elite whose principal sources of wealth have been land ownership and export plantation agriculture. New political clans have had at least two generations serving in the legislature; and/or they rose to prominence during the period of Marcos' constitutional authoritarianism (1972–1986). Most of them benefited economically from their close ties with the dictatorship. Emerging political clans also have had two generations in the legislature; and/or they emerged in the political arena during the post-EDSA period (1986–present). Most of them are middle-class professionals and entrepreneurs who entered politics during the Aquino and Ramos administrations. (Teehankee 1999, 17)

Table 2 Annual Income by Municipality (December 2013–January 2014)

Municipality		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Enrique Villanueva	No reply or zero income	139	12.3	12.3	12.3
	Greater than 0 and ≤P8,928 (P2012 poverty threshold)	121	10.7	10.7	23.1
	Greater than P8,928 and ≤P21,675 (P2015 poverty threshold)	175	15.5	15.5	38.6
	Above 2015 poverty threshold of P21,675	691	61.4	61.4	100.0
	Total	1,126	100.0	100.0	
Larena	No reply or zero income	242	9.2	9.2	9.2
	Greater than 0 and ≤P8,928 (P2012 poverty threshold)	207	7.9	7.9	17.1
	Greater than P8,928 and ≤P21,675 (P2015 poverty threshold)	339	12.9	12.9	30.0
	Above 2015 poverty threshold of P21,675	1,843	70.0	70.0	100.0
	Total	2,631	100.0	100.0	
Lazi	No reply or zero income	1,100	30.0	30.0	30.0
	Greater than 0 and ≤P8,928 (P2012 poverty threshold)	898	24.5	24.5	54.5
	Greater than P8,928 and ≤P21,675 (P2015 poverty threshold)	620	16.9	16.9	71.4
	Above 2015 poverty threshold of P21,675	1,048	28.6	28.6	100.0
	Total	3,666	100.0	100.0	
Maria	No reply or zero income	783	33.0	33.0	33.0
	Greater than 0 and ≤P8,928 (P2012 poverty threshold)	407	17.1	17.1	50.1
	Greater than P8,928 and ≤P21,675 (P2015 poverty threshold)	418	17.6	17.6	67.7
	Above 2015 poverty threshold of P21,675	767	32.3	32.3	100.0
	Total	2,375	100.0	100.0	
San Juan	No reply or zero income	566	19.2	19.2	19.2
	Greater than 0 and ≤P8,928 (P2012 poverty threshold)	437	14.8	14.8	34.1
	Greater than P8,928 and ≤P21,675 (P2015 poverty threshold)	415	14.1	14.1	48.2
	Above 2015 poverty threshold of P21,675	1,525	51.8	51.8	100.0
	Total	2,943	100.0	100.0	
Siquijor (capital)	No reply or zero income	547	10.7	10.7	10.7
	Greater than 0 and ≤P8,928 (P2012 poverty threshold)	578	11.3	11.3	22.0
	Greater than P8,928 and ≤P21,675 (P2015 poverty threshold)	690	13.5	13.5	35.4
	Above 2015 poverty threshold of P21,675	3,309	64.6	64.6	100.0
	Total	5,124	100.0	100.0	

Source: The Philippines, Department of the Interior and Local Government (2014).

Table 3 Households with and without Electricity (December 2013–January 2014)

Municipality	Without Electricity	With Electricity	Ratio of without to with Electricity
Enrique Villanueva	171	950	<i>0.18</i>
Larena	308	2,318	<i>0.13</i>
Lazi	1,622	1,971	<i>0.82</i>
Maria	741	1,592	<i>0.47</i>
San Juan	879	2,061	<i>0.43</i>
Siquijor (capital)	947	4,129	<i>0.23</i>

Source: The Philippines, Department of the Interior and Local Government (2014).

Table 4 Election Results in 2010
Congressman (Lone District)

Candidate	Party	Votes
Orlando Fua Sr.	Lakas-Kampi	33,509 (66.52%)
Fernando Avanzado	PDSP	10,094 (20.04%)
Grace Sumalpong	LP	6,565 (13.03%)
Jesus Flor	Independent	206 (0.41%)

Governor		
Candidate	Party	Votes
Orlando Fua Jr.	Lakas-Kampi	40,491 (83.34%)
Ben Aquino	LP	8,092 (16.66%)

Source: COMELEC (2010).

During my interviews, a man who was a captain of a barangay (the smallest administrative unit in the Philippines) in Larena told me, “The 2010 elections were really quiet. There was no actual opposition, no choice. Everybody knew who would win.” As Table 4 shows, the Fua family obtained an overwhelming number of votes in 2010.¹⁰ Fua Sr. and Fua Jr. gained 67 percent and 83 percent of the votes, respectively. However, there was a drastic change in the next elections, in 2013. The Fua family lost most of the important local posts as well as the congressional post, and LP candidates replaced all of them. What led to this? The next section will examine the question by focusing on an emerging grassroots movement, People Power Volunteers for Reform.

Penetration of PPVR and LP Machinery

When Noytoy Aquino was elected as the president by a huge margin in 2010, there was a sense of anxiety and suspicion toward the new administration among Marxist forces. Responding to an interview, Frank Pascual, a member of the Laban ng Masa (struggle of the masses) party list, pointed out:

For the ruling class, Noytoy is the best choice, especially after GMA (Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, the former president). Reducing corruption can be good for big business, but whether it translates into benefits for the people is another matter. . . . The Cory Aquino presidency was installed by a different phenomenon, a mass upsurge against the dictatorship. Noytoy does not have that kind of flexibility to pursue the people’s agenda. (Mohideen 2011, 71)

10) The Fua family had close ties with President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in the 2010 elections. They ran under Lakas Kampi CMD, which is the party Arroyo belonged to.

On the other hand, his victory was substantially sustained by people's high aspiration for a clean and reliable government. A member of the Partido Lakas ng Masa (power of the masses), Sonny Melencio, said:

Noynoy's victory is a confirmation that the main issue in the election was the high-handed corruption of the Arroyo regime. People voted for Noynoy because they were sick and tired of the never-ending cases of graft and corruption involving the Arroyo family and their sycophants. Noynoy's campaign slogan "*Kung walang corrupt, walang mahirap*" (If no one is corrupt, no one will be poor) may not be true, as poverty emanates not mainly from corruption but from class exploitation and class rule—but it rings a bell and has attracted a broad number of people to support Noynoy in the election. (Mohideen 2011, 69)

From the beginning, the Aquino administration was ambivalent. Even when Aquino stepped down from the presidency, while he was severely criticized for his ineffectiveness in alleviating poverty and his incomplete fight against corruption, he maintained relatively high approval ratings until the end of his term—this was an unprecedented phenomenon in the post-EDSA period.¹¹⁾ Whichever aspect is emphasized, these national-scale discussions overlook a remarkable reality the Aquino administration created, which is that there emerged many people who sensitively responded to people's voice calling for change and spontaneously worked to actualize Aquino's agenda at the local level. They were organized as People Power Volunteers for Reform (PPVR). When assessing the Aquino administration, PPVR's local achievements should be taken into account.

PPVR was originally organized in order to support Aquino's presidential election campaign in 2010. It established chapters all around the country and worked as machinery for the candidates of LP and its allies. PPVR's activities, however, continued even after the election. One of the origins of PPVR's ideas can be found in a suggestion for the Aquino administration proposed by Karina Constantino-David, who had been exercising leadership in organizing a network of development NGOs in the fields of urban poor, women, childcare, housing, and so on since the late 1980s. Because of her rich experience working in civil society, she was appointed as the chairperson of the Civil Service Commission during the Arroyo period. But Constantino-David took a critical stance against Arroyo toward the end and later became a national convener of PPVR. Constantino-David claimed that while Philippine civil society was characterized by

11) In spite of this, it should be noted that Rodrigo Duterte won the 2016 presidential elections by negating Aquino's appeal of a "straight path," and Mar Roxas, who was endorsed by Aquino as his successor, was no match for Duterte. This indicates that Aquino's legacy is not necessarily positive for many Filipinos.

“poverty and disparities in wealth, power and opportunity” and “cynicism and suspicion formed due to years of failed expectations,” there was a “proven capacity of volunteerism” and “the need to convert the volunteers mobilized for electoral victory into a force that can be a partner for sustained reform.”¹²⁾ Adopting this idea, PPVR officially set out its charter after Aquino’s victory. The preamble of the charter declares:

While we have an interest in how these critical institutional and political developments unfold in relation to moving forward with the “*walang corrupt, walang mahirap*” reform agenda, we must also recognize that we—the groups mobilized by the issues and inspiration of the Noy-Mar campaign—are also interested in building what we now assert as “the people power component of P-Noy’s governance.” We are interested in how the people power movement of which we are a part can become an organized and active partner of P-Noy’s governance in realizing the “*walang corrupt, walang mahirap*” promise. While we are obviously interested in how well our government agencies function and how well our elected political leaders perform in realizing reforms, we are also interested in how we ourselves can become part of the realization of these reforms. We do not have to be appointed or elected to positions in government in order to help realize the promise of change; we can help in our groups and networks that got Noynoy elected president.¹³⁾

For PPVR members, “*walang corrupt, walang mahirap*” was not political rhetoric but a practical purpose to pursue in their actual lives. They seriously made up their minds to realize it as foot soldiers. PPVR started to reach out to various groups such as women’s organizations and fisherfolks associations as well as individuals at the local level. They encouraged local people to organize themselves as an association and tried to pave the way so that anti-corruption and anti-poverty policies rightly benefited the people. In other words, PPVR empowered people and built mass bases to make Aquino’s reforms work effectively from the bottom up.¹⁴⁾

In Siquijor, PPVR started to operate in 2011 with around 30 leading members. Most of them were not from LP but from Akbayan. They set up chapters in all six municipalities with a variety of positions. For example, in the San Juan municipal chapter, the municipal leaders council consisted of positions such as lead convener, co-convener, secretary, treasurer, auditor, public information officer, youth sector representative,

12) Quoted from Karina Constantino-David’s for-internal-use presentation material “Opportunities and Constraints for Reform under the Aquino Administration.” While Constantino-David had an influence on the formation of PPVR, she established and managed independent civil society organizations during the Aquino administration. Therefore, she had no direct relation to politics in Siquijor.

