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RESEARCH ARTICLE

COLONIAL MARINE RESOURCE POLICY AND JAPANESE PEARLING ACTIVITIES IN ARU ISLANDS 1933-1942

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Abstract
The Aru Islands have long been a center for The Netherlands Indies pearling industry. Its unique natural resources had positioned the island as a thriving pearl-shelling production zone. Australian-based "Celebes Trading Company" (CTC) developed the island in the image of Thursday Island pearling industry for much of the early 20th century. However as the First World War came to an end, Japanese pearling boats began to frequented the Aru waters. Even though Japanese population had been introduced as pearl labors in Aru during CTC concession, the active presence of foreign fishing vessels concerned the Dutch colonial government in the region. The islands unique natural resources has invited "unchecked movement" in the eyes of the ever-fearing Netherlands East Indies. Pursuing a more strict control over Aru Islands pearling grounds, the colonial government had to faced an increasingly challenging Japanese activities; dangerously testing the limits of colonial pearling management policy. With the time period situated nearing the end of Dutch colonial rule in modern Indonesia, the role of state in dealing with such foreign threats became ambivalent as Japanese activities were seen as part of market rivalry. But as the 1930s came to an end, military and security policy became the dominant factor in establishing colonial power in the area. By using Dutch colonial archives, this article aims to map the Netherlands East Indies responses for the rapid Japanese pearling expansion. Moreover, these responses will explore the fluid maritime frontier of Aru Islands and how it challenged the colonial constructed boundaries.

Keywords: Aru Islands; japanese; maritime border; netherlands east indies; pearls;

Abstrak
Kepulauan Aru adalah lokasi penting dalam sejarah industri mutiara di Hindia Belanda. Perusahaan yang teregistrasi di Hindia Belanda dengan nama "Celebes Trading Company" (CTC), memiliki dampak yang besar dalam sejarah Kepulauan Aru. Populasi Jepang yang pada awalnya didatangkan sebagai buruh di atas kapal mutiara pada awal masa CTC, telah berubah menjadi kekuatan tersendiri pasca Perang Dunia Pertama. Kapal-kapal mutiaranya mulai semakin sering berkunjung dan mengambil mutiara di luar batas wilayah kolonial Kepulauan Aru memasuki dekade 1930-an. Pemerintah kolonial berusaha bertindak atas kemunculan kapal-kapal mutiara Jepang. Meski demikian, usaha pemerintah kolonial mendapat beberapa tantangan tersendiri dalam eksperimen mereka untuk mengawasi mutiara Aru. Tantangan-tantangan tersebut seringkali menyentuh akar dari hukum kolonial yang berlaku saat itu. Latar politik dunia di periode menuju Perang Dunia Kedua juga berdampak dalam langkah yang diambil oleh pemerintah kolonial. Terlebih ketika dunia menuju akhir dekade 1930-an dan perhatian terhadap keamanan negara kolonial menjadi prioritas utama. Dengan menggunakan arsip-arsip kolonial, melihat langkah yang diambil dalam merespon kapal-kapal Jepang dapat terlihat dengan lebih jelas. Melalui respon tersebut, posisi pemerintah dalam dunia maritim Kepulauan Aru yang sangat longgar dapat lebih terpetakan Terutama mengenai ide batasan wilayah ala Barat dan jaringan pra-kolonial.

Kata Kunci: Batas maritim: Hindia Belanda; Jepang; Kepulauan Aru; Mutiara.

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the history of colonial encounters in Indonesia's maritime frontiers has been a subject of study since the 1980s, following the publication of James Warren's famous work, "Sulu Zone." In exploring such "border zones", researchers in Southeast Asian history began identifying "gray geographical regions" in many Mainland or Maritime regions. Particularly in regards to their complex interactions with other local polities or any of the western powers. In the case of Indonesia's vast maritime world, one regions that has seen an interest in since the late 1980s until 2020s is the region known as the Southeastern Moluccas. Situated just southeast of the main city of Ambon in Ceram Island, the many scattered small islands hold no particular interest in the eyes of the Indonesian national historiography, apart from the tiny island of Banda in the northern section of this region. While Banda's trajectory have always been associated with the classic spice of nutmeg, the same cannot be said for the other islands that scattered throughout the archipelago.

The Aru Islands was one that has a central role in defining the history of its region. What stands out and becomes a unique element in the history of the Aru Islands or the region in general, is its reliance on marine-based resources; particularly teripang and pearl-shells (Hägerdal, 2019). Access and the harvest of these resources have always been an integral part in the making of Aru Islands' history, as they attracted large numbers of traders and movement across the sea. Most of such movements were concentrated in the Achterwal (Rear Wall) or the eastern part of Aru where most of the islands' natural resources lay. Meanwhile, the Voorwal (Front Wall) or the western part, was home to trading post and had more close interactions with non-Aruese visitors than their eastern brethern (Patricia Spyer, 2000). This spacial-based interaction fueled the desire for this article to mapped how various powers projected their influence on the island.

