Asian Ethnicity

Navigating communities: race, place, and travel in the history of maritime Southeast Asia

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Navigating communities: race, place, and travel in the history of maritime Southeast Asia

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This paper examines intersecting notions of distance, place and community across Insular Southeast Asia for the last several hundred years. The piece is not an attempt to chronicle all these affiliations over time and space, but is rather an effort to re-think how people have moved in Southeast Asian history, who they did this with and why. The essay is divided into three parts. The first section looks at some of the meanings of place in the last five centuries, as place has pertained to communities in 'centers' and maritime 'peripheries', as well as in several supposedly discrete arenas. The second section focuses on people, and how different communities in Southeast Asia have envisioned the terms and conditions of movement in divergent ways. The last third of the paper concentrates on period, or how conceptions of community, distance and travel have changed over time. It is hoped that this essay will show how all three of these variables – people, place, and periodization – have intersected in specific, complicated ways in shaping local notions of 'community'.

Keywords: community; ethnicity; Southeast Asia; history

Introduction

In 1899, the Tolai of Matupit island, a small indigenous population living off the long, outstretched coasts of New Guinea, began trading for shells. These shells were valuable commercial items in Malinowski's famous *kula* networks further to the East; the ability to procure them, therefore, incorporated the Tolai into systems of exchange across a wide swath of the Southwest Pacific.[1] The injection of one more island group into these networks is not very remarkable, except that we know exactly when and how this happened, as well as why. In that last year of the nineteenth century, an itinerant Chinese trader named Ah Tam (Lee Tam Tuck) came to Matupit and established himself as a shipbuilder.[2] The craft he built were larger and more seaworthy then the traditional Matupit vessels, and they therefore allowed trade and contact to develop on a scale that had hitherto been impossible for the Tolai. An Overseas Chinese migrant, therefore, traveling great distances from the South China coasts, passed across the entire length of Island Southeast Asia, and thereafter played a part in forging commercial and cultural contacts over a huge

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[1]Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*.
[2]Wu, *The Chinese in Papua*, 21.

quadrant of the Southwest Pacific. Blurring the boundaries between East Asia, Southeast Asia and Oceania, Ah Tam connected geographic worlds that have always been more separate in our conceptions than in any fluid, historical reality.[3]

We should get used to such stories. Though scholars such as Marshall Sahlins have been writing for decades about the connective powers of regional 'cosmologies of capitalism', we still take notions of place and fixity very seriously, and perhaps too seriously.[4] Much of the Earth's population has been in motion for the past several centuries, for reasons of trade, conquest, coercion and/or opportunity, and these travels have often been undertaken without regard for putative boundaries or cultural domains. Though intellectuals have recognized these cross-currents and fertilizations for quite some time, serious ways of thinking about space in relation to history have changed only slowly. Fernand Braudel was among the first to attempt this shift in intellectual locus, and his studies of the Mediterranean and its many meanings have spawned a range of eager acolytes.[5] Recently, there has been more of an effort to map re-drawn 'lines in space' onto Southeast Asian history as well, as several scholars have moved away from state-centered geographies, asking how people continued to cross colonial boundaries instead.[6] Indeed, the very notion of our geographical conceptual categories is now undergoing some rigorous re-thinking, not just in particular arenas, but in an epistemological sense as well.[7]

This paper examines intersecting notions of race, place and community[8] across Insular Southeast Asia for the last several hundred years. Temporally, it covers events and patterns starting in the seventeenth century; geographically, the narrative flows from Aceh east to West Papua, and from Java north to the Philippines, though radials of the story incorporate even larger, trans-oceanic geographies. The piece is not an attempt to chronicle all these affiliations over time and space, but is rather an effort to re-think how people have moved in Southeast Asian history, who they did this with and why. The essay is divided into three parts. The first section looks at some of the meanings of place in the last five centuries, as place has pertained to

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[3]For two very recent attempts at writing Asian history from a broad-based, oceanic perspective, see Hamashita, 'The Maritime Products Trade', and Tagliacozzo, 'Trade, Production, and Incorporation'. Similarly broad-based overland analogues have been recently described by Giersch, '"A Motley Throng"', and Wyatt, 'Southeast Asia'.

[4]Sahlins, 'Cosmologies of Capitalism'. Concepts such as 'race' and community can look quite different in diaspora; in this sense place and fixity are important, but Sahlins (and others) have shown how capitalism and movement can bend these concepts to a large degree. Chinese merchants meeting in Xiamen will describe themselves quite differently, often, than if they meet in Singapore or Borneo – a whole slate of identifiers becomes available depending on the context.

[5]Braudel, *The Mediterranean*; Lopez, *Medieval Trade*; Arenson, *The Encircled Sea*.

[6]van Dijk, 'Java, Indonesia and Southeast Asia'; Lindblad, 'Between Singapore and Batavia'; Dick, 'Indonesian Economic History'; Tagliacozzo, 'Kettle on a Slow Boil'; Walker, *The Legend of the Golden Boat*.

[7]Lewis and Wiggen, *The Myth of Continents*.

[8]'Community' is a complicated subject in the context that I use the term here; it can mean many different things. In general, the two terms used widely in the Malay world for 'us' or 'we' ('kami' or 'kita', depending on whether the addressed is included too) can pertain to anyone designated as part of a group. This can include Javanese, Madurese, Bugis, Sundanese, Taosug or any number of other seagoing peoples in the region. Yet community can also be gauged via other indices as well, such as religion (being part of the Muslim *ummah*), or language or cultural practice, such as the aforementioned 'place–communities' signify. What is interesting, of course, is that such people – self-identifying as corporate – are often not indeed found in the same place.

communities in 'centers' and maritime 'peripheries', as well as in several supposedly discrete arenas. The second section focuses on people, and how different communities in Southeast Asia have envisioned the terms and conditions of movement in divergent ways. The last third of the paper concentrates on period, or how conceptions of community, distance and travel have changed over time. It is hoped that this essay will show how all three of these variables – people, place, and periodization – have intersected in specific, complicated ways in shaping local notions of 'community'. Populations indigenous to this region have forged multi-faceted relationships with each other and with the marine environment that connects them, and these relationships can be approached through several avenues of vision. The essay argues that Southeast Asian conceptions of 'self' and 'other' (often put into ethnic or racial idioms), as well as notions of 'home' and 'travel', have evolved out of the highly mobile interactions evident in local maritime history. These discourses can be mapped in broad patterns, which shed light on how maritime peoples express fealty to space and to each other, historically and today. These intersections are analyzed across the breadth of the archipelagic world, spinning disparate geographies, eras and peoples into a single, interconnected web.