13) Quoted from “Charter of People Power Volunteers for Reform,” an internal document of the organization.

14) Although there are only a few provinces where PPVR played a critical role in building effective electoral bases, it was more active in Negros Oriental than in Siquijor. With the LP camp splitting in the province, PPVR worked as an active organizer of election campaigns.

project development and livelihood committee, senior citizens representative, women's representative, and fisherfolks representative.¹⁵⁾ In terms of activities, the chapter facilitated, for example, the San Juan Fisherfolks Forum with Senator T.J. Guingona of the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee and also helped form the San Juan Fisherfolks Alliance. For the women, the chapter provided technical assistance through the formation of the San Juan Pantawid (Bridging) Leaders and Kapamilya (Family) Alliance and organized them to participate in a motorcade and rally to mark the International Women's Day celebration held at the San Juan Social Center. The chapter also supported out-of-school youths and encouraged them to get organized to engage in government projects.¹⁶⁾ PPVR also sought to work at the municipality level. For instance, Maria had suffered from a poor water supply system for a long time. In 2016 the Maria municipal chapter helped to get funds from Kalahi-CIDSS to build tanks, wells, and water pipes.¹⁷⁾

In general, what PPVR did at the field level was listen to people's needs and empower people to organize associations so they could collectively improve their lives. In the beginning it was not easy to contact people. In a private conversation, a PPVR member recalled:

At first, people avoided talking with us because of fear of political harassment from the Fua clan. But as a result of our patient efforts, they gradually started to listen to us covertly. Usually one PPVR member had a conversation with two or three people under a mango tree on the outskirts of a barangay.

It took PPVR a long time to awaken people's initiative. However, because the Fua clan had done almost nothing for the development of the province and because the people had given up hope for a better life, once change happened, it immediately bore fruit. Many associations sprouted like mushrooms after a rain. PPVR tried to turn these associations into support bases for the coming elections. PPVR members began to tell people that they could make an alternative choice in the next elections to end corruption and authoritarian rule by the clan and gain access to more economic opportunities. PPVR continued its efforts for two years before the 2013 elections.

During the election campaign of 2013, the sectoral groups worked effectively. A women's association gathered some 2,500 women for the International Women's Day

15) These are based on PPVR's internal document "Officers Directory and Municipal Leaders Council (San Juan Municipal Chapter)."

16) These are based on PPVR's internal document "Project Track Record and Activities (San Juan Municipal Chapter)."

17) Kalahi-CIDSS (Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services) is one of the poverty reduction programs led by the Department of Social Welfare and Development. It started in 2003 and was expanded under the Aquino administration.

Table 5 Election Results in 2013
Congressman (Lone District)

Candidate	Party	Votes
Jay Pernes	LP	28,395 (54.5%)
Orlando Fua Jr.	Lakas	23,671 (45.4%)
Governor		
Candidate	Party	Votes
Zaldy Villa	LP	29,023 (56.1%)
Orville Fua	Lakas	22,721 (43.9%)
Vice-Governor		
Candidate	Party	Votes
Fernando Avanzado	LP	26,814 (55.8%)
Art Pacatang	Lakas	21,239 (44.2%)

Source: Rappler (2013).

activity in March 2013, just two months before the elections. Due to anger over illegal fishing financed by the clan, fisherfolks associations were active in the campaign against the clan. Youth organizations were set up in all six municipalities, based on the P-Noy scholarship program. The LP Angels, composed of female college students, accompanied candidates and gave dance performances in rallies. A young boys team, the LP Devils, worked as stagehands during the campaign. They produced homemade propaganda materials such as banners made out of sacks with various slogans calling for support for LP. They put those banners and posters on walls and poles all around the island at midnight. Some members of the LP Devils were recruited from a boxing club in case of an attack from the clan's goons. In addition to these practices, PPVR and the LP machinery succeeded in penetrating the barangay level and employed unique propaganda campaigns.¹⁸⁾ All of these efforts encouraged people to make an alternative choice in the elections.

PPVR dismantled the Fua clan's domination slowly and broadly from the bottom up over two years. The outcome manifested in the election results. As Table 5 shows, the Fua clan's candidates for important posts were resoundingly defeated by LP candidates. In each race, the margins were approximately 5,000 votes. This number shows the

18) Akbayan and PPVR did not establish any organizations formally affiliated with Akbayan from 2010 to 2016. All organizations that worked as the LP machinery were nonpartisan or explicitly showed the name of the LP. However, Akbayan members mainly ran those organizations. In this sense, the boundary between the LP and Akbayan was ambiguous. This seems to have been because Akbayan's activists tried to make full use of the potential of their coalition partner as a pragmatic strategy.

substantial influence that PPVR established from 2011. It is apparent that PPVR's penetration played a crucial role in the election results.

Implementation of BUB Projects

LP's electoral victory in 2013 was impressive. However, constituents' support for LP-Akbayan was still not solid enough. PPVR members felt that the triumph might have been only a temporary expression of dissatisfaction and that the Fua clan would try to recover power in the next elections. To prevent the Fua family from reviving and to ensure LP-Akbayan's reelection, they needed to consolidate local organizations and show people more specific reliability. Backed by the national government, they received a timely and useful weapon: the BUB program. They started a new challenge to meet the aforementioned goals by making full use of this program. In this section, we will explore how the BUB program contributed to strengthening the mass base that PPVR had established in Siquijor.

BUB was set up in 2012 with the preparation of the 2013 National Expenditure Program and started to operate in 2013. Its basic framework is that the national government provides funds for local development projects planned through participatory processes at the local level. It was originally proposed and driven by Robredo, who implemented governance reforms as Naga City mayor and then worked as the secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government under Aquino from 2010 to 2012. After his death in an airplane accident, his ideas were carried forward by Rocamora, who was appointed as the chief of the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) by Aquino. The general features of BUB are as follows:

First, it is seen as a component of its budget reform thrusts that are aimed at making the national government budgeting process more responsive to local needs. Prior to the introduction of the BUB, the national government budgeting process was primarily driven by the national government agencies that implement the budget although the Regional Development Councils provide LGUs a limited venue to input into the process. Second, the BUB is also viewed as part of the democracy/empowerment reform as it opens another avenue for people's participation in local planning and budgeting and for generating demand for good governance at the local level. Third, it is also perceived as part of local governance reform in the sense that it provides incentives for good local governance. (Manasan 2015, 2)

Because corruption and poverty were the key issues that the Aquino administration promised to tackle, they had to take concrete action to promote reforms. Aquino was also seeking to change the budgeting system for local development projects because

budget allocation systems such as the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) had been thought of as a hotbed of corruption for a long time.¹⁹⁾ Through encouraging people's participation and making the budgeting system more sensitive to people's needs, it was expected that BUB could prevent corruption and alleviate poverty. Hence, it can be seen as one of the central policies to realize President Aquino's slogan "*walang corrupt, walang mahirap.*"

There are several steps that need to be taken before implementing BUB projects. The first is social preparation: "Capacity building activities" need to be organized by civil society organizations (CSOs) and the Human Development and Poverty Reduction Cluster.²⁰⁾ Through these activities, facilitators ensure that people can understand what BUB is, how it can contribute to their lives, and how they can participate in the process. The second step is collection of relevant economic and social data: local government unit (LGU) staff collect relevant information to ensure that projects work effectively. Third, a Local Poverty Reduction Action Plan (LPRAP) workshop needs to be conducted: LGUs organize workshops to put the LPRAP into concrete shape based on the collected data, with active participation from CSOs (Fig. 1).²¹⁾ The fourth step is identification of priority poverty reduction projects: The expanded LPRAP identifies priority projects to be funded by LGUs based on the discussions in the workshops. Fifth is the endorsement of CSOs: the list of priority projects must be attached with an endorsement of CSOs from the community to prove their participation in the process. Sixth is approval by the

19) While Aquino made an effort to reform the PDAF system, ironically, the biggest scandal that he faced during his term was a PDAF-related one. Aquino's approval ratings began to decline after the misappropriation of huge amounts of PDAF money through fake NGOs was revealed in 2013. Although Aquino himself was not directly responsible for it, some Filipinos regarded him as incompetent in dealing with PDAF matters.

20) In the BUB process, civil society organizations are defined as including

non-government organizations (NGOs), People's Organizations (POs), cooperatives, trade unions, professional associations, faith-based organizations, media groups, indigenous people's movements, foundations, and other citizens groups formed primarily for social and economic development to plan and monitor government programs and projects, engage in policy discussions, and actively participate in collaborative activities with the government. (DBM-DILG-DSWD-NAPC Joint Memorandum Circular No. 1 2012, 4)

The Human Development and Poverty Reduction Cluster is an agency of the national government charged with implementing BUB together with the Good Governance and Anti-Corruption Cluster.