Near to the island of Papua in the north and the to the Australian continent in the south, the Aru Islands have always been an interesting zone of interaction between various regions. Merchants coming from Moluccas and Celebes have dominated the trade in 18th – 19th Century Aru, especially for its luxurious product. R.F. Ellen desribed the role of these traders in establishing Aru in the larger Moluccas commerce. While at first trade were centralized in Banda, in the form of slaves, sago, and timber to support the island nutmeg production (Ellen, 2003), eventually in the early 19th century, South Celebes and Chinese merchant came to dominate Aru's trade. This expansion was driven mainly by the growth of teripang trade in China (Manex and Ferse, 2010). Makassar-Buginese trade network also introduced industrial goods from Singapore, such as various china, glass, trinkets, even European sugar, and textiles in exchange for a direct access to their marine resources (Wallace, 1862).

Such trade attracted not only local traders, but also opened the Aru Islands to western capitalist expansion. This expansion was pioneerd by the Australians throughout 1880s and 1890s. But what cemented their influence over Aru Islands came in the early 20th century. As Australians opened Aru's pearl beds to the industrial world, migrations of pearl laborers subsequently followed. The Japanese was introduced to the Aru islands as pearl laborers employed by Australian companies. This was due to Australian history that had recruited many Japanese men from a coastal perfecture of Wakayama, south of Tokyo since 1883 (D.C.S. Sissions: 2016). Due to the Australian commonwealth prohibition in using Aboriginies men and women as pearl laborers, a surge of migrations took place between various Asian port cities and Northern Australia (Moore, 1994). Alongside Manilamen (Filipino sailors) from Hong Kong or Singapore (Aguilar, 2012), and Timorese from Kupang (Martinez, 2012), the pearling operation was dominated by coloured workers. Despite their introduction as mere labors, the situation attached to thair homeland of Japan brought an ever-worrying presence in the unmonitored parts of Achterwal.

Starting in 1930s, Japanese presence within and around Aru begun to challenge Dutch colonial authority. While at first, the presence of Japanese pearl-fishing boats were regarded as a consequence of pearl market competitions, some Japanese populace began to challenged colonial laws regarding access to marine resources. Eventually, colonial officers reports showed an unpromising situation over in the Achterwal and the colonial government finally decided to put pressure upon Japanese pearl-fishing activities by military means. Parallel to events happening in world stage, the presence of Japanese vessels seems to coincided with Japan Empire's aggressive nature in the prelude chapters of the Second World War. Thus, while Aru's pearls were defended during early Australian expansion, the new encounter with Japanese brought more complex colonial state's military and security policies.

Such lucrative products have brought trade connection to the Aru Islands that does not aligned with colonial interest in preserving state border. Thus, such themes will be important to study pearling industry in

the Netherlands Indies from a transnational manner. While such studies mainly cover the influence of British-Australian pearling, the impact of migrations and movements in the islands have been rarely associated with Japanese population. The history of Japanese presence in the Aru Islands have been minimal to say the least. From their introduction as pearl laborers to eventually being a capitalist force in pearling operations, they were a part of the Australian legacy in the region. Tied so much to the management and the Australian pearling world, the Japanese populace and its trade network offers a new window in seeing how the Aru's pearling grounds breeds more than just economic issues, but also political ones.

In order to bring transnational elements in the colonial natural resource management in the Aru Islands, this article will be mostly be comprised of archival data collected mainly in the form of government's report and letters between Dobo, Ambon, and Batavia. Many of these archives will show how the colonial government respond any possible threats coming from Japanese movements in the islands.

METHODS

In writing this article, the author is interested in viewing the Aru Islands region by means of economic and security state-level policy. While the discussions of socio-economic policies have been discussed in terms of Australian direct influence during the early 20th century, Dutch colonial perspective rarely enters such narratives. By using sources from colonial archives, this article will be able to show and describe how the respond and initiatives inside the colonial bureaucratic connections. With regions as far away as Aru will be able to shape and change Batavia's perspective towards its vast maritime frontiers.

Building up this colonial story involve searching for any archives containing such discussions. As stated by Kuntowijoyo, that the early steps in writing history is to collect data to build the narration (Kuntowijoyo, 2005). Thankfully, there were plenty of such archives in the inventory of Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia (ANRI). For this article, I used many of Algemeene Secretarie division of archives that covers topics that had interest to the Governor General in Java. The natural way the Archives was organized shows the very important steps in bureaucratic world of colonial government. The hierarchy exist from simple field reports to a more policy proposal discussed between various colonial departments and finally the governor general's decision himself.