This attempt to re-think distance, place and travel in Southeast Asian history and how these concepts have been used in the formulation of community and identity owes a great deal to the work of John Smail. Smail, who died recently, wrote an article entitled 'On the Possibility of an Autonomous History of Modern Southeast Asia', which appeared in the *Journal of Southeast Asian History* over forty years ago, and has since been re-published and the subject of animated discussion.[9] This essay has haunted scholars of Southeast Asia ever since its initial appearance, especially as Smail laid it down as a gauntlet in the face of many decades of what he saw as 'colonial-centric' historiography of the region. Is it possible, as Prasenjit Duara has asked in another context,[10] to write histories of geographic spaces that are only partially dependent on the genealogies of the nation-state? How would we inscribe these histories if we attempted this project? What might be the likely returns in shifts of vantage and perspective that could help us see the kaleidoscope of the region in new ways? These are some of the questions I hope to ask and answer in the pages that follow.

Place: locality and region in maritime Southeast Asia

In 1870, a British sea-captain named Parker Snow wrote an article for the Royal Colonial Institute in London called 'Colonisation and the Utilisation of Ocean and Waste Spaces Throughout the World'.[11] Captain Parker seemed to have little sense that the sea was a living mosaic for Southeast Asia's peoples; for him it was more of a 'flat field', a space to be figured into grids showing imperial designs and influence. Yet, the sea always *has* been a vital and fluid arena in this region, with local populations entering it into their cultures and belief systems, their folklore and their

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[9] See the volume edited by Laurie Sears, which discusses in great detail the questions and methodologies at stake in a series of insightful essays (Sears, *Autonomous Histories, Particular Truths*). The lead essay is particularly important, as it lays out many of the issues that Smail first discussed and which are taken up in various ways by the authors of the volume (Sears, 'The Contingency of Autonomous History').

[10] Duara, *Rescuing History*.

[11] Snow, 'Colonisation and the Utilisation', 117–21.

science. Passed-down erudition of the sea helped define community among Bugis navigators, for instance, transmitting knowledge of storms and area phosphorescence, as well as the lie of currents and rocky coasts.[12] Monsoon patterns were also eagerly tabulated by local peoples, and the rhythms of the winds and local seas – and how these effected regional livelihoods – were often known down to astonishingly small detail.[13] Even the stars were studied by Southeast Asians for their uses as regarded the sea, both for navigation and for time-keeping, on the mainland and in the islands.[14] The vast maritime reaches of the archipelago almost never seem to have been considered 'waste spaces' in indigenous knowledge, but were rather tabulated into local lifeways as crucial, practical knowledge. The potential of the sea as a living conduit between scattered peoples seems to have been part of regional thought for a very long time.

How did local Southeast Asian communities see themselves within this vast, connective milieu? In a positional sense, there is evidence that some felt themselves to be 'central', while others saw themselves as 'marginalized' within the greater scheme of maritime society. Certainly shippers and traders of the Northern Javanese *pasisir* felt themselves to be in a 'central place' in the archipelago from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries.[15] Roy Ellen's research on Maluku has also suggested the centrality of certain centers over others in the long history of Eastern Indonesia; Ternate, Ambon and Banda were almost always busier places than Macan, Tidore and much of Seram.[16] Patricia Spyer's recent work has supported these conclusions, focusing on the mentalities of populations who have seen themselves as 'bypassed' or marginalized by larger events.[17] In much of the rest of the Malay World, coastal communities felt themselves to be part of a larger, maritime nexus, linked by religion, trade and a cosmopolitan outlook. Separated by wide expanses of sea, they nevertheless felt a sense of community with other maritime societies scattered throughout the region, usually more so than with their own neighboring hinterlands. These *hulu/hilir* distinctions have been noted in Sumatra, Sulawesi and Kalimantan, but they are also part of a pattern that has stretched up through the Philippines, and onto the Malay Peninsula.[18]

We can briefly examine a few regional 'arenas' to see how fluid these ideas of distance, place and movement really were. In pre-colonial Borneo, a vast range of territories constituted the effective operating field of maritime contact around that enormous island. These spaces included the long, swampy coasts of Southwestern Borneo, where Arab adventurers (like Pangeran Syarif Yusuf Abdulrachman) set up petty-kingdoms in the late-eighteenth century.[19] Yet, to procure the wealth such adventurers needed in their estuarine courts, contact was also maintained with Malays in upriver appanages, who were then linked through vassalage down to the coasts. These dendritic communities were then tied to further societies, usually Dayaks who came to trade in the high river stations from smaller tributary branches

[12]Ammarell, *Bugis Navigation*.
[13]Parimartha, *Perdagangan dan Politik*; Schutz, *Monsoonal Influences*.
[14]Eade, *Southeast Asian Ephemeris*.
[15]Manguin, 'The Vanishing Jong', 197–9.
[16]Ellen, 'Environmental Perturbation', 35–6, 43–7.
[17]Spyer, *The Memory of Trade*.
[18]Oki, 'The River Trade'; Kathirithamby-Wells, 'Hulu-Hilir Unity'; Andaya, *To Live as Brothers*; see also Anonymous, *Laporan Akhir Penelitian*; and Bronson, 'Exchange'.
[19]van Goor, 'A Madman', 198.

of river watersheds.[20] Back down on the coasts, the vigilance and activities of the local sultans also encompassed the open sea. The Bugis diaspora presented both opportunities and significant danger; Bugis merchants were useful for the trade they brought, but they also needed to be watched, as they often intrigued with other local rulers. These Bugis communities were in turn bound together with Taosug *datus* to the north, who were penetrating the island's waters in their own commercial journeys from Sulu. And scattered on both the east and west coasts of the island were 'indigenous' Malay polities as well, centers like Gunung Tabor, Berau and Brunei, which had their own subjects constantly on the move. They, too, sought to raid and to trade, in search of the many riches of Borneo's seas (such as shark fins, *trepang* and mother of pearl, all of which commanded handsome prices on the Chinese market). When in the mid-nineteenth century European adventurers joined this swirling maelstrom of ethnicities, designs and movement, they were confronted by at least a dozen ethnic communities, all of them in motion.[21] The 'regional field' of Borneo's culture, trade and politics stretched to Palawan and Celebes, to Singapore and to Java. 'Travel' was a matter of perspective in this lively arena, therefore, as there were already many traveling communities that had made Borneo their satellite home.

The Southern Philippines was no less animated an arena. If Borneo's geography provided a massively landed center, with communities, identities and travel taking place along its boundaries (and sometimes through its riverine veins), then Sulu was the inverse, or what Roland Barthes has called an 'empty center'.[22] Barthes used the notion of an 'empty center' to describe Tokyo; the massive urban density and sprawl of Japan's capital is broken only in the center of the city, where the emperor's palace is located. This relatively empty space consists, in Barthes' words, of 'an opaque ring of walls, streams, roofs, and trees', and he saw this center as 'no more than an evaporated notion, subsisting here, not in order to irradiate power, but to give to the entire urban movement the support of its central emptiness, forcing the traffic to make a perpetual detour'.[23] We might see Sulu in similar terms; a relatively 'empty' center, population-wise, which nevertheless had a magnetic force on all commercial traffic surrounding it for hundreds of miles. As opposed to the terrestrial mass of Borneo, here the central organizing principle was open water: the Sulu Sea. Yet, this was open water that washed upon many shores.