21) The LPRAP is

the LGU plan which contains programs and projects collectively drawn through a participatory process by the LGU with CSOs and other stakeholders, and which will directly address the needs of the poor constituencies and the marginalized sectors in the city or municipality. (DBM-DILG-DSWD-NAPC Joint Memorandum Circular No. 1 2012, 4)



Fig. 1 Discussion under Way in a LPRAP Workshop

Sangguniang Panlalawigan (municipal council): the Sangguniang Panlalawigan must approve the list of priority projects. The seventh step is submission of the list of local priority poverty reduction projects: the endorsed list must be submitted to relevant institutions such as the National Anti-Poverty Commission and scrutinized (DBM-DILG-DSWD-NAPC Joint Memorandum Circular No. 1 2012, 4–7).

It is evident that the BUB process sufficiently ensures CSOs' participation in various stages. This plays an important role in inspiring people to participate. In Siquijor, many CSOs have been newly organized since 2013 and are actively engaged in the BUB process. Based on my research, as of May 2016 there were 215 organizations in the province. Although not all organizations were formed for BUB, it is clear that BUB encouraged more and more people to establish new ones. Some of the CSOs are the Siquijor Coconut Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Goat Raiser Association, Barangay Olave Neighborhood Electric Association, Handicapable Association of Maria, Lazi Habal-habal (motorcycle taxi) Drivers Association, and San Juan Souvenir Item Makers Association.

Some assessment reports on BUB say that the process does not work well in certain areas because of inactive CSOs and incompetent facilitators. In my interview with a facilitator who worked around Visayas, he said, "If governors or mayors are not cooperative with BUB, it's very difficult to make it work. Especially in cases where they are [in] opposition to LP, projects are sometimes disturbed by political reasons." Contrary to such cases, the BUB process in Siquijor has been relatively smooth and well organized. One reason seems to be that the governor and several municipal mayors have been members of LP since 2013. Another reason might be PPVR's active facilitation of people's participation. They kept propagating the utility value of BUB and urged people

to propose projects. A member of PPVR said, “PPVR itself is not important. We are trying to become middlemen or mediators for people. Our mission is just making roads so that government projects can benefit people.”

As a result of this sort of effort, unique ideas were sometimes raised in LPRAP workshops. For instance, there was a project proposal for building a “People’s Center.” The rationale was written as follows:

As observed in the result of the NAPC BUB Workshop in the town of Siquijor, different sector representatives proposed programs that will solve identified issues. As such, there is a common necessity to have facilities to conduct these programs. However, it will not be that effective if these facilities are geographically dispersed. Therefore, we propose the *People’s Center*—a centralized facility that promotes coordination to the Youth, Women, Senior Citizen, PWD, Informal Sector, Fishermen/Farmer and CSO/Cooperative while at the same time, providing them spaces for their own programs and services. (Document obtained from a PPVR member)

The proposal included a handmade design (Fig. 2). This indicated that people were aggressively trying to utilize BUB projects for their community.

Siquijor Province had 35 approved projects in 2013, 141 in 2014, 99 in 2015, and 58 in 2016. The projects were aimed at, for example, alternative livelihood high-value crop production, livestock and poultry production enhancement, organic fertilizer production, infrastructure support to agriculture and fishery production, computer literacy program for out of school youth, improvement of existing barangay health stations, and so on. Funds for the projects varied—from less than 20,000 pesos for small projects to one million to more than four million pesos for big ones. Because poverty reduction is a key purpose of BUB and many projects were livelihood related, the projects largely succeeded in diversifying sources of income and contributed to increasing income levels of the people.²²⁾

This tangible change seems to have increasingly strengthened support for anti-dynasty forces. While BUB is a nonpartisan policy and has benefited pro-Fua residents as well, everyone knows that BUB was initiated by the Aquino administration and materialized by pro-LP parties such as PPVR. In this sense, as discussed below, the BUB program was also a new type of patronage. Therefore, it is easy to imagine that BUB consolidated the political base PPVR had established since 2011. The results of the 2016 elections were predictable in this context (Table 6). Although there was a split within LP, all candidates supported by the local anti-dynasty machinery again won the important

22) Responding to my interview, a woman who was a leader of several associations in San Juan said that the daily income of the beneficiaries of BUB projects increased 20 percent on average due to diversified livelihoods.

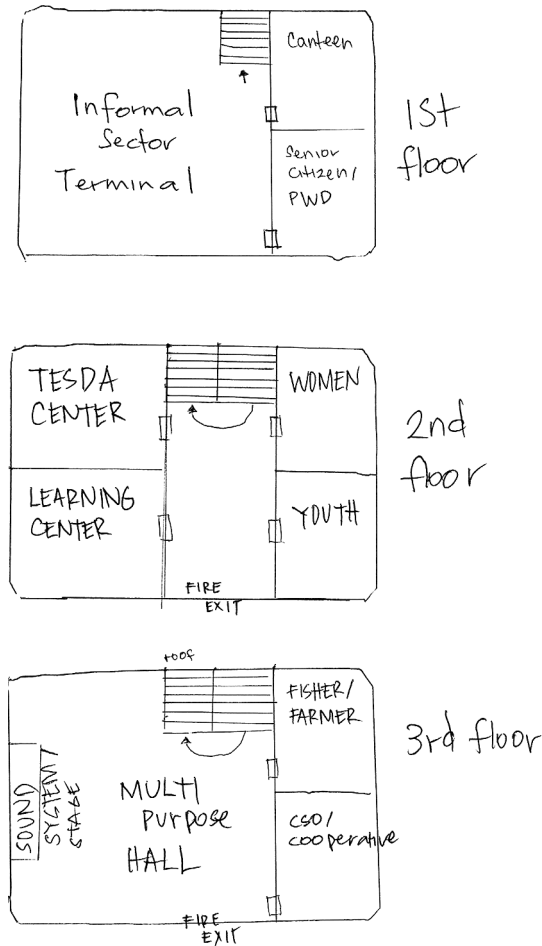


Fig. 2 A Hand-drawn Map of the People's Center

positions.²³⁾ The Fua dynasty was decisively undermined by the accumulation of small efforts to improve people's lives.

23) Jay Pernes was a candidate who ran for congressman from LP in 2013. He was originally a doctor and later turned into a businessman. Because he had been working for a long time outside Siquijor island, he did not have any economic or corrupted bonds with the Fua family. He had a very good personality and strong sympathy with the Aquino administration's anti-corruption, anti-poverty policy. Therefore, he was a promising candidate for the LP camp. However, just one day before the election in May 2013, he died of a heart attack. His wife, Marie Pernes, was hastily made a substitute candidate and won. However, the problem was that she was not as good a candidate as her husband had been. After she became a congresswoman, she and her local supporters became embroiled in an issue involving money. She insisted that the local machinery stole her husband's

Table 6 Election Results in 2016
Congressman (Lone District)

Candidate	Party	Votes
Ramon Rocamora	Independent	22,125 (40.61%)
Marie Pernes	LP	18,216 (33.43%)
Orlando Fua Jr.	UNA	9,695 (17.79%)

Governor		
Candidate	Party	Votes
Jecoy Villa	LP	31,708 (60.0%)
Orlando Fua Sr.	UNA	15,481 (29.3%)
Clare Lucero	NUP	3,888 (7.4%)

Vice-Governor		
Candidate	Party	Votes
Mei Ling Minor-Quezon	LP	26,135 (51.35%)
Bryan Pernes	Independent	14,809 (29.09%)
Arturo Pacatang	Independent	8,026 (15.76%)

Source: COMELEC (2016).

Joel Rocamora's Role

So far the discussion has focused on how the LP machinery and BUB projects built their political base from the bottom up to confront the Fua clan. The democratic aspect or the “progressiveness” of the LP-Akbayan camp might have been overemphasized. Many readers may know that any major change in the Philippines’ political landscape could not take place in this way alone. Although participatory democracy operated well in Siquijor, this became possible only because national political power influenced local politics through personal relations. This section clarifies the role Rocamora played in defeating the Fua clan during the Aquino administration.²⁴⁾

Rocamora was born in Siquijor. He worked as a political analyst in several institutions and was one of the founders of Akbayan. He had already begun to organize a small

↘ money during the election campaign. In addition, she did not have any motivation to promote reforms or improve the lives of the people. Consequently, the local LP camp was not able to support her in the next elections. Nevertheless, the national LP headquarters gave her official recognition as a congressional candidate in the 2016 elections, only because she was an incumbent congresswoman. The local LP camp in Siquijor did not obey this and decided to support an independent candidate, Ramon Rocamora. Even though Marie Pernes ran from LP, the local LP machinery supported another candidate. That is why the winner of the congressman position in 2016 was an independent candidate, but the same machinery and the same local movement contributed to his victory.

24) This section is based on an interview of Joel Rocamora by the author.

opposition group against the Fua family on the island before Aquino became president, but this first attempt did not succeed. The situation was changed drastically by Aquino's victory in 2010. Because Rocamora and Akbayan worked hard for Aquino's election campaign and then Akbayan became a coalition partner of the LP, some Akbayan cadres were invited to the cabinet. Risa Hontiveros, who was defeated in the senatorial election of 2010 by a narrow margin, was initially the candidate for secretary of NAPC, but she could not take the office because of the law prohibiting the appointment of a losing candidate to any office in government within one year after the elections in which s/he lost. Thus, instead of her, Rocamora was appointed as secretary of NAPC in September 2010.

According to Garry Rodan, NAPC was

established in 1998 with a legal mandate for selecting official representatives of the fourteen "basic sectors." This gave NAPC representatives and its council official status in negotiating with government agencies and provided a venue for organized encounters between sectors and government. NAPC has remained one of the smallest state agencies, with a limited budget. Its opportunities thus rest principally on its relationship with other actors inside and outside the state. (Rodan 2018, 150)

Making use of this unique position, Rocamora first negotiated with the secretary of the Department of Public Works and Highways and asked him to check the flow of money to the Fua clan through public works. Because the Fuas' main source of funds was embezzlement of money for public works, this move made it difficult for the clan to gain funds for the next elections. In addition, one day the secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Governance consulted Rocamora on whether a candidate for the local head of the department in Siquijor was adequate or not. The secretary asked, "Do you know him? Is he OK?"