With such ample supply of materials, a scrutinous selection thus naturally occurs. By eliminating or incorporating sources that might be useful to the writing. Thus the final step in source collection is to interpet the completed data. Framing this data in economic and security perspective, Aru Islands's identity as subected by the colonial government does begin to show. Thus, by establishing how colonial government view Aru Islands as part of their possessions, it will highlight any archives about the Japanese pearling activities in the islands.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Parelvisscherij Ordonnantie in Managing Aru's Natural Resources

As stated above, that Aru's economy and environmental state has brought more and more trade and movements across its maritime world. While trade flourished, the newly created Netherlands East Indies colonial state began despising the connectivity that brought with it. Seeing the Makassar-Buginese traders as nothing but disturbance of peace, as administrator who visited the island from 1824 had collected a number of problems caused by such "unregulated trade". However, the fear only grew in 1871, when an Australian pearling ship from the Aru Islands to collect more pearl-shells (Lehane, 2014). Australian pearling industry has developed since 1860-1870s in Western Australia and the territory of Darwin and Thursday Island (Julia Martinez, 2012). With competitions and fear of pearling grounds depletion, some men took their luck to the northern regions of Netherlands East Indies. However, colonial government saw them as "trespassers", and were confronted by military means (Mullins, 2010). Australian pearling vessels were seen as the embodiment of an unchecked maritime frontier and public opinion in the colony were increasingly irritated by the lack of colonial authorities actions against them ("Java-bode", 1883).

The atomsphere in Aru was also beginning to take turn for the worse. In the decades following Australian activities, various Achterwal villages showed to rebel against colonial authorities, showing an increasing amount of Aruese disappointment. In 1881, the Resident of Amboina, Baron van Höevell had to approached an ex-pearl diver named Belbel, convincing him to not insight a rebellion in the Achterwal ("Indische Gids" 1893). While just four years later another villager by the name of Naelaer, was forcefully arrested in 1885-1887 by colonial force (van Höevell, 1888). But finally, a massive Achterwal rebellion in early 1893, brought a turning point towards Aru's natural resource management.

This time, the rebellion was headed by Toelfoeloen and had gathered an Achterwal alliance against Buginese, Makassarese, Chinese, and Dutch personel on the islands (Spyer, 2000). Eventually Toelfoeloen was captured by colonial force and brought to Ambon to be trialed and hanged.

To collect more data on the opinion of local Aruese on foreign exploitation, a small survey was made by the Resident of Amboina from 15 to 20 November 1889. the Resident and two Posthouder from Dobo and Watuley, travelled with the warship Arend to intrviewed various Orang Kaya, or the head of the villages. The interviews were conducted aboard the ship as it travels through the Voorwal and the Achterwal. Many of the representatives of each Negeri expressed concerning views towards foreign exploitations. Particularly fears over the impact of overfishing in pearl oysters and teripang reserves towards the Aruese economy (Heyting, 1889). With the survey reporting an evidence of disappointment in Aru's relationship with the state, colonial government understands that peace and prosperity can only be achieved if economic disparity between the local Aruese and foreign fishermans were to be closed.

In order to achieve peace and continue the process of colonial state-making in the early 19th century, the Parelvisscherij Ordonnantie 1893 No.261 was then published. Setting the 3-mile from the outermost islands as the colonial territorial limit, and thereby forbidding any non-native fishing without proper license/grant from the colonial government. By directly handling access towards Aru's marine resources, the colonial government will be able to closely monitor any movements close to Aru's border. This will potentially bring down any potential conflict with the indigeneous Aruese or with another foreign competitors. Despite the enactment of Ordinance 1893, Australian vessels continue to work outside the 3-mile limit. It wasn't until 1905, that an Australian pearling company – Celebes Trading Company (CTC) – under the leadership of James Clark was successfully given an exclusive concession in the Moluccas (Steve Mullins, 2001). The coloial government was also in need for Aru's economy to grow and brought stability to all parties involved.

This decision to moved their operation to the Aru Islands was mainly driven by the infamous "White Australia" policy that began as "Immigration Restriction Act" in 1901. It was aimed to reduce the number of Asian workers in Australian economy, with the push to fully replace all pearl labors in West and North Australia with white ones by 1912 (J.P.S. Bach, 1962). However, with Clark's departure from the Australian pearling industry, the threat of a "pearling exodus" was becoming even greater for the federal government. It was then decided in 1916 that the pearling industry was exempted from having to fully replace their workers (Julia Martinez, 2005). By moving their operation to the Aru Islands, James Clark and CTC opened the islands as an international pearling center composed of multi-ethnic populations of Japanese, Manilamen, and local Indonesians who had previously worked in the Australian operation.

Japanese Position During Australian Concession (1905-1914)

After James Clark had managed to secure the concession of Aru Islands, immediately the CTC's assets were transferred to the Aru Islands operation. Consequently, the transfer led to the migrations of many colored pearl labors in 1905 towards Dobo. Many Japanese, Filipino, and local Indonesians took the streets of Dobo and began to formed a bustling settlement, in the direct watchful eyes of Dutch colonial officers. During this time, the Japanese population dominated the composition, numbering around 500 (Hiroshi & Hitoshi, 2002) from a total of more or less 1,000 pearl labors (The Telegraph, 1907). Besides simply migrating to follow their Pearl Masters, Japanese population also came to Dobo from Makassar (De Preanger Bode, 1906). Although not much is known about the Japanese that had came from this route, it can be inferred that they might be Japanese women who eventually worked their way through Ambon to eventually settle as prostitutes in Dobo as part of a larger Karakayuki-san phenomena. While the prostitutes might only came in periodically and rarely constitutes as permanent settlers, their contribution for Japanese migration in the Aru Island can't be disputed. As during that time, the Japanese populace also established a Nihonjinkai or Japanese Association Club in 1908 to update informations about their homeland or to engage in various recreational activities (Post, 1996).

