

研究纪要

Research Note

NETWORKING CHINESE GOLD MINING KONGSIS IN WEST BORNEO: A RESEARCH NOTE OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH TO STUDYING OVERSEAS CHINESE HISTORY

西婆罗洲华人金矿公司的网络化分析：
一份从哲学角度研究海外华人历史的研究笔记

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(纪方超)

Abstract

Starting from the time of the 1740s, significant numbers of Chinese migrants, mainly from the Guangdong province in mainland China, started to migrate to West Borneo. Initially, they were recruited by local sultanates to extract the rich gold mines in the area. After years of development, these Chinese mining organizations evolved into distinct ethnic settlements known as the kongsi (公司 (gongsi in pinyin) in Chinese, and kongsie in early Dutch records). The history of these gold mining kongsis holds significant potential for elucidating a more extensive network among diverse regional political and economic entities. This paper serves as an initial review rather than a

comprehensive historical examination of the kongsi. With a few exceptions, it largely draws from a compilation of secondary sources on kongsi studies from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The primary aim is to outline critical methodological themes and underscore the substantial academic significance of kongsi studies for future reference. The paper serves three distinct objectives. Firstly, it endeavors to provide an overview of the general historical and historiographical context of West Borneo kongsis. Secondly, the paper highlights remaining pivotal questions and challenges within kongsi studies. And finally, it introduces a novel methodological approach to reframe and redefine kongsi history by establishing connections between kongsis and Western philosophical theories.

Keywords: Early Modern History, West Borneo, Kongsi, Overseas Chinese Studies

摘要

大约从1740年代开始,大批来自中国广东地区的华人开始移民迁徙到西婆罗洲。最初,他们受当地苏丹招募,逐渐成为开采该地区丰富金矿的主要劳动力。经过几十年的发展,这些华人金矿组织演变成了被称为“公司(出于历史沿革的原因,文中统一使用kongsi来表述)”的独特海外华人栖息地(在早期荷兰记录中亦称为kongsie)。研究西婆罗洲华人金矿公司的历史对于阐明同时期(十八世纪与十九世纪)西婆罗洲以及爪哇海区域内各种政治和经济实体之间广泛复杂的网络关系具有重要的作用。需要注意的是,本文仅是针对目前公司研究的总结性调查和研究笔记,而非全面的历史考察和历史研究。文中除少数案例外,本文主要依赖于十九和二十世纪西婆罗洲公司研究的专著资料(secondary sources)。文章的主要目的是概述西婆罗洲华人金矿公司的历史背景,总结当下公司研究所面临的关键问题和挑战。同时,本文尝试建立公司研究与西方哲学理论之间的联系,旨在介绍一种重新构建和重新定义公司历史的新方法。

关键词: 近现代史、西婆罗洲、公司、海外华人研究

A Story and the Introduction

In the month of February 1834, a report having been brought to Singapore that the people of a Chinese colony on the west coast of Borneo were anxious to establish a permanent commercial intercourse with the settlement, some

mercantile men at Singapore, chiefly Chinese, decided on fitting out an expedition to that part, and the conduct of it having been offered to, and accepted by me, I took the command of the British schooner *Stamford*, and received on board a cargo consisting of opium, tea, and other articles, to exchange for the product of the gold mines of Borneo.¹

When George Windsor Earl, a well-established British trading ship commander based in the newly-founding Singapore, arrived at Sinkawan(g), West Borneo in March 1834, he met a bunch of enthusiastic local Chinese leaders who had been eager to conduct regular trade with Singapore. Aware of the Dutch blockades against Chinese trade on the nearby seas, Earl decided to go to the closest Dutch town, Sambas, and negotiated with the Dutch official (the Resident) there. However, when he arrived at Sambas, the Resident, Mr. Rumswinkle, explained to Earl that “according to the tenor of his instructions from the Batavian government, he could allow me (Earl) to have no commercial intercourse with the Chinese territory from Sinkawan(g).”² Instead, the man told him to redirect the destination of his schooner, which moored in the downstream river area, to Sambas and conduct the market inquiry here. Rumswinkle warmly welcomed Earl, generously lending him his own yacht to return to his schooner and bring the ship upstream back to Sambas. The following morning, the two shared breakfast after Earl’s return with his ship. As Earl sat on the Resident’s vessel after the meal, he observed several small canoes brimming with people navigating near the bank. The Dutch official confirmed with him that those were indigenous Dayak people who came from inland Borneo. He then told Earl that he “was particularly fortunate in meeting with these people, as he had never before seen a small party of independent D(a)yaks so far down the river.”³ After weeks of investigation, Earl described Sambas as a place with “a mean disappearance” and found no hope for a promising market.⁴ As he was getting desperate, “the Chinese governor” of Monterado, an inland headquarters of Chinese gold mining communities, sent him an invitation letter after receiving messages from Singkawang. Earl was more than delighted because according to the Resident, “the