Borneo's economically viable coasts (as mentioned above) lay to the south; these were worked by Taosug princes, the *datu* relations of the ruling Sultan on Jolo. Mindanao lay to the east: this island produced many of the same products as Borneo (gold dust, wax, hornbill casques) and had analogous political groupings (such as the Magindanao sultanate, and [later] Spanish Zamboanga, which mirrored British Labuan in certain coercive aspects.) To the north lay the Visayas, where Spanish influence was starting to seep south from Manila, and where Islam had already been congealing as an identity in opposition to proselytized Christianity. And to the West sat Palawan, with its own satellite communities of Muslim and Chinese traders,

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[20]For a useful contemporary description of these processes, see Arsip Nasional Indonesia (ANRI), Borneo West Kust, 27-09, Letter from Commissioner Borneo Regarding Sambas (30-9-1845), 'Regeringsvorm van Sambas'.

[21]See the descriptions given by Joseph Conrad from his own travels as neatly laid out in G.J. Resink, 'De Archipel voor Joseph Conrad'.

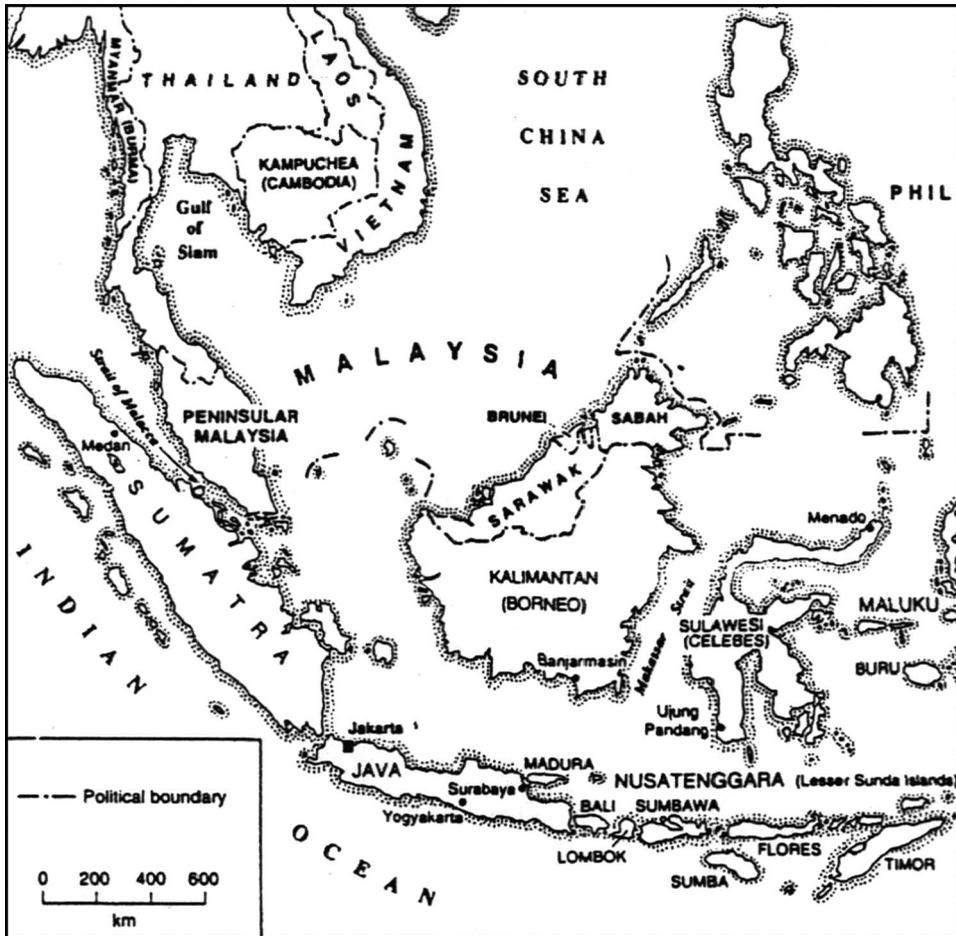[22]Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, 30–3.

[23]Ibid., 32.

Figure 1.   Maritime Southeast Asia.

a frontier island in nearly every sense of the term. In the Southern Philippines, as in Borneo, communities were in constant motion: the Taosug from their string of tiny islands; the Iranun and Balangingi Samal, who acted as Taosug labor-procurers through slaving, and Bugis traders, who brought spices and gunpowder, as well as *lontar* leaves and coarse cloth. Chinese merchants also criss-crossed the region, first from China, later from Manila, and finally from Singapore and Labuan.[24] In this 'empty center' of the Southern Philippines, travel from points outside Sulu's encircled seas was the norm; even American whalers made the journey, from distant Massachusetts and Connecticut.

In the nineteenth century, as Dutch control over the Indonesian archipelago started to take a more bounded shape, some of these indigenous notions of travel and far-flung community became more difficult to maintain. Unfettered movement was indeed one of the first 'problems' Batavia attended to in its conquest of the Indies. The Dutch saw all sorts of dangers that accompanied any large-scale freedom

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[24]Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life*.

of motion for local peoples. One of these worries concerned materiel. If Indonesians got their hands on commodities such as arms and ammunition in their travels, the consequences could be dire for the tiny Dutch community that ruled the Indies.[25] Another concern focused more on ideology, and the construction of community through various religious and intellectual forms. The perils of Pan-Islam were one of the earliest of these worries from Batavia's perspective. Dutch surveillance on Wahabbi influence over West Sumatra stretched back to the 1830s, if not earlier. By the second half of the nineteenth century, Batavia was also keeping a close watch on Indonesian pilgrims traveling to Mecca by sea, people who were performing one of the five pillars of Islam, the annual *Hajj* to Arabia.[26] Yet, the sea also transmitted other dangers of community. By the early twentieth century, Communism was also spreading into the Indies, and providing a notion of class-based community outside the desires of the state. After the 1911 Revolution in China, pan-Chinese feelings also became an important security concern for Batavia, as many locally born Chinese in the Indies looked north to Peking as part of an emerging Sinic nationalism.[27] All these 'dangers' – dangers to the colonial state, at least – traveled primarily by sea.