Rocamora answered, "Yes, I know him. I recommend him to be appointed."

While the man had seemed to be neither pro-Fua nor pro-LP, later he came to know he had been appointed partly thanks to Rocamora. This appointment also helped to block projects benefiting the Fua camp. Furthermore, when Rocamora talked with the regional police director in Siquijor, he said, "The instruction from on high is to help the LP win." Then, during the election campaign, Rocamora told local police and military, "Money of the Fuas will go through this house and that house. So you deploy guards in front of the houses so that they cannot distribute money."

As the secretary of NAPC, Rocamora facilitated several projects in Siquijor to build and vitalize CSOs. For example, he facilitated a project to set up community vegetable gardens. NAPC got mayors to approve a half-hectare for the project, then provided seeds and organic fertilizer, and had professionals teach farmers how to plant vegetables. After the first planting, the seeds went to the farmers. Now they can have vegetable gardens in their backyard. Instead of buying vegetables from Negros or Cebu, people are able to

save money and expand their livelihoods by planting their own vegetables. Six hundred to 700 families were involved in this project. Rocamora said, “If you want to organize people, you have to be able to provide concrete things like fishing nets or vegetable gardens. That was the first time this kind of organizing took place in Siquijor.” Through these projects, NAPC set the stage for PPVR to work. Obviously, this direction was taken over and strengthened by the introduction of BUB.

Regarding Rocamora’s role in Siquijor politics, there are three points to note. First, the connection with the national government was crucial. As many other local clans do, the Fua clan switched its party affiliation to gain support from the national government. In the 2010 elections, the Fua family were in the Arroyo camp. After the Arroyos were defeated in the elections, they lost backing from the national government and the president. This allowed the new ruling parties, LP and Akbayan, to penetrate into the Fua clan’s bailiwick. As the Fua family had probably enjoyed until 2010, at this time LP and Akbayan were able to access material and immaterial resources provided by the national government. This was obvious in the roles played by Rocamora and NAPC in Siquijor. In this sense, John Sidel’s argument of “bossism” is valid here. His contribution to Philippine political studies was to clarify that the strength of local bosses relied on the state apparatus (Sidel 1999). Although the case of Siquijor is not predatory like Sidel’s case studies, it would have been more difficult for LP and Akbayan to win the local elections without an effective connection with the national government.

Second, Rocamora and the LP-Akbayan camp engaged in a kind of patronage politics. As mentioned in the previous section, formally BUB was designed as a nonpartisan policy. However, every voter regarded it as patronage from LP. When briefings on BUB were held in barangays, there were always big banners with pictures of Aquino’s face and his political slogan. Before the elections of 2016, Benjamin Diokno, the secretary of budget and management in the Duterte administration, said, “The Bottom-up Budgeting (BUB) program is being heralded by the Aquino administration as real reform; in reality, it is a tool for political patronage, a way of capturing political support at the grassroots level” (Editorial 2017). As noted in the comment by a BUB facilitator above, non-LP local leaders did not cooperate in materializing BUB projects. This was because they had no reason to assist LP in delivering patronage.²⁵⁾

25) However, a column in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* called it “hypocrisy.” After he was appointed to his position, Diokno himself justified reallocating project funds in favor of allies of President Duterte and financially punishing opponents. Patronage politics persist in every administration. Although it is common to condemn patronage as “dirty politics,” there is no country where patronage does not exist between politicians and their constituency. A more realistic perspective for political studies is not to question whether something is patronage or not but to explore how patronage is used.

Third, personal connections exerted a big influence on the transformation of the political landscape. As mentioned above, LP-Akbayan's local campaign became possible because Rocamora succeeded in dismantling the Fuas' power base by using connections with secretaries of various departments. If he had not been a member of the cabinet and from Siquijor, things would have been very different.

All these aspects were characteristics of traditional Philippine politics. However, Rocamora and Akbayan were deeply aware of that. Responding to my interview, Rocamora said, "If you want reform, you have to operate in the old political terrain. No choice." This pragmatic view was unique to Akbayan's strategy, which was in sharp contrast with other leftist groups such as the Communist Party of the Philippines. Rocamora's role in Siquijor politics was a clear example of this strategy.

However, there was some conflict over this strategy in the party. Although some reforms became possible under the coalition between Akbayan and the Aquino administration, this relationship led to a clash of opinions on how to deal with the administration. Akbayan members such as Ricardo Reyes and Walden Bello claimed that President Aquino was betraying his promise of "good governance" and pursuing neoliberal economic policies that were damaging to the poor. They asked the party to break up with Aquino in order to protect the party's fundamental values and interests. However, the party leadership refused. Finally, Reyes and Bello left Akbayan. From a certain point of view, engaging in a pragmatic strategy means compromising one's own principles. Making a coalition might change into cooptation. In this sense, operating "in the old political terrain" was risky.

Yet Rocamora was well aware of what Akbayan could do with political power. In my interview, he continued, "But once you win, then you can start to make changes." After Akbayan won in the 2013 elections, he tried to transform the decision-making system:

In public works, all over the Philippines with few exceptions, decisions on what projects are funded are made by congressmen and a few government officials. Once we won in 2013, we began participatory broad infrastructure planning. We organized and invited the chamber of commerce, municipal mayors, church people and people from universities to come. And we discussed what projects we would build.

The culture of traditional politics cannot change overnight. Akbayan needed to accept that reality to win the elections. However, Rocamora and local activists in Siquijor believed that if they continued to make efforts to materialize participatory democracy, it would lead to genuine reform in the long term. This was the style of progressive politics in Siquijor that defeated a political dynasty.

Conclusion

After the collapse of the Fua clan's domination, the economic situation in Siquijor changed a lot. Business investments from outside the province started to come to the island. Because investors had been disgusted over the bribes necessary to have their investment approved, the appearance of new local leaders was seen as the beginning of a fair business environment. The first supermarket in the province opened in Larena. While young people used to leave the island to find jobs, they could now work in their home province. Because the scholarship program was expanded under the Aquino administration, the rate of college enrollment on the island also increased. While a carpenter's daily wage used to be 200 pesos, today it is 300 pesos due to the increased demand for labor.

In this paper, focusing on PPVR's activities, utilization of BUB projects, and Rocamora's role in Siquijor Province, I argued how a political dynasty's power base was dismantled. It is now clear that if a political dynasty is not actively engaged in improving the lives of the people in its bailiwick and if it loses support from the national government, it is very vulnerable to a counterforce that tries to organize people with specific economic benefits and has connections with the national government. In a social situation where political and economic power is disproportionally distributed, democracy cannot be ensured by the representative system alone. It is indispensable to foster active CSOs and to encourage people to participate in the decision-making process in order to alleviate the tremendous inequality. In this sense, what the LP-Akbayan camp did in Siquijor can be called progressive.

The decentralization policy by the Local Government Code in 1991 has also been seen as one of the legacies of People Power because it includes the provision that promotes the participation of NGOs and people's organizations in the local development process. From a different point of view, however, decentralization was a measure to win over local elites to the national government during the Cory Aquino administration and to help strengthen their domination in each locality (Abinales 2010, 398–399). Progressive forces were not able to deal with this situation because their vision to change the political structure focused only on the national level (Abinales 2010, 394–395). They did not understand the local dynamics of Philippine politics. However, looking into the case of Siquijor, Akbayan seems to have found a way to work effectively at the local level.

Certainly the structure of elite democracy was not broken up during Aquino's administration. Overall, the administration's anti-poverty and anti-corruption policies had incomplete results. It is well known that LP has many members from political dynasties (in this sense, we cannot regard LP itself as a progressive force). Nevertheless, it is also a fact that progressive forces such as local members of the LP-Akbayan camp in Siquijor

have confronted the authoritarian system at the local level in a pragmatic way. This can be seen as People Power being part of a long democratization process. Philippine politics is not a changeless world. To grasp its dynamics, we need to pay more attention to local practices and the small changes they bring about.

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Imperial Bandits: Outlaws and Rebels in the China-Vietnam Borderlands

BRADLEY CAMP DAVIS

Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017.

Bradley Camp Davis provides a meticulously researched account of the complexly interwoven dynamics of imperial and later colonial power, rebellions and outlaws (“bandits”) in the China-Vietnam borderlands of the nineteenth century. Drawing on an impressively multilingual range of Chinese, Vietnamese, and French archival sources paired with oral traditions, the author carefully foregrounds the borderlands history of ever-shifting loyalties, alliances, and conflicts between multiple internal and external power holders and projections embedded in the overall modality of violence—or what Davis calls the “culture of violence.”