Chinese allowed neither European nor Malay to penetrate into their territory.”⁵ He eagerly accepted the invitation. Later in Monterado, Earl discovered a very different world.

Let us now take a moment to imagine ourselves in the position of Mr. Rumswinkle. This is what it feels like to be stationed in West Borneo as the representative of Dutch authority in the early nineteenth century. We barely ventured inland. We hardly encountered any hinterland people, even though they outnumbered us by hundreds of thousands.⁶ From a certain perspective, we felt like we were actually the most isolated one in the area. We sat on our vessel and congratulated our British guest for seeing people that you had never seen in your years of service. And he even made it to the Chinese territory that we were never allowed to enter. In the meantime, we were aware, however, that the two European hegemonic capitals in the Java Sea region, British Singapore and Dutch Batavia, were actively projecting their new imperial ambitions across the archipelagic world of Southeast Asia. But did we truly experience the magnitude of their power? Once a year, we received messages from Batavia regarding the governing instruction of the area. However, no clear order was given about the regulations of foreign ships like Earl’s schooner. Although we maintained the rule that banned all “Chinese ports” in West Borneo from conducting any commercial activities, we could not stop people like Earl from traveling back and forth between Chinese territories such as Singkawang and our solitary town of Sambas, and eventually going deeper into the heartland of Monterado. Despite this, we knew very clearly that we had a monopoly on trade in the nearby seas. But again, did we truly experience the effectiveness of our monopoly?

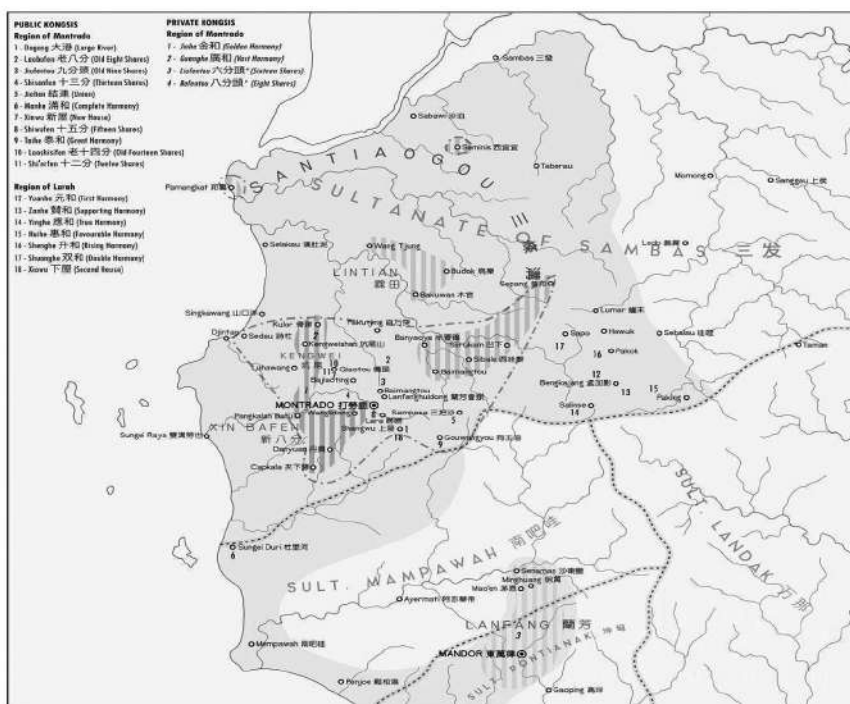
Let us leave Mr. Rumswinkle behind, and briefly introduce what Earl was about to witness. One hundred years before his visit, starting from the time of the 1740s, significant numbers of Chinese migrants, mainly from the Guangdong province in mainland China, started to migrate to West Borneo. Initially, they were recruited by local sultanates to extract the rich gold mines in the area. After years of development, these Chinese mining organizations evolved into distinct ethnic settlements known as the kongsi (公司 (gongsi in pinyin) in Chinese, and kongsie in early Dutch record).