These complex, non-place-specific notions of community seem to have been part and parcel of life in Southeast Asia over the last several centuries. This paradigm holds true not only for the Insular, maritime world of the islands, however. In Northern Vietnam, Sino/Vietnamese identities were also extremely fluid, especially among piratical communities who traveled back and forth across the frontier of these two realms.[28] In the Gulf of Thailand, Sino/Siamese shippers took on broad identities that defied spatial fixity, emphasizing their Thai roots in local Southeast Asian contexts, and their Chinese origins when back in coastal Guangdong.[29] Burmese sea-peoples, such as the Moken, traveled easily across the emerging boundaries of Burma, Siam and Malaya, stressing their maritime, non-territorial connections even in the era of expanding nation states.[30] Though area regimes made it a priority to try to control movement across space in all these arenas (the Spanish in the Southern Philippines; the Dutch and British in the Malay world; the French in Northern Vietnam; and the Siamese in what was becoming Thailand), local actors often defied these attempts. The sea has always provided avenues for community-building and identity-formation, therefore, which fell outside the desired pathways of the state. This has been a contest that has continued into our own times. The open maritime cadence of the region today still provides options and opportunities that transgress programs of nationalist allegiance predicated on a discourse of place.[31]

People: movement and transnationalism in an archipelagic setting

We have concentrated until now on several 'geographies' of distance, travel and community ('*hulu/hilir*' and centrality paradigms generally; Borneo; the Southern

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[25]Watson-Andaya, 1977; Tagliacozzo, *Secret Trades, Porous Borders*.
[26]Reid, 'Nineteenth Century Pan-Islam', 270; Vredenbregt, 'The Haddj'.
[27]Tagliacozzo, 'Border-Line Legal'.
[28]Murray, *Pirates*.
[29]Cushman, *Fields from the Sea*; Viraphol, *Tribute and Profit*.
[30]Ainsworth, *A Merchant Venturer*, 15–25.
[31]I had the opportunity to interview the crews of small Burmese *thambans* (or sampans) that coasted down to Penang, Malaysia, in 1989; the crews described a rampant smuggling trade by sea of a large bandwidth of items. Fieldnotes, Penang Docks, Malaysia, November 1989.

Philippines; and the Dutch East Indies). All these spaces have been shown to be permeable to complex notions of community, as travelers from other, distant places met and intermingled in each of these arenas over the centuries. We now focus less on place, and more on the subjects of these communities themselves: the vast array of peoples who have tied and retied their identities to travel in Southeast Asia's maritime world. The idea of distance and sojourning defining communities has become a much-discussed trope of late; monographs such as Aihwa Ong's on transnationalism and John Torpey's study on the invention of the passport have found wide reading publics.[32] In Asian waters, the journeys of Chinese migrants have spawned increasingly complex studies in the last several years,[33] while scholars have examined other Southeast Asian communities in motion as well, through the vantage of cultural and religious lenses (the 'Malayo/Muslim' world of the Straits; the Minangkabau *rantau*; and Catholic pilgrimage in the Philippines are just three examples[34]). Maritime populations in Southeast Asia imagined their own sociality along a number of different lines, depending on how far they traveled, with whom they did this, and under which auspices. This middle-third of the essay analyzes some of these variants through thumbnail sketches of several communities. The Bugis, several 'Sea-Peoples', 'Foreign Asians' and even Europeans will be problematized. All had in common transvaluations of the idea of any individual notion of racialized community, partly as a result of widespread journeying in the region.

The voyages of the Bugis and Makassar peoples of South Sulawesi are among the most famous examples of seafaring tradition in Southeast Asia. The Bugis did not take to the sea in large numbers until the fifteenth century but, once they did, they became one of the most important maritime communities in the region. Bugis prahus sailed locally in Sulawesi's waters, setting up satellite communities in many places, including the famed boat-building villages of Bulukumba and Bira, where all-wood ships are still made.[35] Yet, they also traveled far afield in the Indonesian archipelago, especially to Riau and Johor (where they helped erect several local dynasties), to Kalimantan (where they had trading communities far up East coast rivers), and to Maluku as well.[36] Bugis ships even sailed to the northern coast of Australia, where cave paintings, Aboriginal loan-words and archaeological detritus attest to their presence today.[37] The vast conglomeration of seafaring knowledge accumulated in these voyages was passed down among the Bugis over centuries, usually aboard ship.[38] While Bugis communities throughout the far-flung archipelago were often

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[32]Ong, *Flexible Citizenship*; Torpey, *The Invention of the Passport*.
[33]The most recent summary/critique of the literature can be found in McKeown, 'Conceptualizing Chinese Diasporas', but see also Pan, *Sons of the Yellow Emperor*.
[34]Roff, 'The Malayo-Muslim World; Kato, *Matriliny and Migration*; Reed, *Patterns of Migration*.
[35]In 1990, I spent several weeks in these villages, watching shipwrights constructing all-wooden craft entirely from memory. I never saw any written plans used during the entire process of construction; the ships took shape in discussions between a master-builder and his team. No metal was used in the ships either; wooden sealing pegs littered the beach, to be hammered into the raised hulls. These wooden pegs swell after the craft is introduced to seawater, holding the boat together without the threat of rust. Fieldnotes, Bulukumba and Bira villages, South Sulawesi (Sulawesi Selatan), April/May 1990.
[36]Andaya, *To Live as Brothers*; Andaya, 'From Rum to Tokyo'; Lindblad, *Between Dayak and Dutch*; Ellen, 'Environmental Perturbation'.
[37]Macknight, *The Voyage to Marege*.
[38]Ammarell, *Bugis Navigation*, 1999; Pelras, *The Bugis*.

competitive with one another, they also knew how to ally themselves along ethnic lines against common foes, whether these were Southeast Asian or from further afield.[39] Most important, however, was a palpable sense among Bugis of their shared heritage, a sentiment that was preserved in texts such as the famous *I Galigo*.[40] This ritual history of the Bugis is held in esteem by nearly all contemporary Bugis, regardless of where the travels of their ancestors have seeded them within Indonesia's waters.

Aside from the Bugis, the various sea-peoples of Maritime Southeast Asia also constructed notions of racialized community along highly variegated lines. Sopher[41] and Sather[42] have shown the incredible diversity of these communities; they span the Orang Suku Laut to the Orang Seletar, the Orang Kuala to the Sekah, the Urak to the Moken. While the former author delineated these populations primarily through ecology, production and geography, the latter has given us a regional taxonomy that takes broad account of history. The imposition of hierarchy has been one of the main themes in the history of these various peoples; among the Bajau, especially, notions of community often revolved around the coercion of Bajau into other peoples' projects.[43] This has been richly studied in Sulu, where scholars such as Majul, Stone, Gowing, Kiefer, Warren and Tagliacozzo[44] have shown how the Bajau were incorporated into the collection/production regimes of stronger area peoples, such as the Taosug. Yet, the lines of these inequalities, and the senses of community built around these coercive relationships by client populations such as the Bajau, has even been shown to have existed as far from Sulu as Eastern Indonesia. There, the dominating organizational practices of the Taosug in the Southern GM ships undertook various maritime duties in the Indies, including hydrography and policing. Many GM ships also contributed to the nascent ethnography of the colony by identifying and tabulating seafaring peoples of the region.

Philippines were assumed by satellite Bugis and Makassarese communities, who demanded analogous labor and collecting duties from the Bajau, as well as seasonal levies of manpower for other purposes.[45] In this sense, Bajau notions of self and other were often patterned on the historical trajectories of imperial control. This was not the imperial reach of the West, however; rather, the groping tentacles here were those of other, more aggressive sea-peoples.