It is this “culture of violence” that he repeatedly considers as the central and inherent historical feature of these borderlands. Carried out by various bandits primarily competing for mineral resources and opium, their violent tactics have been consequently utilized for different imperial and colonial power interests. Bandits with their own politico-economic agendas become “imperial bandits,” who “played an essential role in political projects of empire” (p. 9), leading to the central conclusion that “Vietnamese and Chinese imperial rule—and even the establishment of French colonial rule—would have been impossible without imperial bandits” (p. 157). This intricate entanglement of borderland banditry and imperial power desires yields fascinating trajectories of bandit organizations as well as their individual leaders. Originating as a movement challenging Qing authority in southern China, the Black Flags’ subsequent ventures in northern Vietnam played into the hands of the Nguyễn court struggling with the White Flags undermining their projection of imperial sovereignty. Apparently, relying on, and officially sanctioning, the Black Flags to eradicate the White Flag Rebellion did not run contrary to their understanding of sovereignty. Despite divisions within the Nguyễn court on this reliance, the alliance between the Black Flags and Nguyễn Vietnam continued into the Sino-French War, when the former were now also sponsored by Qing China to push back French encroachment in northern Vietnam. The French, on the other hand, increasingly relied on the Yellow Flags, bitter enemies of the Black Flags, to pursue their colonial project. The individual career of Liu Yongfu, leader of the Black Flags, strikingly reflects this

tumultuous history of borderland violence, ambivalently and opportunistically sponsored or banned by different imperial/colonial powerholders. Starting as an anti-Qing rebel, he was continuously awarded higher titles and ranks in the Vietnamese imperial hierarchy before he even obtained positions in Sun Yatsen's newly founded Republic of China in 1911 upon his retirement in his hometown Qinzhou. Posthumously, Liu Yongfu was often framed as an anticolonial revolutionary and proto-nationalist in the national historiographies of Vietnam and China, respectively. While hinting at the historical debate on the issue of Liu Yongfu and his Black Flags, particularly concerning the often rather overlooked aspect of intrinsic violence, Davis aims, more importantly, to put this in dialogue with oral sources of upland communities such as the Yao and Hmong, among others, which recall overly violent bandit atrocities—"to tell a more inclusive, pluralistic, and enlivened story of life in the borderlands at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries" (p. 18).

Davis chooses to tell this story chronologically in four core chapters, preceded by an introduction and reflected by a conclusion. While the introduction usefully outlines the China-Vietnam borderlands along the central themes and conceptualizations of "imperial bandits" and "cultures of violence," and stresses the importance of oral traditions, the first chapter traces the emergence of the Black and Yellow Flags back to geo-economic calculations revolving around opium and mining, outweighing any potential ethno-national agenda as often claimed later, and follows their different trajectories of gaining power through various arrangements with imperial authorities and local communities, either relying on local (mainly Tai) powerbrokers or acting as imperial powerbrokers, or both. The most significant powerbroker arrangement between Nguyễn Vietnam and the Black Flags was viewed by the French as the largest impediment to their envisioned commercial opening and development of resources of northern Vietnam.

As Chapter 2 illustrates, within French "consular optics," imperial reliance on bandits only demonstrated the incompetence and lacking power of the Hue court with disastrous consequences for upland communities. This articulated observation of chaos, lack of order and imperial authority, served as the main justification for the French colonial project to develop and improve (*mise en valeur*) these borderlands and to protect its upland residents. Ironically, to achieve these goals of restoring their understanding of law and order, the French similarly resorted to "outlaws," thereby fully adapting to the locally inherent borderlands mode of power brokerage and violence (again terrorizing upland communities they claimed to protect), whose continuity became central element of the subsequent Sino-French War, treated at substantial length in Chapter 3.

Therein, the author importantly zooms in the supposedly local scale of larger historical dynamics, foregrounding the underlying "borderlands networks of mobility and violence" (p. 89) crossing through the Sino-Vietnam frontier that were essential to the conflict. The aftermath of the war, with the Black Flags eventually pushed back to China, entailed French efforts to impose a new order of territorial sovereignty, buttressed by new border technologies of fixing and integrating, namely a demarcating borderline negotiated with China and cross-border communication through

the telegraph. However, as Davis argues in Chapter 4, this new imperial borderland infrastructure, aimed at regulation and securitization, eventually facilitated the continuity of long-term modalities of violence-based power arrangements. Bandit operations and local rebellions endured through their flexible adjustment, turning into anticolonial fighters or “surrendered bandits” (*soumissionnaires*) working for the French protectorate.

This very continuity inspires Davis’ concluding reflection of how up to the present, local borderland realities persist amidst internationally normed and standardized border policies. However, instead of being astounded by his observation at the present China-Vietnam border how “locals” could freely cross an international border without any inspection of their travel documents and goods (an anecdote surely quite familiar to borderland scholars, including me), it might have been more fruitful to stick to the book’s overall theme by reflecting on the continuity of endemic violence and cross-border criminality (kidnapping, trafficking of humans and drugs, etc.) with the potential complicity or involvement of state authorities.

Davis’ described continual instances of mutual appropriation of power between local power-brokers and different forms of state administration—creating a condition where “the terms of power are never completely settled” (p. 9)—are a familiar historical feature of upland Southeast Asia (see, for example, Tappe 2015; Pholsena 2017). The author’s study also reminds of Pat Giersch’s (2006, 3–4) conceptualization of the “Chinese frontier” as “middle ground” “of fluid cultural and economic exchange where acculturation and the creation of hybrid political institutions were contingent on local conditions.” As this book joins the ranks of scholarship challenging James Scott’s (2009) overly binary understanding of “Zomia” as a venue of oppressive lowland state apparatus and upland freedom-seekers, it is a bit surprising that Davis does not further engage with it. Related to this, the author could have put more effort to position his work within relevant scholarly works and discussions, to achieve also a higher level of theorization. The reader is indeed provided with some theoretical inputs on the notion of bandits (Hobsbawm), their entanglements with bureaucratic and political power (Barkey, Blok), and violence (Benjamin, Weber), but is subsequently mainly left with the analytical lens of “cultures of violence.” Itself probably apt to describe the historical workings of power in this borderland, this term could have been fleshed out a bit more instead of often serving as a generally concluding catchphrase.

In *Imperial Bandits*, Davis’ versatile navigation through a multitude of sources in crafting a rich and vividly narrated reconstruction of a turbulent period in the Sino-Vietnam borderlands largely compensates these minor concerns, but also opens up other—again, not major—issues. While trying to keep pace with the author, the reader might easily get lost in an abundance of detailed events, individual stories, and spatial references. Particularly regarding the latter, some clear maps, apart from figures depicting nineteenth-century French and Chinese maps, would have been useful.

Methodologically, it still seems that Davis largely adopts “imperial optics” to retrace this

borderlands history of violence. Measured against his repeated emphasis and promise to draw on oral traditions, they appear to be rather thin. The core chapters still constitute a history of events mainly told through official Chinese, Vietnamese, and French archival sources. This is in itself valid, but the very beginning of the book and a special section dedicated to oral traditions (pp. 17–21) promise more to the reader. Moreover, despite referring to stories of several upland communities such as Yao or Hmong, or Tai speakers such as Nùng, Tày and Giáy, we mainly hear Yao voices, interspersed with a few short Tày stories.

That said, this book serves as an excellent contribution to burgeoning scholarship on the history (as well as the present) of Sino-Southeast Asian frontier dynamics. Its fine-grained micro-history provides us with a more nuanced understanding of the larger picture of emerging imperial (“state”) power shaping, and being shaped and constituted by, borderland power realities, revealing its fragmented and violent reality.

Simon Rowedder

Department of Southeast Asian Studies, National University of Singapore

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Through Turbulent Terrain: Trade of the Straits Port of Penang

LOH WEI LENG with JEFFERY SEOW

Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 2018.

Penang—the Malaysian port city acquired by the British East India Company in 1786—spearheaded the expansion of British influence in the maritime world of Southeast Asia. Thanks to its advantageous location—at the north-western edge of the Malacca straits—Penang became a thriving hub for seaborne trade and facilitated multilateral global trade. Further, in line with the growth in trade, Penang’s economy, society, and governance systems also developed and survived the vicissitudes of the modern world. Throughout the socioeconomic history of modern Penang, we can expect to understand significant global phenomena that occurred during the modern era; these

include imperial expansion, a growing world economy, and regional reactions to Western colonization. Of course, the history of Penang—one of the seeds sown in the past that has resulted in present-day Malaysia—would also enrich the understanding of Malaysian national history. Despite its importance, researchers have neglected Penang and instead lavished abundant attention on Singapore. This lacuna in historiography is appreciably filled by *Through Turbulent Terrain: Trade of the Straits Port of Penang*, which elucidates the general pattern of trade development and socioeconomic changes in Penang during the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries.

The authors remarkably capture the long-term history of British Penang by using both official and private records, particularly those associated with commerce. Some studies have been published regarding the socioeconomic history of Penang; however, their target periods were divided into the periods before and after 1870. This is because of the change in administrative status of the Straits Settlements in 1867 and the scarcity of primary sources dealing with the earlier part of its history. But in general, there has been no study presenting the long-term history of Penang throughout the nineteenth century. In addition, as mentioned above, since most researchers have focused on the socioeconomic development of Singapore as the largest trade center in the region, the motivation to reconstruct the comprehensive economic history of Penang was usually undermined by the overwhelming presence of Singapore. However, recent studies that shed new light on the Southeast Asian trade during the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries advocate the significance of reconsidering regional economic development. In particular, trade-driven economic growth, by employing the viewpoint of the “long nineteenth century,” enables us to identify the local factors underlying the transitional development of regional economies between the early modern and modern periods (Reid 1997; Sugihara and Kawamura 2013). Because the historical research on Singapore, which was established in 1819, does not cover the entire period of our interest, we must investigate Southeast Asian economic development during the long nineteenth century by looking at Penang’s commercial history since the late eighteenth century—that is, before the period of Singapore’s prosperity. *Through Turbulent Terrain* addresses this issue though it does not use the analytical framework of the long nineteenth century. The authors have collected material from widely dispersed primary sources, such as official documents, British parliamentary papers, commercial newspapers, and so on, and organized those related to the socioeconomic development of Penang. For instance, the tables in the book’s appendix are especially useful for understanding the trend and structure of trade in the 150 years since British Penang’s foundation. Then, based on the painstakingly collected information, the authors argue that Penang grew as a global entrepôt connecting various parts of the world—including Europe, the Indian Ocean, the Southern China Sea, and adjacent Southeast Asian countries—during the nineteenth century. Particularly, its trade structure gravitated toward local trade with entities on the western coast of the Malay Peninsula, Southern Siam, Burma, and Dutch Sumatra. Additionally, local merchants, of diverse backgrounds and who operated their own businesses, were engaged in the circulation

of regional products and manufactured goods. The elaborate shipping lists extracted from contemporary commercial handbooks demonstrate the multi-ethnic aspects of Penang's trade—for instance, throughout the nineteenth century, Chinese ship owners and merchants dominated regional trade with adjacent countries. Thus, the actual state of Penang's trade is likely to modify the conventional view of the port being subordinate to Singapore or functioning merely as a transit port for the tin industry of the Malay Peninsula. In other words, the essential pattern of trade development of modern Penang was based on its role as entrepôt in the Malacca Straits. We can additionally find the elements that remained unchanged or varied between the early modern and modern era of its multilateral regional trade—which extended beyond the imposed colonial boundaries—with neighboring countries. The authors also suggest that the most noticeable change in Penang's trade was the shift in its status, after the turn of the century, from entrepôt to staple port.