They broke sultans' controls, expanded their territories, occupied new gold mines, collaborated and intermarried with the Dayaks, and developed agriculture and trading networks. By the nineteenth century, there were approximately twenty to thirty Chinese mining kongsis spread throughout West Borneo. One century later, in 1849, the local Chinese population reached between 49,000 and 70,000.⁷ Monterado, the inland headquarters that Earl was about to visit, was one of the northern cores of these mining organizations. In essence, the history of these gold mining kongsis holds significant potential for elucidating a more extensive network among diverse regional political and economic entities.

The southern fringe of the South China Sea and the Java Sea played critical roles in the transformation and the making of early modern and modern empires and states in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Historically speaking, it was a sea region of prolonged political turbulence, which was not only an oceanic epitome of major imperial divisions in Europe but also a bitter political arena by itself. Geographically speaking, the region has served as the checkpoint of Eurasian maritime trade, which connects the Indian Ocean to thousands of islands across archipelagic Southeast Asia and the East Asian continent. During the medieval and early modern eras, the Java Sea cultivated exceptionally dynamic regional economies and politics across its surrounding islands. By the turn of the nineteenth century, Napoleon's conquest of the old Dutch Republic in Europe terminated the Dutch VOC (*Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*)'s long-lasting governance in Batavia on the other side of the Eurasian waterway. Fearing a possible French expansion on eastern water, the British Royal Navy took the opportunity to extend its presence beyond the Indian Ocean through the Malacca Strait.⁸ Thomas Stamford Raffles, later the founder of British Singapore, took over the VOC governing office in Batavia and made significant endeavors to project his grand ambition of "moving north across the equator" into a regional political reality.

Bringing West Borneo kongsis into this broader regional context, we witness historical actors such as Chinese gold miners, indigenous Dayak people on land, private trading groups, and pirates on the sea (see Map 1).⁹ In the eighteenth century,

in search of more monopolistic profit in spice, rice, sugar, and coffee productions, the VOC launched a series of aggressive campaigns in both ethnic and economic sectors across Java and Sumatra, the southern edge of the Sea, which triggered even more fierce resistance from local Chinese and Muslim sultanates. The VOC massacre of the Chinese in Batavia in 1740 and the follow-up expedition against the Javanese Mataram Kingdom in Central Java expressed a strong sense of anxiety regarding their difficulties in monopolizing spice, sugar, and coffee production among other ethnic communities. However, as we read in Earl's story, flourishing Chinese junk trades and other non-Dutch European groups continued to challenge the Dutch hegemony by actively participating in both legal and illegal commerce on the sea. Non-state actors and activities transcended their roles of being passive responders to Dutch monopoly and became indispensable pillars of the intra-regional economy across neighboring islands.



Map 1. Chinese Kongsis in West Borneo in the early nineteenth century (by Li Xinxiang).¹⁰

Certain elements must be arranged in advance. This article serves as a preliminary research note rather than a comprehensive historical examination of the kongsis. With a few exceptions, it largely draws from a compilation of secondary sources on kongsis studies from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The primary aim is to outline critical methodological themes and underscore the substantial academic significance of kongsis studies for future reference. The note is organized into three sections, each serving as a distinct objective. First, it endeavors to provide an overview of the general historical and historiographical context of West Borneo kongsis. Secondly, this research note highlights remaining pivotal questions and challenges within kongsis studies. And finally, it introduces a novel methodological approach to reframe and redefine kongsis history by establishing connections between kongsis and Western philosophical theories. Subsequently, new questions arise: why does the task of defining, interpreting, and rationalizing the role of the kongsis within a network comprised of European empires, sultanate regimes, and non-state agents present such a formidable confusion? How can we grasp, *rather than resolve*, the presence of confusion within the intricate dynamics of historical agents? It became evident that the philosophical approach, particularly the works of Bruno Latour and his contemporaries, offered a valuable tool for navigating this inquiry. In the forthcoming section, I will demonstrate how their philosophical thinking provides valuable insights into comprehending the complexities of these historical relationships. I aim to incorporate various socio-economic and philosophical approaches, juxtaposing them with historical entities such as the kongsis and the Europeans. Together, this new attempt suggests that the kongsis are a critical lens through which to examine how imperial and state frameworks actually operate within shifting historical realities.