From a colonial perspective, this sudden migration of foreign workers meant a lot more work to be done. In that case, in order to facilitate this sudden growth, the colonial government had to assigned a Japanese interpreter in 1912 (Bataviassch Niewusblad, 1912). Nonetheless, the assignment of an interpreter doesn't fall off from the situation in which Dobo has transformed into. As the CTC concession had been granted a 10 year long lease in 1909 (Het Vaderland, 1900), Dobo also increasingly mirroring those of the other pearling cities

such as Broome or Thursday Islands, complete with a rampant prostitution and the occasional burst of inter-ethnic violence over gambling, women, and alcohol (Choo, 2011). This violent nature of Dobo usually happened during the "lay-off" seasons of pearl fishing at the end of the Western Monsoon. During which time, many of the labors that had lived for 8-9 months inside the lugger in Aru Islands' Achterwal, finally returned.

During this period, killings and shootings usually took place around brothels and bars as one Controleur, A.H.G van Sluys wrote in the Koloniale Tijdschrift of 1916 about Dobo (Vickers, 2019). In order to minimize the crimes, both the colonial government and CTC administration actively tries to create obstacles. Colonial bureaucracy, such as the Raad van Justitie in Makassar have seen a number of Japanese cases from Dobo. Such as giving a Japanese man a 7 year sentence in prison for killing a prostitue in 1914 (Het Nieuws van den Dag voor Nederlandsch-Indie, 1914). At the same time, CTC would freeze payment for any pearl labors convicted with crimes (Gympie Times and Mary River Mining Gazette, 1910). Besides violent crimes, prostitutions that were being brought by Japanese women also led to the spreadings of veneral diseases among pearl labors and forcing colonial medical doctors to intervene (The Bulletin, 1918).

By 1913, the incoming of Australian pearling company has transformed the physicial layout of Dobo into the likings of its Australian counterparts, According to a Japanese report, the city was filled with 10 inns, 3 general stores, 2 barbers' shops, 1 bathouse, 8 restaurants, and 9 brothels (Vickers, 2019). In spite of all the irritating changes brought along with it, the Netherlands East Indies viewed such things as small sacrifices for the region's economic development which inadvertently will create peace in the Aruese society. While the foreign populace might cause minor troubles for the colonial authorities, their presence remained relatively docile and thus not a threat to the colonial security. Especially as they were tied to the Australian pearl masters, the foreign Asiatic movement from Japan or Australia were seen as a mere extension of a Western labor industry network. While this situation assures that colonial authorities have the advantage of overseeing pearl fishing and simultaneously managing Aru's maritime border, a wind of change eventually happened during the fourth year of the 1910s; the First World War.

Figure 1.1. Straat te Doka op Trangan, één van de Aroe-eilanden.

Source: KITLV.

Figure 1.2 Haven te Doka op Trangan, één van de Aroe-eilanden.

Source: KITLV.

THE FIRST WORLD WAR AND CHANGES WITHIN CTC

Immediately after the outbreak of the First World War, CTC pearling operations were grind into a halt. As the London market was now more concerned with essential logistics for the war, meant that there was no room for any luxurious and delicate product such as pearl-shells or mother-of-pearls. With such catastrophic blow to the industry, CTC's fleet of 1 schooner, 92 luggers, and 1 steam ship had to lay anchored in Dobo for most of 1914. Eventually in December 1914, about 600 local Indonesian labors were discharged and returned to Ambon, Banda, or Tual, while the remaining -mostly Japanese- labors were given 35 luggers to operate as means to discourage them from returning back to Australia in search of a better living (De Preanger Bode, 1915). The situation of the industry was looking worse,

even James Clark returned to Australia in 8 May 1915 due to the stagnant state (The Sydney Morning Herald, 1915).

In order to put things better, the CTC director and lobbyist in Batavia, John Camp Mac Coll decided to apply for a remision of payment to the colonial government in Buitenzorg, on the basis that the Ordinance of 1905 assures that such remissions can be granted. In his application of 4 November 1914, he described that if pearl-shells from the 1913/1914 catch can't be sold in London, then the CTC will not have the budget to repair any vessels laying in Dobo, to feed 800 pearl labors, or simply pay the monthly colonial fees (Coll, 1914). This request was then submitted and received by the colonial government, while never mentioned possible remision or the amount of it (Besluit Gouverneur-Generaal No. 40, 1915). While waiting for the answer to come, the prospect of losing the 1914-1916 catch was getting more real.