This book highlights the multifaceted rivalry with which Penang struggled as a British colonial city. During the nineteenth century, the British community of the Straits Settlements established their influence in Southeast Asia by managing the competition with the Dutch and the suppression from the Indian government which was then ruled by the Bengal presidency. In such struggles, the leading role of the Singapore mercantile community has been underscored; however, the authors contend that the local community at Penang demonstrated its own interests, which differed somewhat from those of Singapore's owing to the differences in geographical position and business circumstances. While Singapore's local trade primarily covered the Southern China sea, Malayan Archipelago, and Gulf of Siam, the trade of Penang focused on the eastern rim of the Indian Ocean. Owing to the close commercial links with the north-eastern coast of Sumatra, where the Dutch influence was gradually growing, the Dutch discriminatory tariff on the imports of British manufactured goods had a more adverse effect on Penang's commerce than on Singapore. As such, the authors argue, the mercantile community of Penang had to take desperate measures to register its protest against the violation of the Anglo-Dutch treaty. As Penang's trade with Sumatra depended heavily on the exchange between the re-exports of Indian or British manufactured goods and Sumatra's native produce (pepper, coffee, and forest products), the establishment of Dutch rule and imposition of hostile tariffs were a significant blow to the merchants. Therefore, to maintain Penang's position as the regional entrepôt, its local community led the campaign calling for British diplomatic protest against the Dutch violation of the treaty. At the same time, the book also explains that the authorities at Penang themselves were struggling against exploitation by Singapore's government, which served as the headquarters of the Straits Settlements. Because of the administrative arrangement, the revenue levied by the Penang authority was confiscated by the Singapore government and allocated unequally among the Straits cities. As Straits Settlements council members were mainly from Singapore's local community, the council was also run in a manner that catered more to Singapore's interests. Penang's requests, on the other hand (for help

to improve its port infrastructure, for instance), were hardly ever accepted. In the early twentieth century, there were plans to construct a port at Prai, on the opposite shore in the Malay Peninsula, to enhance the volume of tin ore exported through direct shipments. Though the port scheme was eventually rejected after a cost-benefit analysis, this incident showed how Penang's interests were vulnerable to the decisions of the upper administrative body in Singapore. Indeed, not only did Penang face intense rivalry from foreign powers, such as the Dutch, they were also up against their fellow English who had opposing interests. Many chapters of *Through Turbulent Terrain* are dedicated to showing how Penang, overshadowed by the supremacy of Singapore, adjusted to harsh and changing circumstances autonomously and, at times, in an ad-hoc manner. However, these hardships are also what drove the unique socioeconomic development of this British colonial city in Southeast Asia.

Finally, I would like to point out a controversial point raised in the book. The authors state that the principal pattern of Penang's trade switched from entrepôt to staple port in the aftermath of the rise of the tin industry and rubber production in the Malay Peninsula after 1900. In other words, while Penang's trade growth was driven by the transit trade based on the multilateral trade linkages until the turn of the century, the subsequent driving force was the massive exports of primary goods. These were required for the industrial development of the West, which was based on the strong physical (harbor and railway) and institutional (British colonial rule) connections between Penang and the hinterlands of the Malay Peninsula. Indeed, according to the statistical information in the book, Penang came to function as a center for extracting the produce from the regions with abundant natural resources and exporting it to the world market; thus, a part of its trade performance depended on its role as a staple port. However, as the authors clearly highlight, even as the Malayan exports of tin and rubber via Penang were on the increase, the imports of consumer goods for the labor in mines and plantations were also rising. In particular, Burmese rice and foodstuffs from neighboring countries began to circulate on a large scale between Penang and the Malay States. Without such an intra-regional circulation of necessities via Penang, the labor—particularly Chinese and Indian expatriates working in tin mines and plantations—could not have specialized in the production of industrial raw materials. Therefore, the increase in purchasing power of local populations caused by exports of staple products in a certain region, was used to satisfy the demand for consumer goods supplied by neighboring countries; thus, the gains from trade were distributed within the region under the influence of Penang's entrepôt trade. This development pattern of Penang and the adjacent region suggests that while staple exports did indeed become the dominant item in its trade, the functioning of Penang as an entrepôt since the nineteenth century underlay the entire growth of its regional economy; further, it held on to its position at the center of commodity circulation. This finding of the book sheds new light on the presence of staple ports in Southeast Asia. Their function was not confined to a close link between the port, on the one hand, and the narrow hinterland area or a country, on the other; rather, it

facilitated the development of an extensive regional economy. *Through Turbulent Terrain* deals with the insightful question regarding the relationship between the prosperity of a cosmopolitan port city and the growth of the regional economy in a period when the modern world was taking shape.

Kobayashi Atsushi 小林篤史

Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University

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Familial Properties: Gender, State, and Society in Early Modern Vietnam, 1463–1778

NHUNG TUYET TRAN

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018.

This book is the first English-language, full-length history of Vietnamese gender relations in the early modern period. In English, the existing studies of women in Vietnamese history have focused heavily on the pre-twentieth-century period (Dutton 2013, 2–4). Vietnamese-language publications, on the other hand, cover a wider time range. They include *Phụ Nữ Việt Nam qua Các Thời Đại* [Vietnamese Women through the Ages], a pioneering work in Vietnamese women's general history and Vietnamese history during the twentieth century (Lê Thị Nhâm Tuyết 1973), and more recent studies by Phạm Thị Vinh (2003) and Vũ Thị Mai Anh (2015), which shed light on ordinary Vietnamese women's lives and agency in economic activities over several centuries of the early modern period.

With *Familial Properties*, the author challenges the cliché that Vietnamese women enjoyed unparalleled power in the early modern era and the notion that their power and autonomy reflected remnants of a matriarchal tradition in the ancient era. She examines women's life and gender relations in Vietnam from the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries, a central period to any study of gender in Vietnamese history. This was also a time when Vietnam was known for having a relatively gender-egalitarian society, though some scholars suggest that cultural practices valuing Vietnamese women had been preserved until the Nguyễn dynasty (1802–1945).

Throughout the book, the author objects to the claims of some previous studies and makes the following assertions. After the fifteenth century, the Vietnamese state authorities—such as the Lê, Mạc, Trịnh dynasties in Northern Realm, and the Nguyễn dynasty in Southern Realm—maintained political and social order through the control of gender relations, relying on the neo-Confucian doctrine as a governing philosophy. These dynasties tried to establish patrilineal family systems, in which relations between men and women were asymmetrical, and men had power over family affairs such as marriage, sexual activities and inheritance of family properties. We see this in instituted laws (*Quốc Triều Hình Luật* [Lê code] by the Lê dynasty) and edited compilations of judicial precedents (such as *Hồng Đức Thiệu Chính* [Book of Good Government]).

However, the state efforts to control women's lives were not always successful. This was due to the civil war between the Mạc, Trịnh, and Nguyễn dynasties, and the commercialization of agricultural activities and the rural trade following the civil war. Because their husbands, brothers, and sons were fighting and dying on battlefields far from home, women took on important roles in the agricultural and business activities of the countryside. With accumulated monetary capital, some donated funds and arable lands to local communities to rebuild roads, dikes, bridges, and markets—tasks the state and local authorities were unable to perform because of the civil war. The women's donations were also survival strategies that prevented their husbands' relatives from staking a claim to their (the women's and their children's) properties. In return for these donations, the local leaders and state representatives established steles, documented the women's goodwill, and promised to maintain the ancestral rites for them. And through their contributions, these women emerged as important economic, social, and spiritual patrons of their local communities. They enjoyed their claims to their family properties not because of the law and edicts that upheld the remnants of Southeast Asian bilateral family system, but because they gained an economic advantage from socioeconomic changes of the time.

The author backs up her point with abundant sources that include state laws and regulations, village conventions (*hương ước*), legal cases, morality texts, testamentary records, insights from local and foreign observers, stele inscriptions, short stories, as well as oral folk poetry written in Chinese, *Nôm* (a character to represent original Vietnamese vocabulary), and *quốc ngữ* (romanized Vietnamese) and western languages.

Each chapter covers a wide range of topics—marriage, the control of sexual activities by the penal code, women's chastity, and all-female Catholic houses as a substitute for marriage—and examines them from various perspectives. Through detailed and insightful analyses, the author succeeds in presenting an encompassing picture of Vietnamese women's lives and the gender system of the early modern era. It is a book that will aid further discussion on the subject, and to that I would like to contribute questions and suggestions from anthropological and sociological viewpoints, starting with Chapter 4's discussion of equal property rights between men and women.