Section 1. Historiographical Context: West Borneo Kongsis in Transition

Section 1.1. Java Sea in the Early Modern History

Let us begin by examining the broader socio-economic environment. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries constitute a critical transformative moment for the Java Sea and its neighboring isles.¹¹ Although the European presence in maritime Southeast Asia, as Anthony Reid indicates, had already started to disrupt the region's "golden age of commerce" since the late seventeenth century, it was not until the early nineteenth century did the British and the Dutch achieve their regional hegemonies.¹² Before the dawn of the nineteenth century, the VOC's expansion in Java required deliberate negotiation and cooperation with local powers. The political and economic challenges imposed by the Chinese and Muslim sultanates on Java had forced the Dutch to pay huge costs in a series of rugged attempts to monopolize agricultural production and exports. By the early eighteenth century, private Chinese owners had dominated the sugar plantations in the suburban area of Batavia, which triggered the VOC massacre against over 10,000 Chinese in 1740.¹³ The VOC coercion created the eighteenth-century prelude for the infamous Cultivation System implemented in Java in the early nineteenth century. After the massacre, the Company launched what Kwee Hui Kian called "the Chinese War" in East and Central Java to further secure its control over tax farms and suppress massive Chinese labor migrations and unrest on the island. During the war, besides the Chinese, Pakubuwono II, the Susuhunan of the kingdom of Mataram in Central Java, took the opportunity to launch a painstaking yet ultimately unsuccessful attempt to resist the Company's expansion in the region.¹⁴ However, of particular importance is the fact that the VOC's success in the war did not eliminate the already existing production and power patterns on the ground. As I will explain in the next section, in this research context, states existed in their relationships with different social and ethnic organizations. The result of wars and political changes did not destroy these relationships. Rather, it reorganized them.

As Kwee indicates, the massacre and war against the Chinese failed to terminate the latter's dominance in other major businesses, including salt, timber, and shipping trade. Meanwhile, VOC's successful campaign against Pakubuwono II gave rise to not just Company authorities but also other Mataram rulers, Javanese regents (*bupatis*), and Chinese business owners (*towkays*), in the regional political-economic network.¹⁵ In West Borneo, without substantial Dutch forces stationed in the area, kongsis reached their golden era of unrestrained development until the establishment of the Dutch East Indies in the early nineteenth century. On the other side of the sea, the very physical existence of British Singapore had not emerged until the second decade of the nineteenth century. Neither the British Crown nor the British East India Company had consolidated their political foothold in the region. The Java Sea in the eighteenth century largely matches a common portrait of the early modern world, which highlights a multi-polar power order without hegemony. However, I have no intention to downplay the military and political advantage of the Europeans, especially the Dutch, during this period. It is important to notice that the VOC achieved advantages not only vertically but also horizontally. They heavily relied on the company's deliberate communications and interactions with local groups and overseas immigrants. This series of cross-regional struggles provided the institutional and infrastructural path for further European penetration of the region in the nineteenth century.

At this critical moment of economic and political transformation, regional states were in the process of developing governing rationality, which was accompanied by traditional forms of power practice. It included a strong sense of ruling sovereignty and coercion that were widely adopted and used by the different sides of power. In the meantime, the delineation of state territory remained permeable, as did the organizational structure. European colonial companies, governments, and Muslim sultanates all functioned as early modern state powers with different political structures and spheres of influence. In this broader context, when a Chinese miner accepted the Dutch appointment as a district captain (*Kapitein*), yet he continued to participate in (or even lead) tax evasion and smuggling against Sultan's order and

Dutch monopoly, to what degree was he a colonial state official, and to what degree was he a non-state uprising? Taking these questions into account, this research note then presents valuable questions and challenges in the field of the kongsi study.