At first, John Mac Coll seemed to be optimistic that the war wouldn't last that long and mighy be decisvely won by the French or British. But as the years rolled out to 1917, things were worse than before. A field manager in Dobo had sent James Mac Coll a letter dated 7 May 1917 that mentioned that the prospect of the United States entering the war could possibly bring the whole operation down, as the pearl-shell market in New York City was one of the last one remaining (Celebes Trading Company, 1917). As it became far more urgent, James Mac Coll finally submitted another application to the colonial government, However, this time he requested if the payment for vessels fee for the conession 1917/1918 and 1918/1919 term can be reduced. Before the war, the CTC agreed on a fee of f 14,400/month for 60 vessels. But since in 1917 the CTC only operates 15 luggers, this fees will definitely too much of a burden. The Director of Agriculture, Industry, and Trade (Department van Landbouw, Nijverheid, en Handel), wanting to float the possibility of the pearl industry revival (Department van Lanbouw, Nijverheid, en Handel, 1917), finally in 1918 concede to remove the payment of f 14,400 to just f 240 per vessels currently used (Besluit Gouverneur-Generaal No. 21, 1918).

Precisely at this moment, a partner trading firm from Makassar Owned by merchants Schmid and Jeandel, discussed with the colonial government for a possible buyout of the CTC. One of the owner, P.J.C. Jeandel sent a letter to the Governor General in 30 September 1918, stating that the CTC had already discussed a possibility to their unused 50 luggers and 2 schooner to the firm. The letter was used to finalize the buyout that CTC had desperately need. To convinced the colonial government his firm will be able to handle the operation, he wrote confidently that the whole total buyout will be around f 200,000 and even negotiated to increase the number of minimum used vessels back to 60 (Jeandel, 1918). The prospect of Schmid en Jeandel to successfully continue the Australian management finally convinced them to release a resolution in 1918, legalizing the transfer of CTC's ownership from the Australian consortium to P.J.C. Jeandel and Conrad Smith (Besluit Gouverneur-Generaal No.4, 1918). Following this, in 1921 they immediately changed their firm into a limited liability company or *Naamlooze Vennootschap*, under the name N.V. Compagnie Commerciale Schmid en Jeandel (De Locomotief, 1921).

This transfer of management was seen as crucial by the colonial government, in ensuring the stability of Aru. Ever since the 1893 rebellion in Aru, an active approach towards demacrating the needs of capitalist ventures and local indigenous lives have been quite succesfully navigated by the colonial government. Nonetheless, an eruption of violence again occurred in the Achterwal during 1916-1917, just as CTC was having trouble maintaining its operation. An indigenous "association", was detected by colonial authorities in July 1916, in the midst of forming an inter-village alliance ("Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad", 1916). A decisive action came after De Haas – commander of Dobo's military-police detachment – was wounded during a gunfight in the island of Kobror. Afterwards, a colonial warship Valk and 2 more brigades successfully captured all villages in 8 January 1917, along with 2 of suspected head of rebellion, 32 villagers, as well as 60 firearms stashed nearby ("Delftsche Courant", 1917).

Entry of Japanese Pearl-Fishing Boats in Aru's Achterwal

While the instability brought by CTC's operation has been lifted, a change in the management of pearl-fishery begins to create a fracture in colonial government's perception of power and influence in the Achterwal. In the decades following Schmid en Jeandel takeover, the Australian mode of operation saw itself entering its waning days as Japanese pearl-fishing boats began challenging both the company and the colonial government. At first, the pearl-fishing operation in Aru Islands continued as usual, with concession granted periodically from 1921 to 1929 with some minor increase in colonial fees for vessel registrations and annual payment (Besluit Gouverneur-Generaal No. 16, 1921). While another former CTC's partner, Syekh Baadilla, had reduced its operation in 1928, before declaring bankruptcy in 1933 due to the Great Depression (Martinez & Vickers, 2017).

During late 1920s, the Aru Islands had earned quite a negative repuation among North Australian pearl industry. In spite the exit of Australians in CTC's central management, Japanese pearl labors decided to keep settling in Dobo thus creating a new Japan-Australia migration route. Japanese imperial gains in the South Pacific after the First World War greatly enabled this new connection with Dobo and Australia. North As a result, Australian newspapers described the Netherlands East Indies as incompetent in closing the "flood gates" of migration from the Japanese homeland (Smith's Weekly, 1921) and others attributing the illegal Japanese entry to North Australia mainly to the Aru Islands' Japanese diaspora ("Daily Telegraph", 1921).

As the world and the Netherlands East Indies entered the Great Depression, pearl-fishing operation in the Aru Islands has seen some minor encroachment from South Pacific-based Japanese pearl-fishing boats in the outskrits of the Achterwal. The CTC operation in Aru began sending letters to the Governor-General in 1933, stating that some Japanese and Australian pearl-fishing boats were spotted operating outside the 3-mile limits in the Achterwal. Inside the letter, they proposed to the colonial government to give CTC a right to fish outside the 3-mile limit to detter future foreign vessels (N.V. Compagnie Commericale Schmid en Jeandel, 1933).