The author states that the Lê code did not stipulate the right of equal division of household

property and that this custom did not exist in practice. She supports this assertion with three testaments issued at the end of the eighteenth century—in all the cases, daughters could not enjoy equal rights with their brothers; especially in the last (a testament issued in 1798), where the daughters received nothing from their parents (pp. 140–145).

However, according to my research, I found an equal inheritance case between sons and a daughter during the same period of the abovementioned three cases.¹⁾ This testament was found in genealogy of Phạm lineage at Đông Ngạc village in Từ Liêm District near Hanoi citadel.²⁾ It reads:

On the twenty first day of the second lunar month in the second year of the Cảnh Thịnh Reign (1794), living in Quảng Oai Prefecture, Viscount Phạm Duy Thông and wife Nguyễn Thị Như leave rice fields, lands, and ponds, and divide equally into three parts for their children to cultivate, inhabit, make livelihood and make them celebrate each ancestor's anniversary as follows. [12ab]³⁾

The father and the mother clearly declared that they would like to divide their properties to three children equally. From the accounts of this genealogy, the children were Phạm Doãn Căn (“the eldest son,” b.1754), Phạm Thị Niệm (“daughter,” b.1756), and Phạm Đình Vương (“son,” b.1759). Each children's share was described as such: “The former fire and incense property” (cụ lưu hương hỏa) and “residential land” (gia cư) were only passed to the eldest son. Rice lands in Đông Ngạc village and another village, lands (thổ phân), and ponds were passed to the three children. Because the sizes of some properties were not recoded, I cannot know for sure if each child's share was equal, though my guess is that it was (see table below).

In this particular case, each child received their parents' property in exchange for responsibility to celebrate some ancestors' death anniversaries. In the testament, it is recorded which children had responsibility for which ancestor's death anniversaries. Interestingly, “daughter” Thị Niệm received her parents' properties in exchange for the responsibility of celebrating four female ancestors, including her father's mother, father's grandmother, father's great grandmother, and father's sister (Only for this last person, she commemorated with her brothers). This took place

1) I share the same interest with the author and published some articles about Vietnamese women's property rights in early modern era (Miyazawa 2016a; 2016b). The case below was examined in one of these articles (Miyazawa 2016b).

2) The original title is *Phạm Lineage Genealogy* [*Phạm Thị Gia Phả*]. I used pdf. data in *Gia Phả Các Dòng Họ ở Đông Ngạc, Từ Liêm-Hà Nội* (CD-ROM). This genealogy is in CD-ROM format, and made by the Genealogy Study Program of Hanoi National University. I would like to thank Professor Okada Masashi, one of compilers of this CD-ROM, for providing it me. I can see the stamp of EFEO (École Française d'Extrême-Orient) and the classified number “A. 1833.” in the front page of this genealogy. This genealogy originally belongs to Hán Nôm Study Institute in Hà Nội. I also can find the same title and the same number in the catalogue of the institute (Viện Nghiên Cứu Hán Nôm và Trường Viễn Đông Bắc Cổ Pháp 1993, 528).

3) The original pdf. data does not have the page number. I counted the pages myself.

Table Made from Pham Lineage Genealogy

	Residential Land	Pond	Land	Fire and Incense	Ricefield in Đông Ngạc Village	Ricefield in Cô Nhuế Village	Total
Phạm Doãn Căn ("eldest son")	1 place*			1 sào 2 thước	5 sào 8 thước	5 sào 3 thước	1 mẫu 1 sào 13 thước+ α
Phạm Thị Niệm ("daughter")		2 places*	1 sào 7 thước		5 sào 6 thước	5 sào 5 thước	1 mẫu 2 sào 3 thước+ α
Phạm Đình Vương ("son")	1 place*		1 place*		5 sào 5 thước	5 sào 7 thước 5 thốn	1 mẫu 0 sào 12 thước 5 thốn+ α

Notes: * The sizes of the fields and ponds were not written in the genealogy.

1 mẫu = 3,600 m², 1 sào = 360 m², 1 thước = 24 m² in Northern Vietnam.

in 1792, when she was 28 years old and married out already.⁴⁾

According to the stipulation of Article 388 of Lê code, a daughter could succeed her parents' property for ancestor worship—the fire and the incense property (*hương hỏa*)—in absence of her eldest brother or any brothers during her life time. However, in this Phạm Thị Niệm's case, she could succeed her parents' property in exchange for having responsibility for ancestor worship though she had the eldest brother was around and he succeeded the presumed "*hương hỏa*" property.⁵⁾ In accordance with the neo-Confucian doctrine, a daughter was not supposed to be a member of her natal family after marriage. That being the case, the daughter was under no duty to maintain ancestor worship in her natal family. In practice, however, Phạm Thị Niệm undertook the responsibility of celebrating death anniversaries of some ancestors in her natal family. Her case suggests that in Northern Vietnam, at least until the end of the eighteenth century, there were properties for ancestor worship that were not for the maintenance of patrilineal family line. These properties were sometimes called "anniversary rice fields" (*ky điền*).⁶⁾ We also see, through this instance, that married daughters could still lay some claims to their natal families; they could receive their parents' properties in exchange for the responsibility of ancestor worship. Through

4) According to the account of this genealogy, she married Đỗ Trọng Thùy in Đông Ngạc village and had two sons and two daughters [9a].

5) In this testament, nobody was appointed to have responsibility over celebrating the death anniversaries of the father Thông and the mother Như. Therefore, I am guessing that the eldest son Căn have the responsibility to do so in exchange for receiving "the former fire and incense property" as the fire and incense property for his parents.

6) According to the research on customs in Tonkin (northern Vietnam) by French colonial government in the late 1920s, the features of anniversary rice fields are as follows: first, they are established for those without male heirs; second, non-heirs or daughters were sometimes the managers of them; and third, they were sometimes established for maternal kin (Protectorat du Tonkin 1930, 153–154, 160).

this practice, parents were assured of the eternal consolation their ancestors' and their own spirits, while married daughters gained an economic advantage both for themselves as well as their husbands and children.

From both the author's and my research of inheritance cases, it is clear that two types of inheritance models coexisted: one consisting of equal division between men and women, and the other an unequal one. I agree with the author's conclusion that the Lê code did not stipulate equal property rights between men and women. However, Vietnamese inheritance practices of the early modern era varied too much—and more examination is needed of the different situations. For further analysis, we could apply Japanese anthropologist Sugishima Takashi's "multiple-game-situation theory," which explains how incompatible "rules and beliefs" can simultaneously exist and operate in daily life (Sugishima 2014, 10).

In addition, to enrich the discussion of Vietnamese women's social life and family properties in the early modern era, I would like to propose a closer study of concrete documents, including testaments, genealogies, and land registers—not only in archives but also from the countryside. As Sun Laichen points out in his book review of *Familial Properties*, the gap exists between law code and local customs or practices (Sun forthcoming).⁷⁾ From the viewpoint of the sociology of law, it is called "a gap between law in books (codified law) and law in action." To that end, Japanese historian Ueda Shinya recently examined inheritance, dowry, and dwelling in northern and central Vietnam by collecting testaments in local archives or in villages (Ueda 2019).

In all, *Familial Properties* is an excellent resource for a deeper understanding of Vietnamese gender relations during the early modern period.

Miyazawa Chihiro 宮沢千尋

Faculty of Humanities, Nanzan University

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7) I thank for Dr. Sun Laichen to provide his manuscript of book review of Tran's book with me.

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Rubber and the Making of Vietnam: An Ecological History, 1897–1975

MICHITAKE ASO

Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018.

Probably no other industry aside from rubber has such a long and controversial past, which is closely attached to the history of modern Vietnam. Introduced into the country at the turn of the nineteenth century, the cultivation of rubber quickly expanded to other parts of the Indochinese peninsular following the process of French colonization and their *mise en valeur* of the colony. The concentration of rubber cultivation was in Cochinchina in South Vietnam and Cambodia. During the colonial era, the rubber industry was among the most modern, dynamic, and profitable sectors of the economy, attracting large foreign investment as well as the application of modern science

and technology. Due to its close ties with colonialism and capitalism, however, this industry was strongly associated with extreme colonial exploitation and oppression. As a result, rubber plantations came to be centers of anti-colonial movements. These plantations again became targets of the Vietnamese revolution during the First Indochina War (1946–54), when the Vietminh conducted sabotage actions against French-owned rubber plantations. Later, during the Vietnam War (1954–75), governments of both North and South Vietnam sought control of rubber plantations due to their economic and strategic significance. The *Doi moi* (Renovation) of 1986 also incorporated plans for the development of rubber industry in modern Vietnam.

Michitake Aso's *Rubber and the Making of Vietnam: An Ecological History, 1897–1975* discusses the history of rubber alongside the national history of Vietnam. The book is organized into three parts and comprises seven chapters. A chapter in Part One analyzes the discovery of rubber latex, the early introduction of rubber into Indochina, and the role of the French colonial government in facilitating the expansion of rubber in Vietnam. The author argues that by expanding rubber plantations, the colonial government sought to increase its presence in the countryside (p. 48). The land granting system and the policies to force the local people to leave their lands helped planters acquire large-scale lands to establish their rubber plantations. The Montagnards thus became the laborers of the rubber plantations. Part Two of the book consists of three chapters that concentrate on the management of rubber plantations. The author examines the involvement and contributions of individuals, organizations, companies, and the state in the development of rubber industry in colonial Vietnam. While the lack of resources restrained the colonial government from investing in rubber and providing any meaningful support for Vietnamese rubber growers, the development of rubber in Indochina relied on the initiative of French individual planters (p. 65). The colonial government indirectly participated in the management of rubber industry by facilitating scientific research on rubber and providing a legal framework relating to the land concessions, the working and hygiene conditions of rubber plantations, and particularly the collaboration in the fight against tropical diseases threatening rubber trees (fungal pathogens) and rubber workers (malaria). The significant contributions of a number of agronomists, such as Yersin, Pierre Gourou, and health experts at the Pasteur Institute are also brought into the analysis.