Section 1.2. Questions and Challenges in the Field of Kongsi Study

When we turn to the sources and studies related to the Borneo kongsis, we find a fairly bewildering number of very different receptions and meanings, defining “kongsi” as:

1. A common management group.
2. A social organization akin to a common descent group, like those found in Southern China’s “one-surname” villages and clan temples.
3. A republic.
4. A generic name of Chinese ethnic secret societies of the Tiandihui (“Triad”) type which in fact did sometimes call themselves “kongsi”.
5. The title of an official or leader of the Chinese pioneer settlements.
6. The house where the latter has his residence.
7. An amount of money that represents the capital of the common management group.
8. A god, patron saint, or tutelary spirit of the Chinese pioneers, such as Dabogong.¹⁶

Among the existing western scholarship, J.J. de Groot, James C. Jackson, Leonard Blussé, Bingling Yuan, and Mary Somers Heidhues constitute the major literature of this particular community.¹⁷ Together, they suggest a few important theoretical frameworks to direct the kongsi study. Instead of struggling with a clear definition of the kongsi, it might also be important to explore the broader impact these frameworks have generated in the region.¹⁸ If they were “common management groups,” how did they manage the import and export of commodities for their communities? If they belonged to the general conception of “Chinese ethnic secret societies” in disguise,

how did they bond with other secret societies in Java and Malacca? If they represented a shared spiritual pillar among overseas Chinese pioneers, how did they perceive and interact with other regional religions and cultures? This research note contributes to the field of kongsi study by rationalizing their highly wide-ranging roles in the broader historical context.

An important fact is in order regarding the nature of the kongsi. As Carl Trocki suggests, the kongsi-type of organizations did not appear exclusively in West Borneo. Instead, it “was widespread throughout the region” across Southeast Asia.¹⁹ Many newly emerging overseas Chinese brotherhood communities in the region have named themselves “the kongsi.” The period of the 1760s also echoes Dian Murray’s argument about the founding moment of the famous Chinese secret society, the Triads (the Tiandihui), which profoundly facilitated the development of overseas Chinese networks in maritime East Asia and Southeast Asia.²⁰ Li Xinxiang’s recent publication on West Borneo Kongsis serves as a reminder of the intricate nature and enduring presence of these organizational structures within the overseas Chinese communities of Southeast Asia, dating back as far as the seventeenth century.²¹ Succinctly, I address two critical significances of the kongsi study. First, compared to other brotherhood societies, West Borneo kongsis went beyond the traditional boundary of blood-oath morality. For example, as Wang Tai Peng indicates, West Borneo kongsi was “unlike the Chinese brotherhood in an attempt to overthrow the Ch’ing dynasty” and “was entirely with the rise of” the gold mining industry.²² Indeed, the dominantly economic nature of the kongsi cannot be taken for granted. Instead, it was a product of a series of complex cooperation and negotiation between the Chinese and regional authorities into which an enduring local moral economy was forged. And there are more solid connections between kongsis and the general field of overseas Chinese history. For West Borneo kongsis, commercial partnerships and shared economic interests that were deeply ingrained in the Java Sea region were much more important than the blood-oath brotherhood and mainland-based political propaganda for their Chinese members. Together, they provided strong institutional support that connected the regional Chinese laborers and capital with the emerging global economy. This raises

the telling question regarding how influential and widespread kongsis' infrastructural support could expand beyond West Borneo and how it functioned in reality under different states' restrictions.