We should not imagine that the Bajau, and other nomadic and semi-nomadic sea-peoples akin to them, were utterly without agency in these processes, however. Harrisson tells us that the Bajau were frequent long-distance travelers in Borneo's waters up until the early-nineteenth century, trading far upriver to places where Malay and Chinese merchants still feared to tread.[46] Other Bajau dealt with the expansion of Iranun and Balangingi-Samal raiding in less grand terms, opting to

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[39]Sutherland, 'Ethnicity, Wealth, and Power'.
[40]Enre, 1999.
[41]Sopher, *The Sea Nomads*.
[42]Sather, *The Bajau Laut*.
[43]I include here modern state-making projects by post-colonial Southeast Asian societies. In 2004, I spent time with Bajau communities living in poverty outside of Zamboanga, Southwestern Mindanao, Southern Philippines; the post-colonial state in this instance had failed the Bajau in almost every conceivable way.
[44]Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, Stone, 'Intergroup Relations', Gowing, *Muslim Filipinos*, Kiefer, *The Taosug: Violence*, Warren, *The Sulu Zone*, and Tagliacozzo, 'A Necklace of Fins'.
[45]Sather, 'Seven Fathoms', 30.
[46]Harrisson, 'The Bajaus', 38.

Figure 2.　Dutch Indies ships of the Gouvernements Marine, 1900. GM ships undertook various maritime duties in the Indies, including hydrography and policing. Many GM ships also contributed to the nascent ethnography of the colony by identifying and tabulating seafaring peoples of the region. [Regerings Almanak van Nederlandsch-Indie, 1900, p. 450].

relocate their settlements several miles away from the coasts (usually up smaller, less navigable river systems) so that large slaving expeditions would have a harder time seeking them out.[47] Yet, especially in terms of the maintenance of ethnic community, travel in the psychic realm was also an attractive option for seagoing peoples now facing large-scale structural changes in Southeast Asia's political economy. Sandin relates the 'Sea Dayak' tale of Chulo, an Iban who resisted predation on his

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[47]Wright, 'The Lanun Pirate States', 216.

community via coastal, downstream peoples by organizing feared 'piratical'/ headhunting raids himself. 'I am Chulo', he yells out in the Iban narration, 'my name now is light flashing over Banting, light flashing over Lingga, light shining in the heavens.'[48] The story of Chulo became an important saga among certain Sarawak Iban as their territory and independence was encroached upon in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. 'Community' could also be culturally fashioned along the lines of a mythic resistance to changing times, therefore, as Ken George and others have shown for other places in the maritime world.[49]

A last approach to changing conceptions of community among sea peoples also has to do with travel; travel not of people, but rather of objects. The myriad trade commodities that found their way down to Southeast Asia in the centuries of trans-oceanic commerce with China, India and the West also shifted notions of community. These items were traditional and 'modern', hand-crafted and manufactured – goods such as textiles, gongs, high-fire ceramics and firearms. As all these objects entered into maritime societies, they were incorporated into local practice and helped solidify community through the binds of ritual.[50] Ivor Evans[51] commented upon this process among the North Borneo Bajau in 1952, where he saw a cannon and two small gongs named (the former, '*Bujang Paling*', the latter two '*Tampurong*' and '*Si Giong*', repsectively) by local peoples as they were brought into community use. Sandin catalogued the entrance of a large range of commodities into local Iban societies, items which were then used ritualistically in various local functions. These included cooking pots (*periok temaga*), pans (*kali*), shell amulets (*rangki*), beads (*pelaga*) and cowrie shells (*buri*), to name just a few.[52] The important thing was that these objects had traveled far to get to their 'host' Borneo societies; once there, they were used to help weave bonds of community through shared practice. The further these items had traveled, often, the more power they had in bringing people together. Southeast Asians would often travel great distances in search of famous ceramic jars, for example, as the cultural efficacy of the pieces (once brought to the new owner's village) ensured status and prestige.[53] The arrival of the jar also ensured communal status, however, as the fame of rare pieces spread far and wide throughout the maritime world.

'Foreign Asian' populations (or the peoples whom the Dutch called '*Vreemde Oosterlingen*' – Chinese, Japanese and Arabs resident to the archipelago), also built varying senses of community based on their travels in the region. Though these peoples were not indigenous to the Indies, many had been traveling these waters for some time, and had put down significant roots. We know that Chinese traders, for example, penetrated the watershed of the Sepik in what is today Papua New Guinea, inter-marrying with local women as they hunted for the famed Bird of

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[48]Sandin, *The Sea Dayaks*, 69.
[49]George, 'Headhunting'.
[50]For an approach to using these kinds of objects in the writing of local and trans-regional histories, see Tagliacozzo, 'Smuggling in Southeast Asia'. I have done fieldwork in the kiln areas of northern Thailand (Sukothai, Sawankhalok and Si Satchanalai) and seen fragments of 500-year-old fish-patterned shards sticking up out of the earth. It is uncanny to walk into a longhouse in Borneo and see some of these same pieces, realizing the incredible journeys they have made geographically, temporally, and also culturally.
[51]Evans, 'Notes on the Bajaus', 50–1.
[52]Sandin, *The Sea Dayaks*, 64.
[53]For an important description of these kinds of practices, see J.M. Mallinckrodt, 'Ethnografische Mededeelingen', 562.

Paradise.[54] Their voyages had taken them far outside the geographical and cultural universes of Straits Chinese (Baba/Peranakan), for example, with whom they no doubt would have felt little ethnic kinship. Arab traders and religious leaders journeying through the Indies seem to have felt more of a connection to their fellow voyagers, probably based on the religious connection of Islam. Eighteenth-century Hadrami adventurers from Yemen would have had little in common with Turkish travelers to seventeenth-century Aceh, yet when the call of pan-Islam went up over the islands in the late-nineteenth century, the descendents of both of these initial sojourning communities rallied to the idea of a common mission.[55] Finally, the last '*Vreemde Oosterlingen*' group to arrive, Japanese resident to the Indies, also came in several broad waves of maritime contact. Japanese prostitutes in Sumatra, Japanese pearl divers in Aru, and Japanese tramp steamer captains off Borneo quite probably had little in common in their adopted homes. Yet, when Japan called for their monetary savings in a program of nation-building in the 1920s, all these groups sent remittance monies back home to Northeast Asia.[56] The Japanese ships that took these savings back to Nagasaki and Kobe can almost serve as symbolic vessels of the value of community-building abroad, even when members of these isolated groups never met each other in the *Nanyo* ('South Seas').[57]

This leaves us with a last population of significant size in the Dutch Indies. We may ask how patterns of distance, travel and community also intertwined here among the European 'overlords' of the region themselves. We might imagine that the Dutch were fairly homogeneous in their sentiments of communal identity in Indonesia, a notion borne from the superiority of conquest and the anxiety of a huge indigenous population ruled by very few men.[58] Yet, nothing seems to have been further from the truth. As Dutchmen traveled in 'their' archipelago by sea, tacking back and forth between Indonesia's 13,000 islands, voices consistently spoke out of a fractured community, one often very insecure about its own dimensions.[59] First, 'the Dutch' were actually a medley of various European 'races' thrown together, roped under the rubric of 'Dutch': German traders, Swedish sailors, Italian and Norwegian naturalists, and American adventurers were all essentialized as equals, for all intents and purposes.[60] This was acceptable to Dutch policy planners, but often these

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[54]Wu, *The Chinese in Papua*, 22.