Both proposals were quite outlandish and out-of-character in the eyes of the colonial government. Nonetheless, any threats concerning colonial integrity must be dealt cautiously By the colonial government in Ambon and Batavia. In order to discern the "internal management" problems of CTC and those of national interest, the colonial government began gathering infromation of CTC's Aru Islands' operation. A letter from the Gezaghebber (Civil Administrator) of Dobo, C.J. Foortse, updated colonial understanding of CTC's internal problems. The report, dated 29 January 1934, described his opinion that CTC decline had started from 10 years before, after Chinese busninsess began monopolizing the purchase of pearl-shells gathered by indigeneous Aruese. According to him, Schmid en Jeandel's unwillingness to invest in modernizing their pearl fleets or pearl-fishing method, and to employ larger numbers of ships resulted in their current state being outcompeted by various local and international companies (Foortse, 1933).

Meanwhile, another CTC report was sent to the Resident of Amboina, B.J. Haga, in 7 August 1934, Detailing an increasing numbers of foreign pearl-fishing boats spotted outisde the 3-mile limit. Among the ones reported by CTC, Japanese pearl-fishing boats dominated the waters outisde Aru, with 15 boats and 20 more will be expected to come around September. According to the report, the Japanese does not pay fees to fish any pearl-shelles, thus bleeding the colonial revenue and Potentially flooding the market with lower quality shells and preventing CTC to gain any income. Finally, they reffered back to Staatsblad No.4 1908, which gurantees the tenant's protection by detaining the captain of any Japanese vessels (N.V. Compagnie Commericale Schmid en Jeandel, 1933). But one report in April 1935, described a worrying state of Japanese activities in the Achterwal.

Since February of 1935, the manager of CTC, C.A. Monsted sent a letter from his schooner, Ariel, reporting to the Controleur in Dobo about another foreign vessels activities in the Achterwal near Pulau Enu (Monsted, 1935). C.A. Monsted critisize that any illegal Japanese vessels does not pay any immigraton fees, taxes, or duties. While many of the Japanese employed by the CTC had to adhere the colonial laws. In order to investigate this, in 24 March – 2 April 1935, two officers of Customs in Dobo, H.W.F. Meeng and A. Veerman travelled with the motor-schooner, Princess Mary, to various parts of Achterwal to survey any non-Aruese trade there.

During their travel, they encountered Japanese presence in Pulau Enu, where ships from neighboring Tenimbar and Barbar islands testified selling turtle-shells, rice, tobacco, and cigarettes to the Japanese motor schooner, New Guinea Maru, inside the 3-mile limit. The two officers eventually met some 14 Japanese luggers fishing nearby. The schooners of New Guinea Maru and Seicho Maru were known to transport Aru's pearl-shells to Palau in the Caroline Islands, South Pacific (Meeng & Veerman, 1935). It appears that the local Aruese, along with other local indigenous south moluccan ships engaged in a lively trade with Japanese ships, without abiding to colonial customs and shipping regulations.

The Gezaghebber of Dobo, immediately sent the report to J.F. Dee, the Assistant Resident in Toeal, Kei Islands in 27 May 1935 (Foortse, 1935). While realizing the limitation of police mobility from Dobo to the Achterwal, he also proposed a temporary increase of police personnel in the coast, just to monitor and apprehend and foreign vessels. With advices from the Assitant Resident in Tual (Dee, 1935) and the Resident of Amboina (Haga, 1935) the Director of Economic Affair, E.P. Wellenstein eventually sent a proposal to the Governor General in 24 June 1935. In his opinion, since CTC's problems are purely managerial, there are no restrictive economic measures to be taken against foreign vessels, as the Japanese mostly operates outside the 3-mile limit and brings economy and entertainment to nearby ports. While at the same time, he also agreed

that a police motor boat will be necessary to prosecute any infringing activities inside the limit (Wellenstein, 1935).

Even though the increase of Japanese presence might be concerning, the situation was considered normal by the Resident of Moluccas. In his letter to the Governor General in 15 August 1935, he positively admired the Japanese activities as "enlivening" Dobo's economy. With 126 Japanese employed by CTC, a large coconut plantations under Japanese company, and the occasional trade in Dobo by Japanese schooner Daiichi Tora Maru. However he also warned Batavia and Buitenzorg that their presence might have to be cautiously monitored and thus agreed to the idea of putting a fast-moving police motor boats in Dobo (Haga, 1935).

The Case of "Chahachy Samabara" and Colonial Authorities in the Aru Islands

Even though the Japanese pearl-fishing problem was handled quite firmly, the colonial government's knowledge of Japanese activities proved to be challenged once again, with the individual case of Chahachy Samabara. In 1935, Chacahy Samabara – a pearl laborer for CTC – was found to lease his pearl lugger and diving equipment to an Aru village in the Actherwal. He pleaded in his letter dated 9 May 1935, that the actions he did was under the aggreement with Christafel Kangan, the head of Koba village, to teach his villagers in using diving eqipment, while Chahachy Samabara takes only a small percentage of their catch (Samabara, 1935). This clarification letter was backed up with a letter from Christafel Kangan, dated 8 May 1935, stating that both of them operated within the village's traditional fishing ground (Kangan, 1935). Thus, Both Chahachy and Christafel argued that their small operation does not harm the colonial law in any capacity, and their operation was done only to lifted some burden brought by the Great Depression.