Another critical missing aspect of the previous kongsi study is its lack of nuances. As figure 1 shows, James C. Jackson depicts detailed maps of Chinese gold mining areas in the 1780s and 1850s.²³ His work demonstrates explicitly two important messages. First, they show how the Chinese miners widely expanded across West Borneo over seventy years of development. Second, they highlight the three core mining locations (Monterado, Bengkajang, and Mandor) in the area and how they emerged to become the capitals of mining actions. However, Jackson's maps fail to demonstrate two core datas of the kongsis. First and most importantly, as Jackson indicates, the spread of gold mines from the 1780s to the 1850s unite a massive area in the northern part of West Borneo into a continuous zone. But after processing goldmining networks in mapping software, it becomes clear that the mining locations were rather more disjointed than contiguous (see figure 2). Second, Jackson's maps do not address the interactions between Chinese mines, agricultural settlements, ports, Sultans and Dutch spheres of influences clearly. For example, the Chinese towns of Singakawang and Pamangkat had long been the major ports of smuggling throughout the nineteenth century. They served as both the center of Chinese-dominated maritime trade of the region and the outpost of powerful inland kongsis especially in Monterado. Moreover, as Heidhues stresses, Dutch visitors in the early nineteenth century discovered that the land between Pamangkat and Singkawang had been developed by the Chinese into fertile agricultural settlements.²⁴ Simultaneously, Singkawang, Pamangkat, and the "Chinese zones" in-between were under severe Dutch and Sambas sultan's monopolistic prohibitions (see figure 2). Receiving orders from Batavia in the 1820s, the Dutch Resident stationed in Sambas allowed no outside groups to trade with the local Chinese. But there was a significant lack of compliance with the law. As Earl's story shows, Singkawang continued to serve as a coastal trading outpost for the inland mining capital (Monterado/ Montrado in this case). In other words, these areas were both legally solitary and demographically well-

connected. Moreover, as figure 2 shows, the extent and manner of Chinese occupation in inland plains beyond the major mining towns remain elusive and enigmatic.

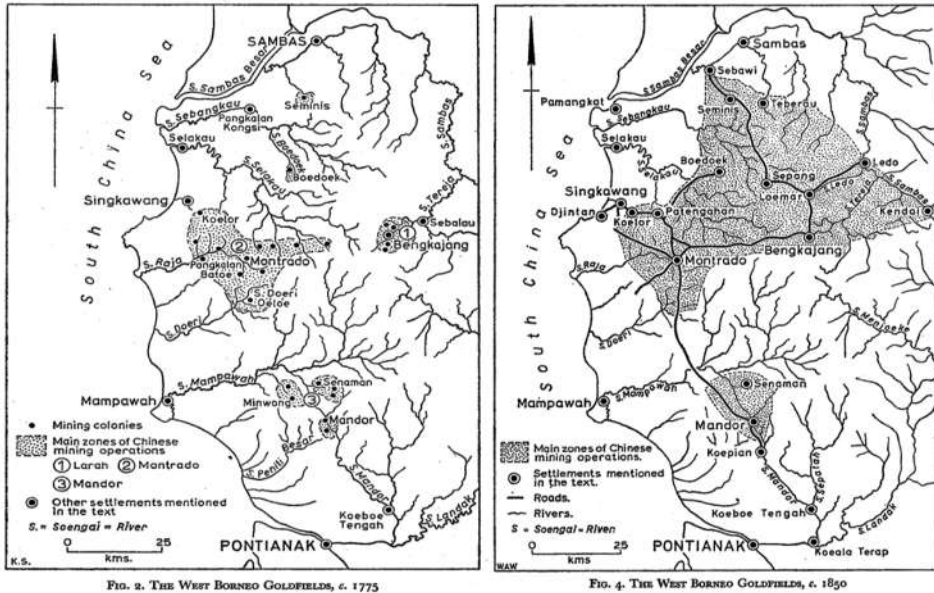
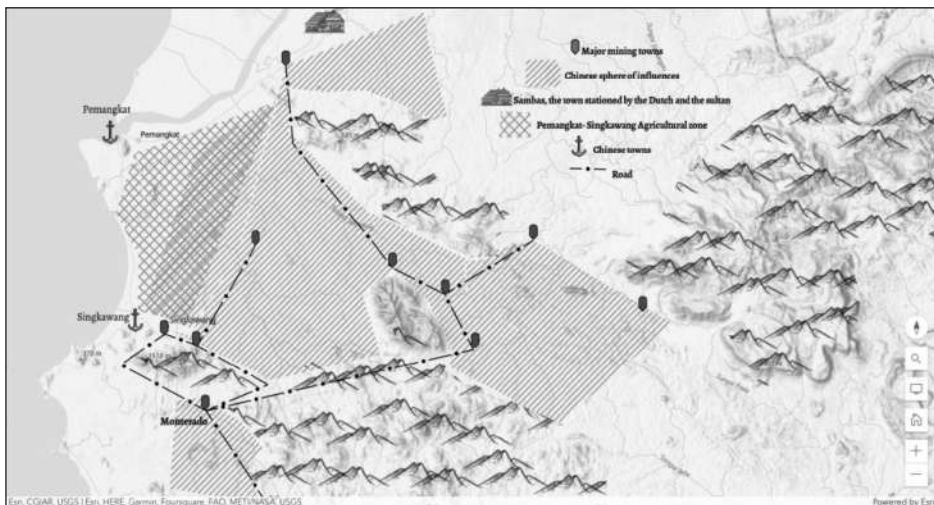