[55]Mobini-Keseh, *The Hadrami Awakening*; Reid, *Southeast Asia*, 146–9.

[56]Shimizu, 'The Rise and Fall'; Sone, 'The Karayuki-san of Asia'; Post, 'Japan and the Integration'.

[57]On Japanese finances in the Dutch Indies, see ARA, Dutch Consul, Tokyo to Minister for Foreign Affairs (19 June 1918, #1012/89); ARA, Dutch Consul, Tokyo to Gov. Gen NEI (10 June 1918, #956/72) and Dutch Consul, Tokyo to Gov. Gen. NEI (25 May 1918, #876/68), all in (MvBZ/A/43/A.29bis OK).

[58]For a discussion of the numbers (and anxieties) involved, see H.W. van den Doel, 'Military Rule', 60–7.

[59]Gouda, *Dutch Culture Overseas*.

[60]Many Westerners came to the Indies to pursue their careers and fortunes. Warren has discussed the careers of several German traders in Sulu (Warren, *The Sulu Zone*), while travel narratives exist from naturalists such as the Norwegian Carl Bock (*The Headhunters of Borneo*) 1985 reprint) and the Italian Odoardo Beccari (Beccari, *Wandering in the Great Forests*). Even Americans tried their hands at solo empire-building in the Indonesian archipelago; Thomas Gibson almost carved a kingdom for himself in Sumatra in the 1850s. Though there were differences in the rights and privileges enjoyed by these populations under Dutch Indies laws, Westerners (as a whole) were in a completely different legal stratum from 'Foreign Asians' or the indigenous peoples of the archipelago.

communities within a community were actually at cross-purposes (over free trade, Christian sectarianism, boundary agreements and even taxes.) The British, although heavily relied upon for shipping and defense along the Indies' and Malaya's shared 3000 km frontier, were also despised as bullies, sometimes very openly in the Dutch press. In 1899, the Japanese in the Indies, fresh from their nation's victory in the Sino-Japanese War, also became ethnically 'white' under Indies laws, and were accorded the privileges of all the other industrializing nations of Europe and North America.[61] Finally, Dutch women figured differently under notions of distance (from the metropole) and travel (within the archipelago), their movements usually more circumscribed in the Indies than the fields of action enjoyed by Dutch men.[62] This had everything to do with European fears of cross-race sexual unions, and the envisaged 'loss in prestige' if Dutch women ended up in liaisons with indigenous men.[63] Traveling in Southeast Asia's seas meant different things for different people, therefore, and these valuations and conceptions of racialized community changed over time. It is to those shifting conceptions in the temporal sphere that we now turn.

Period: vision and vantage in the history of Southeast Asia's seas

In a short but penetrating book, Richard O'Connor has discussed the transition of Southeast Asian urban culture from *gemeinschaft* to *gesellschaft*, from community to market.[64] O'Connor has taken umbrage with the attempts by many sociologists (particularly those associated with Tonnies and the Frankfurt School) to reduce urbanism to a calculus of economic decisions, whereby a migrant decides that urbanity and urban community make sense for purely cost/benefit reasons. Instead, O'Connor postulates that the decision to become part of city collective (at least in Southeast Asia) was always more complex. We might extend this cautionary discourse to notions of community in the maritime world; 'becoming' sedentary (as opposed to remaining nomadic or semi-nomadic), 'becoming' Taosug (as opposed to remaining Bajau) were always decisions fraught with serious weight. People entered and exited communities carefully; often they manipulated identities to remain in several camps, in an attempt to hedge their bets[65] (sometimes they were given little choice, however, and were told where their future identities lay). The vast shift in political and economic bases of society in Southeast Asia between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries, however, led to certain changes in how community was expressed. This often had everything to do with concepts of distance and travel, especially as European coercion grew in these waters in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Notions of community in much of pre-colonial Southeast Asia were strong, but they were never completely invulnerable to creative malleability, especially in the region's ports. Descriptions of Malacca at its height in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries emphasized the overtly cosmopolitan nature of the city, replete with visitors from Gujurat, the Philippines, Maluku and even China. Yet, these accounts also imparted a sense that ethnic quarters were not strict 'enclaves', whose lines

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[61]Fasseur, 'Cornerstone and Stumbling Block'.
[62]Gullick, *Adventurous Women*; Morgan, *Place Matters*.
[63]Stoler, 'Making Empire Respectable'.
[64]O'Connor, *A Theory of Indigenous Southeast Asian Urbanism*.
[65]Leach, *Political Systems of Highland Burma*; Warren, *The Sulu Zone*.

Figure 3.   Indonesian sailors, Sunda Kelapa Docks, Jakarta. Javanese, Madurese, Bugis and Sundanese sailors in front of their Bugis ship, 1997. [Author's photo].

could never be crossed.[66] This held true for classical Ayutthaya as well, which also boasted very mixed communities that had come to Siam by sea, including Japanese, Dutchmen and a sizeable entourage from France.[67] In Batavia, all the evidence points to a remarkably *mestizo* society (made up of Indians, Chinese, Dutchmen and various 'Indonesian' peoples), at least until the nineteenth century, when racial separation became more of a concern for Europeans.[68] This did not mean that many groups in maritime Southeast Asia did not see themselves as distinct in one sense or another, marked off by language, custom or the undertaking of various rituals. The Iban held elaborate and precisely coded feasts; Bajau had their own ballads and tales, which celebrated their own cultural concerns.[69] Yet, the boundaries between different communities were often more permeable than they would be later in Southeast Asian history, when Europeans took an active interest in telling (and keeping) certain peoples apart.