Part Three on “rubber wars” consists of three remaining chapters that discuss the wars involving rubber plantations. The author first examines the struggles of Vietnamese rubber workers to improve plantation conditions, such as by increasing benefits and reducing hours of work. He also talks about the sabotage actions carried out by the Vietminh aimed at rubber plantations as part of their “scorched earth” tactics during the First Indochina War. The author then states that the legacy of colonial abuses prompted the Vietnamese laborers to support the anti-colonial Vietminh in their sabotage of rubber plantations. Due to their strategic location—as a gateway to Saigon and Mekong Delta—rubber plantations became during the Vietnam War (1954–75) the battlegrounds for which the National Liberation Front, the Republic of Vietnam, and the US military

sought to take control. The last chapter provides an analysis of the consequences of the wars on rubber production, as well as the long-term environmental and social impacts of rubber for Vietnam.

The above review presents the unique and valuable contributions of Michitake Aso's *Rubber and the Making of Vietnam* in comparison with other research on the history of rubber in Vietnam. Instead of focusing on the economic dimension of rubber and the interactions between rubber plantations and the national revolutions, the author applies a much more nuanced and comprehensive approach. The book covers all major aspects of the rubber production, including science, commerce, governance, healthcare, as well as the position of rubber plantations in the prolonged wars of Vietnam. More interestingly, Aso discusses all these aspects through the lens of an ecological perspective, which clarifies the impacts of rubber on the society, economy, culture, and politics. Another vigorous effort of the author is how he widens the discussion on the history of rubber in Vietnam to a broader context of Southeast Asia, and links it with the nationalist struggles, decolonization, and nation-building in colonial and postcolonial Vietnam. However, perhaps because the book covers so many aspects, an inadequate discussion is reserved for the central hypothesis of ecological history of rubber as conveyed by the title of the book. The ecological and environmental disasters resulting from the Americans' spraying of Agent Orange on rubber plantations are inadequately examined. Moreover, there is insufficient information on rubber management during the Japanese occupation period (1940–45). The statement that Ngô Đình Diệm "on July 21 [1954] signed the Geneva Accords" (p.209) is also inaccurate. In fact, Diệm had refused to sign the Accords and this was the reason why he later claimed his government was not bound by this agreement (Chapman 2013, 69; Gaiduk 2003, 207). Finally, my experience with Dutch colonial expansion in the Indonesian archipelago causes me to have doubts on several points. First, that the expansion of rubber plantations in Indochina was because of a need to increase the French colonial government's presence in the rural areas. Second, that the requirements to protect French rubber planters prompted the French colonial government to establish an effective administrative control of the countryside.

Phạm Văn Thủy

VNU University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Hanoi (VNU-USSH)

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Arc of Containment: Britain, the United States, and Anticommunism in Southeast Asia

WEN-QING NGOEI

Ithaca: Cornell University Press; Singapore: ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute, 2019.

Wen-Qing Ngoei's *Arc of Containment: Britain, the United States, and Anticommunism in Southeast Asia* is a thought-provoking, compelling, and significant contribution to the study of American hegemony and intervention in postwar Southeast Asia. Ngoei challenges historians and scholars of U.S.–Southeast Asia relations to shift their vantage point from Vietnam to British Malaya and Singapore, and in doing so, employ a new approach in understanding the complexities and nuances of United States' foray into Southeast Asian affairs. Ngoei advances a “new international history” of the region that unravels the intimate and intertwined narratives of the British, Americans, and Southeast Asian anticommunist leaders during a tumultuous period in the region when Southeast Asian decolonization coalesced with global Cold War forces.

Although historians have examined this period in Southeast Asian history in a myriad of ways, this ground-breaking book is particularly exceptional as it situates American ascendancy in the region within the configuration of Anglo-American cooperation and anti-communist nationalism in Southeast Asia. The author holds the view that “anticommunist nationalism in Southeast Asia intersected with preexisting local antipathy toward China and its diaspora, to usher the region from European-dominated colonialism to U.S. hegemony” (p. 5). Both the British—attempting to put the brakes on its ineluctable withdrawal from its colonies in Malaya and Singapore—and Southeast Asian leaders tilted toward the United States to forge a strategic alliance that was intrinsically anti-Chinese. More importantly, British colonial and anticommunist project proved vital in shaping American Cold War policies in Southeast Asia.

Scholars interested in Southeast Asian history and politics will find the book highly informative and well-structured. It is divided into five main chapters. In the first, Ngoei sets the stage for his narrative, asserting that American policymakers' outlook about Cold War Southeast Asia was shaped by three interlinked factors: the Japanese occupation of Southeast Asia; the Anglo-American colonial experience in Southeast Asia; and the perennial antagonism toward mainland China and its diasporic communities in Southeast Asia. The successful invasion of Southeast Asian states by Japanese forces during the Second World War, establishing military and political outposts in the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaya, Singapore, and eventually Indonesia, ingrained in American policymaker's vision “the dynamic of regional interconnectedness axiomatic to achieving ascendancy in Southeast Asia” (p. 18). The author further argues that this strategic thought consequently framed the nascent notion of domino in the region.

The Americans also placed more value on the British colonial policies in Malaya and Singapore compared to other European colonizers in the region. Three fact-finding missions were sent from

the U.S. to Southeast Asia from 1949 to 1950, and their findings echo British insights. In a report to Dean Acheson and Deputy Undersecretary of State Dean Rusk, U.S. Ambassador Philip Jessup noted that “his conclusions were ‘in accord’ with those of British officials” (p.27). In fact, U.S. policymakers’ views on the Chinese diaspora in the region also paralleled those of the British. After the war, the British had the difficult task of containing the two million Chinese in Malaya and Singapore who, they assumed, were vulnerable to the Chinese Communist Party’s political influence. In the same way, the Americans also thought of the overseas Chinese as a possible means for China to stretch its control in Southeast Asia.

The following two chapters provide a more in-depth analysis of British influence on the United States’ Cold War approach. The second chapter elaborates on the fascination of American policymakers toward British colonial policies in Malaya, which the former deemed as an “enlightened colonial administration” (p. 45). Perhaps this comes as no surprise, as the British were the last of the Europeans to leave its colonies in the region and in a relatively peaceful way. In the next chapter, Ngoei outlines American policymakers’ preoccupation with the British counterinsurgency strategies in Malaya. In the 1960s, he contends, “U.S. officials nurtured a fantasy that Britain possessed a magic bullet to kill revolutionary communism” (p.83). The author further asserts that, in fact, both British and Malayan officials took advantage of this preoccupation to bolster their alliance with the United States.

Chapter 4 probes into the formation of what Ngoei calls the “arc of containment,” precipitated by the rise of anti-communist states across Southeast Asia. This arc began with the creation of Malaysia in 1963, reinforced by Singapore’s successful political and security measures against socialist adversaries, and eventually completed with the demise of Sukarno’s power in Indonesia in 1965. In the final chapter, the author takes the opportunity to weave together the narratives introduced in the preceding chapters by conjuring a grand historical narrative of Southeast Asian transition from Anglo-American ascendancy to U.S. hegemony. In 1967, Southeast Asia witnessed the emergence of a regional institution that thwarted any possibility of further communist advancements. In this narrative, Vietnam’s capitulation under communism was the exception in the Southeast Asian saga.

What makes this book a compelling read, aside from its clarity and eloquence in articulating the intimate and entangled historical narratives of the US, Britain, and Southeast Asian states, is its audacious and apposite critique of Vietnam-centric scholarship on U.S. interventions in the region. The author skillfully reframes the subject by accentuating, and rightfully so, the interconnectedness of postcolonial Southeast Asian states. Ngoei is able to conjure an international history of Southeast Asia during the Cold War—one that integrates the viewpoints, interests, and actions of the different key players. While the volume is essentially about U.S. ascendancy in the region, it is so neatly placed within the context of the British withdrawal from the region and the emergence of local Southeast Asian leaders who actively sought for an alliance with the U.S.

Despite its numerous merits, *Arc of Containment* would have benefited from a more compelling discussion on the United States' political and military experience in the Philippines long before the dawning of the Cold War. The Americans were neither unfamiliar nor inexperienced with Southeast Asian insurgencies and anti-communist campaigns. In fact, they had a long experience in colonial administration in the Philippines beginning in 1902, which transformed into a "benevolent hegemony" with the establishment of the Philippine Commonwealth in 1935. Is it possible, then, that what the U.S. saw as the "enlightened" rule of the British was simply a way to reinforce and legitimize their own strategies that were defined long before the outbreak of the Cold War? Moreover, the Americans, in collaboration with Filipino leaders, launched a successful campaign against the local communist group, Hukbalahap (People's Anti-Japanese Army), resulting in its leader Luis Taruc's decision to surrender in 1954. Why would U.S. policymakers put more value on the British policies during the Malayan Emergency when they had a successful and more direct experience with anti-communist struggle in the Philippines?

Notwithstanding these questions, the book remains a great source of knowledge and strong assertions. It is excellently researched, well-crafted, and provocative. Anyone studying Cold War Southeast Asia will have to contend with Ngoei's interpretations. By offering a cogent alternative interpretation of the labyrinthine history of Southeast Asia's ties with Britain and the United States, *Arc of Containment* will stimulate other historians to revisit the history of postwar Southeast Asia.

Darlene Machell de Leon Espena

School of Social Sciences and Office of Core Curriculum, Singapore Management University

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