The operation generated a conern in the eyes of the colonial government. Not only it could habor a "Japanese-Aru" alliance that might trigger another rebellion in the future, but also the clear violation of any Pearl-Fishing Ordinance that has been published from 1893-1916. The said ordinance explicitly clarify that no parties will interfere with anything related to indigenous fishing methods (Staatsblad voor Nederlandsch-Indie 1893, 1894). While the Nature of Chahachy Samabara's action doesn't necessarily indicates that he deliberately Attempted to violate the law, but it was clear from the colonial government's perspective, that the ordinance does hold some flaws and loophole that can be exploited whenever. A letter from the Resident of Amboina to the Governor General and the Director of Economic Affairs in 20 June 1935, stated that the matter was shows clearly an concerning state in Aru. Although it seems that the indigenous Aruese holds the operation, it is clear that the Japanese is the de facto holder. While the lease of diving equipment doesn't necessarily Break the law, but Chahachy Samabara's financial ties to the operation will encourage other Japanese to lease their equipment in the same manner (Haga, 1935).

Another letter was sent on 12 July 1935 by the Director of Economic Affairs to the Governor General. Advising that, while current regulations does not prevent from other foreigner to lease their equipment, it does however necessary to warn the head villagers of the consequences in renting the Japanese boats (Wellenstein, 1935). In another part of the letter, the Director also acknowledged the limits of their own ordinance. As according to the law, the captain of the vessel will be held responsible for any violations. But, since the vessel carried by Christafel, Chahachy Samabara was therefore can't be prosecuted by any means. While the indigenous captain could be prosecuted, the Japanese will simply find another villagers to start the operation again. Clearly the colonial ordinances were not sufficient enough to quell the Japanese "clandestine" pearling operations, there weren't any real step taken by the colonial government afterwards. In the aftermath, there were no further details regarding any upate in the pearling ordinance.

At the same time, police-military responses became the backbone of colonial authority's power projection over the Japanese populace. In 1936, the colonial government sent 150 additional police, in hope to undermine any further Japanese incursion or "troublemakers" (Bataviaasch Handelsblad, 1936). Despite any police or military reinforcement, the number of Japanese vessels have increased througout the late 1930s and early 1940s. For example, in 1936 some 36 Japanese pearl-fishing ships belonging to "The Tange & Co." from Osaka were spotted visiting the Achterwal. However, the number soon increases in 1937 by 112, as stated in the Memorie van Overgave of Aru's Gezaghebber (Bik, 1937).

The increased activity of Japanese pearl-fishing activity also took a toll on the Aru's pearling industry. Reported on a newspaper in 1938, that a Japanese cheap Pearls have flooded the markets in London and New York City, and threatening the Aru's operation once again (Het Vaderland: Staat-en Letterkundig Nieuwsblad, 1938). On top of increasing Japanese activitiy, in 1939, a series of disease struck the Aru pearling bed was reported by the J.D.T. Hardenberg, a director for Laboratorium voor het Onderzoek der Zee (Laboratory for Marine Research). The disease was due to a combination of tides abnormality and jellyfish invasion in some parts of the

Achterwal (Hardenberg, 1939). In 1940, a remision of f 3,750 was granted by the colonial government in order to secure CTC operation. But as the world and Aru plunged once more into another world war, the pearling operation in Aru only puts it in a strategic location to the ever-expanding Japanese Empire.

Threats of Japanese Imperialism in Aru

In the end of 1930s, an ordinance about naval defense was published in Staatsblad No. 442, 1939 in order to strenghtened colonial maritime power in the archipelago. The new law cemented the internationally recognized 3 mile limit and to facilitate the performance of colonial navy in protecting their borders against any forseen threats (Staatsblad voor Nederlandsch-Indie over het jaar 1939, 1940). The ordinance was published as a part of the "Territoriale Zee en Maritime Krigen-Ordnantie 1939" to fully ensure the security of Netherlands East Indies unchecked maritime areas. Colonial military interest in the area were only intensified beginning in the 1940s as the Second World War had started in Europe and much of Pacific.

During this time, various colonial newspaper began circulating biased opinions towards the Japanese in the Aru Islands. In the sector of pearl industry, many attempted Japanese concession were regarded as "espionage operations" planted in many of the colony's strategic sectors (Soerabaijasch Handeslblad, 1942). This understanding was used to view various Japanese attempt to apply for Aru's pearling concession since 1910s or to understand Japanese role in stimulating the violence that had plagued Dobo (Algemeene Handelsblad voor Nederlandsch-Indie, 1933). Interestingly, Dutch colonial government has associated Japanese Imperialist expansion with or in the form of economic penetration since early 1900s that even led to the formation of the colonial army or KNIL (de Graff, 1987). This does sit well with the fact that Japanese economic concern in the Netherlands East Indies has been associated in term of military and security policy.