Western observers of Southeast Asia's maritime peoples were keen on cataloguing the different populations they met, sometimes on the high seas, though more often in the region's ports.[70] This early anthropological urge for taxonomy has been described in a general civilizational context by Hodgen, but in Southeast Asia we need only go back to some of the earliest European travelers such as Pigafetta to

[66]Hashim, *Kesultanan Melayu Melaka*.
[67]Breazeale, *From Japan to Arabia*.
[68]Blusse, *Strange Company*; Taylor, *The Social World*.
[69]Sandin, 1967; Sather, 'Seven Fathoms', 30.
[70]This was part of the larger colonial scientific endeavor in this region, which also included burgeoning 'sciences' of other sorts. See Pyenson, *Empire of Reason*, and Tagliacozzo, 'Hydrography, Technology, Coercion'.

see it at work.[71] Anthony Reid has shown some of the diversity of these observations for the Early Modern period, and by the nineteenth century, Westerners in Southeast Asia had detailed lists of which boats (they assumed) signified specific area peoples.[72] Meanwhile, the ranges of different seafaring communities were tabulated into grids, both by scientific expeditions and by interested observers, who tallied their findings in geographic journals and shiplogs.[73] These catalogues 'set' communities into fixed boundaries of designation, even when such communities were far more fluid than these lists allowed. The onslaught of censuses in Southeast Asia solidified these categories over time, though these processes evolved and underwent significant changes during the centuries in question. Yet, by the turn of the twentieth century, it can be said that certain maritime communities literally had been brought into existence by Europeans: not in an ontological sense, but in terms of their locus and composition, as seen through the vision of the state.[74]

After 1900, notions of community in Maritime Southeast Asia can be viewed through the lens of cultural sensibilities (anthropological and otherwise) encompassing some of our own notions of a tenuous 'modernity'. Though there have been penetrating studies of contemporary marine populations in Southeast Asia, particularly in the archipelagic world, it is noteworthy that many of these communities remain remarkably *under*-studied. Foremost among these populations are the groups of sea-peoples who live on the edges of port-complexes and harbors, communities who phase in and out of 'modernity' in Southeast Asia with every new infrastructural project designed by area states. Only recently have these populations started to get more attention, specifically as to how they fit (or do not fit) into maritime development schemes as defined by regional capitals.[75] Another lacuna

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[71]Hodgen, *Early Anthropology*; Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*.

[72]Reid, *Southeast Asia*, 36–43; Gibson-Hill, 'Indonesian Trading Boats'; Manguin, 'The Southeast Asian Ship'.

[73]See, for example, Lange, *Het Eiland Banka*; Kroesen, 'Aantekenningen over'; Hasselt, 'De Poelau Toedjoeh'; Anonymous, 'Chineesche Zee'; Zondervan, 'Bijdrage tot de Kennis'; Skeat, 'The Orang Laut'; Anonymous, *Balakang Padang*; and Niermeyer, 'Barriere Riffen en Atollen'. For modern historiographical analyses, see a Campo, 'Perahu Shipping in Indonesia', and Dick, 'Prahu Shipping in Eastern Indonesia'. Dutch period journals such as the *Tijdschrift voor het Zeewezen*, and Dutch Indies shiplogs (such as those of the Bommelerwaard (Logbook #585), Metalen Kruis (Logbooks #3108–9), and Timor (Logbook #4413), all Indies ships of the line), are treasure troves of information about area sea-peoples. The latter may be found in the Algemeen Rijksarchief, den Haag; Ministerie van Marine, 2.12.03 Scheepsjournalen [1813–1968].

[74]A very good source for seeing these modalities writ large over the entire expanse of the Dutch global imperium is Blink (*Nederlandsch Oost- en West-Indie*). See also ARA, 1902, MR #501, 674.

[75]See Susilowati (on Banjarmasin), Sutejo (on Pekalongan), and Stenross (on Madura), for the situation in and around port complexes (all forthcoming in Knaap, *Ports, Ships, and Resources*); see also Nurcahyani, *Kota Pontianak Sebagai Bandar*, Rahardjo, *Sunda Kelapa Sebagai Bandar*, and Zuhdi, *Cirebon Sebagai Bandar*. For some of the best work generally on sea peoples today, in a variety of contexts and across the breadth of the Malay World, see Chou, 'Contesting the Tenure of Territoriality'; Sather, *The Bajau Laut*; Derks, 'Malay Identity Work'; Zainal, 'Gerak Kehidupan'; Sjahbandi, *Adaptasi Sosial Ekonomi*; Frake, 'Cultural Constructions'; Anonymous, *Pola Pemukiman*; Sather, 'Sea Nomads'; and Wee, 'Material Dependence'. Orang Laut whom I spoke with in South Sulawesi in 1990 told me that the Indonesian government had absolutely no interest in ameliorating their poverty. These people lived in stilt houses outside Watampone, a few feet above a maze of mud flats; as was the case elsewhere in Southwest Sulawesi, they were gradually being drawn closer to urban communities in order to find wage-work. Fieldnotes, Watampone, South Sulawesi, May 1990.

exists in the conceptions of community that exist among Southeast Asian seamen currently serving in the fleets of ASEAN (and other) nations, both on the high seas and in shallower, regional waters. These are not the traditional sea-peoples of ethnographic literature, but they are nonetheless among the larger populations of maritime peoples now living and working in Southeast Asia.[76] Do Bataks, Bugis, Minangkabau and Javanese share a conception of solidarity while serving on Indonesian passenger and cargo ships? If so, on what is this solidarity based? Do these populations emphasize connection at the expense of their own 'sub-ethnicity', and if so, in which contexts? In which milieu is an Indonesian sailor 'Batak', and in which milieu is he (for example) Christian, unionized or communist? These notions of maritime community have been almost completely unmapped in the modern period, though there are indeed studies on a variety of other issues (technological, economic and spatial) having to do with Southeast Asian shipping in our own time.[77]

These are the connections we see. There is also, however, a broad, swirling world of maritime movement and identity which travels outside the vision of port authorities and sociologists, ethnographers and states, and which is no less important. This is the world of smuggling and 'unrecorded trade', which takes place on a huge, systemic basis throughout the countries of the region. Though Bugis ships, for example, based in Ujung Pandang, Surabaya or even Sunda Kelapa (Jakarta) are culture-bound to the Indonesian archipelago, they regularly ignore government dictates and sail to Malaysia, the Philippines and quite possibly further to take on goods. These transactions are accomplished through networks of affiliation which transcend Bugis ethnicity, but which continue historical patterns of Bugis alliance, travel and contact from an earlier, less bounded period in the archipelago.[78] It is not only the Bugis diaspora that has undertaken these voyages, however. Scholars have begun analyzing other traditional shipping patterns that also channel trade away from the eyes of the Southeast Asian state. This has been true in Burma, Thailand and the countries of the mainland, but it has been a particularly fruitful avenue of research in the Philippines and Indonesia, where vast maritime spaces, permeable borders, and widespread corruption make these journeys common.[79] In Indonesia, especially, the continuation of traditional connections of sea-peoples with the outside world means that these 'transgressions' take place on an everyday basis. In 1996, Jakarta placed the number of illegally docked foreign ships in Indonesian waters at over ten thousand for the year; this number is probably only a pale shade of the real figures, however.[80]

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[76]Filipinos, in fact, are one of the single largest ethnicities staffing global shipping generally; these men travel all over the world on a daily basis. To my knowledge, very little has been written about the cultural complexes surrounding these journeys, or whether Filipino seamen see themselves as part of a larger community based on these journeys.

[77]Brooks, *Seafarers in the ASEAN Region*, 1989; Dick, 'Prahu Shipping in Eastern Indonesia'.

[78]I asked these questions to Bugis sailors in a series of interviews undertaken in Sunda Kelapa, Jakarta; in Surabaya harbor; in Ujung Pandang; and on board ship while crossing the Java Sea. These interviews took place in 1990, and were followed by a subsequent round of questioning again in 1997. For obvious reasons, I cannot give the names of the ships or sailors involved.

[79]Hughes, 'The Prahu'; Tagliacozzo, 'Smuggling in Southeast Asia'; Sidel, *Capital, Coercion, and Crime*.

[80]See 'TNI AL Usir 10,096 Kapal', *Kompas*, 5 December 1997, 8.

What these trends tell us is that notions of community, distance and travel in Southeast Asia have undergone important formal changes, but that many of the deeper structures underlying them often remain remarkably constant. Although the contemporary period of bounded nation states and coercive spatial monitoring has produced units such as 'Indonesia', 'Malaysia' and 'the Philippines', these rather arbitrary designations have not always undermined the logic of much older associations in the region. Rather, in some senses, they have only acted to enforce their utility, as now travel, alliance and long-distance trade reap even larger profits than they did previously. The Minangkabau *rantau*, for example, which acted historically (in part) to prove a young Sumatran's self-worth before his re-integration into the community, has phased into similar, analogous forms in our own time. Today, Indonesians make similar journeys to Malaysia in search of work, fame and fortune, often aboard quiet ships across the heavily policed Straits of Melaka. There, they can interact with Malaysians whose forefathers also made these trips (especially in Selangor and Negeri Sembilan), while all can communicate with a mutually intelligible language, and via a shared bond in the rituals of Islam.[81] These maritime journeys, predicated in part on the advantages and histories of community in motion, still take place on a wide scale. They show us the resilience and adaptability of these concepts for the peoples of the maritime world, who have always been flexible in applying such notions for reasons of profit, identity or common religious spirit.

Conclusions

John Smail understood that *longue durée* patterns of geography, identity and belonging in Southeast Asia were just that – long-term conceptual constructs, which were susceptible (even demanding of) to constant re-evaluation. It was in this spirit that he critiqued historiographies of the region which were overly dependent, in his eyes, on colonial-inscribed political categories:

> Just as we can see a general history of the West in which the Southeast Asian colonies play an important part, but only a part, so too should, I believe, we be able to see a general history of Southeast Asia – its autonomous history, its history as itself – in which colonial rule also plays an important part, but only a part.[82]

Rather than seeing the history of the region as being one delineated and defined by imperial categories and its vestiges, he saw the flow of the past in this arena in more fluid, inclusive terms. We can learn a lot from this approach, even if the ideas that heralded this view were first promulgated and disseminated almost half a century ago.

Navigating community in Maritime Southeast Asia has usually been a matter of choice for the historical peoples of the region. Travel across the shallow seas of area archipelagos was relatively easy and straightforward, and knowledge of local marine conditions was passed down from generation to generation, making interaction common. At the same time, communities claiming long-term relationships and affiliations could be found in many places, so that travel was often less a matter of

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[81]'Belum Lelaki Kalua Belum ke Malaysia', *Jawa Pos*, January 1992; see also Adi, *Beberapa Aspek Tenaga.*
[82]Smail, 'On the Possibility', 101.

contacting new peoples, and more a notion of renewing old ties. Sojourners did not always take spouses, or leave children, in the ports of their destinations, but communities of language, religion and custom were often very fluid and stretched across broad distances. This was certainly so in the region's Early Modern 'Age of Commerce'.[83] Despite the slow intrusion of European statecraft, this state of affairs remained largely unchanged until the mid-nineteenth century. It was only then that Western colonial states had the power to sever these notions of community on a large scale, usually by legislating 'acceptable' radials of travel at the point of a gun. Even then, however, area peoples continued to cross wide geographic spaces in the interests of community, though now these voyages were undertaken predominantly at night.

Part of the colonial state-making project in Southeast Asia was the conceptual division of space, and the assigning of certain arenas to peoples who were deemed to be 'of' that domain, racially or otherwise. This process was designated in imperial capitals such as Batavia, Singapore and Manila, and was usually accomplished through the census and local cadastral surveys, through maps and taxation. Though much of this process was attempted on land, Europeans knew that, to be truly effective in ruling this region, they would also have to succeed in these aims by sea. Blocks such as 'Sulawesi', 'Sulu' and 'Sumatra' were entered into official ledgers in this way, and each of these loci were given governors and budgets, as well as ethnic 'peoples' and characteristics, to solidify them in the eyes of the state. This has also been a common project of the post-colonial state as well, which has struggled to continue many of the designs that Westerners left unfinished at mid-century.[84] Yet, the maritime peoples of 'Sulawesi', 'Sulu' and 'Sumatra' continue to at least partially thwart these attempts at taxonomy through movement and association, as well as through contact and custom. The historical sinews of flexible community have been too strong to overcome completely in this respect; the ties that bind still exist. Indonesian Bugis still cross the Straits by boat on their way to the Malay peninsula, to visit long-departed cousins in Malaysian Selangor. Bajau still transit between Sabah and the Southern Philippines, and speak the local dialects of the Sulu Sea upon encountering their relatives. Internally within each of these area states, there has also been strong resistance to adopting centrally imposed monikers, whether this has been among the Moken in Burma, or among many of the other scattered sea-peoples of maritime Southeast Asia.

It is the contention of this paper that these processes and dynamics can be patterned in historically meaningful ways. While children in Northwestern Borneo, the Southern Philippines and Sumatra may now pledge allegiance to different flags, the realities of contact and affiliation among these far-flung communities will not disappear. Indeed, quite the opposite scenario may eventually come true, despite many decades of post-independence nationalism being exercised in the region. As the regional integration policies of ASEAN proceed apace in much of this watery domain, area peoples are being allowed greater access to each other than they have enjoyed for some time.[85] The economic linkages envisioned by area statesmen will quite probably re-energize notions of extended community that have always

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[83]Reid, *Southeast Asia*.
[84]Scott, *Seeing Like a State*. One only has to look at the 'Taman Mini' complex outside central Jakarta to see a contemporary analogue of this process.
[85]Tagliacozzo, 'Border Permeability'.

functioned through long-distance travel. This unintended consequence of integration, which policy planners understand but are largely powerless to prevent (if they wish the spoils of cross-border trade to continue enriching state coffers), will be a cultural legacy of these processes on a huge scale. Communities that have been weakened but not broken by colonialism, war and the forging of nation-states at mid-century will reassert themselves in new guises. This will only be in keeping with the historical patterns of this vast arena, however. Though few global culture areas have been able to match Southeast Asia's ethnic diversity, even fewer have been able to match its histories of movement, adaptation and long-term accommodation.

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