Amidst the war, Japanese vessels from Carolines and Palau still continue to visit in 1939, while other vessels from Darwin continualy does so until 1940 ("Townsville Daily Bulletin", 1940). As the year moved towards 1941-1942, colonial authorities began exerting more military control over the island. At the start of the Pacific War in 1941, Dutch-Australian alliance were ensuring the public of security at the maritime frontiers stretching from Aru to Thursday Island ("De Indische Courant", 1941). In February of 1942, the Netherlands East Indies was invaded by the Japanese Imperial Forces, as they had defeated the Americans in Philippines, and the British in Malaya and Singapore. To secure Aru's possesion, colonial forces created a military unit for the Southeastern Moluccas in June 1942, with Dobo's army consisted of only 43 personnel (De Actie op de Kei-Aroe en Tanimbar-eilanden '42", 1954: 145). The meager defenses were futher strained after another Indigenous Aru rebellion in May of 1942, that had to be putted down with the force of additional 10 troops from Tual ("Het Nieuwsblad voor Sumatra, 1949). Finally in 3 August 1942, under the darkness of night Japanese troops landed 200 men in Dobo unoppossed, as the colonial army had retreated further into inland in order to be securely transported to Darwin.

During this time, the colonial government abandoned everything that they had up to that period. Pearling fleets and coconuts plantations became stagnated and Dobo's wharf was mainly used for various military functions. Given its close proximity towards the Australian northern territories, it was a very strategic location in helping the Japanese war efforts. But while the Dutch government had temporarily relocated itself to Australia, Some citizens are still trapped inside the Aru. One such individual was Samuel Jacobs, a Moluccan-born teacher that was responsible in handling the rebellion in 1942. He was imprisoned shortly after Japanese invasion but was able to slipped out from Dobo in the middle of the night. They were rescued by small Dutch forces in 15 September 1942 (Nieuwe Courant, 1949). He settled in Darwin with his wife and was given a medal in August 1943 from Charles O. van der Plas, the head of Netherlands Indies Comission for Australia and New Zealand.

Besides minor casualties, Allied forces carried out several bombing raids towards Dobo, in order to hinder the Japanese war efforts. The first ever bombing raid was conducted in 25 December 1942, which destroyed multiple military facilities around Dobo (The Age, 1942). Bombings are still being carried out in Dobo throughout 1943, with one devestating incindiary attack on 5 February 1943 (The Mercury, 1943). The destruction was devestating enough for Japanese troops to abandoned its position before deploying troops again in March (News, 1943). While Japanese troops finally surrenders at the end of the Second World War, colonial possesion in Aru has finally come to an end.

CONCLUSIONS

The lure of Aru's natural resources have always attracted unwanted movements between Aru and other places outisde of the Netherlands East Indies.

Nonetheless, such connectivities does not fall far from Aru's pre-colonial history of trade and commercial network. The entrance of colonial authorities in the islands historical stage set forth an implementation of western territorial ideas. In parituclar, with the colonial state formation brought after the downfall of VOC, the "outer islands" beyond Java and Madura became an important factor in guiding colonial government's projection of power. By establishing fixed boundaries in written law, the wild colonial frontiers could be tamed and controlled. Despite such efforts, the fluid nature of maritime borders can still clearly test the threshold of colonial influence. This challenge was clearly reflected in colonial attitudes towards Japanese pearl-fishing activities in the Achterwal.

The movements of Japanese population in the Aru Islands showed a crucial point in understanding the challenges of colonial management policy. The differing experience between Australian and Japanese pearl-fishing operations significantly concentrated on the abilities of Japan as a state in exerting influence over its capitalist ventures. It was increasingly clear that Japanese pearling activites were seen as a part of Japanese Imperialist expansion. Cases such as those of Chahachy Samabara only adds more to the fact that the Japanese population in Aru has a full potential in exploiting friendly relationships with indigenous people for their own benefits. While the case of Chahacy does not clearly reflect state encounters within it, but the potential of an espionage work still lingers as Japan's pearling fleets only increased in numbers. Coupeled with the popular descriptions and reports of pearling labor lives, the Japanese were seen more as "barbarians in European clothings", than a "European-like citizens".

But more than just a matter of security, Japanese pearl-fishing activites only reinforces colonial government's idea that the Achterwal of Aru is a fragile landscape filled with illicit dealings and trade that could potentially brought disruptions to the colony. Its position as the source of Aru's marine resources has made it a rocky spot to control. While the parelvisscherij ordonnnatie Brought some form of stability to the Achterwal, eventually it also came into a stiff challenge. While the ordonnantie defines artificial 3 mile-limit as the islands' main border, it was clear that it couldn't stop the transborder nature of Aru's trade and connectivities. The marine management which had been a colonial tool in "pacifiying" the Indonesia's maritime frontiers had been challenged by Aru's pre-colonial undefined borders and fluid movements.

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