Figure 1. The West Borneo Goldmines in 1775 and 1850 (after Jackson).²⁵



Furthermore, one of the central missing pieces the kongsis scholarship fails to address is the kongsis's connection to the broader regional network. Scholars have addressed kongsis' active interactions with maritime trade in their relationships with critical commodities (opium, salt, rice, etc), but many questions remain unresolved.²⁶ Where were these commodities imported from? Who were these importers? What was the market situation? How did these elements change over time? Furthermore, scholars who study kongsis largely focus on their relationship with the Dutch colonial government, yet sources have shown the British also actively engaged in the trade and smuggling of kongsis commodities.²⁷ Who were these British? How did they fit into the general frameworks of kongsis development and Dutch monopoly on certain commodities? Networking West Borneo kongsis in a broader context provides a new approach to answering these questions.

Section 2. Theoretical Framework: Actor-Network Theory (ANT)

Despite the ability to occasionally invade, ravage and destroy these settlements, outsiders could not easily control them (the Chinese) in the long term. Both colonial and indigenous rulers came to realize that their own prosperity depended on Chinese laborers. They were the geese laying golden eggs. Not only did they outproduce indigenous labor because of their more developed skills, but they also had greater incentives because they were in the cash economy. Conquest, slavery, and systems of ritual dependence were all counterproductive.²⁸

Southeast Asianists have paid close attention to the character of the heterogeneous power struggles in regional history before the nineteenth century. Carl Trocki examines the vicissitudes of Malay sultans who had actively invested in piracy based in Singapore and Riau before and after the establishment of British Singapore.²⁹ Eric Tagliacozzo's work demarcates a "porous" yet potent Anglo-Dutch frontier in maritime Southeast Asia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³⁰

He highlights the consistent nature of cross-regional illegal activities across this frontier, which surpasses the conventional imperial border between the two European empires. Together with James Warren, Leonard Andaya, Leonard Blussé, and many others, scholars have forged solid narratives of early modern island Southeast Asia as a highly dynamic arena under heterogeneous regional orders.³¹ If we position the kongsis in this wider context of the regional study, these organizations become a crucial geopolitical and geoeconomic center in its own right, resembling a network with non-state spaces acting as both lines and nexuses.

Previous scholarship on the kongsis in the eighteenth century tends to portray these jungle communities as independent settlements over which neither local Muslim sultanates nor the Dutch colonists had succeeded in controlling. By the late eighteenth century, the kongsis had established a unique settlement pattern characterized by a quasi-independent existence amidst the dense jungles and highlands of West Kalimantan. From a methodological standpoint, my contention is that a valuable approach for dissecting the intricate connections between the kongsis and other regional characters lies in the introduction of Actor-Network Theory (ANT).

First introduced by Bruno Latour in 1987, ANT has gained widespread usage in fields of scientific and laboratory research, environmental studies, the history of science and technology, and sociology.³² In essence, ANT perceives social phenomena as dynamic networks of relationships involving both human and non-human elements. It posits that research entities, such as knowledge, are constructed through social networks where actors engage, negotiate, and align their interests. This process of interaction, negotiation, and alignment is referred to as *translation*. Through the *translation* of interests, powers, and meanings within and between networks, both human and non-human actors simultaneously exert agency and are influenced by it. A notable example of ANT application is Michel Callon's study of three marine biologists' efforts to increase the scallop population in St. Brieuc Bay, France. Callon argues that this scientific project should be understood as a social process involving multiple actors: the three marine biologists, the bay's fishermen, biologists' research colleagues, and the scallops themselves. The rendering and receiving of

agency among these actors occur through the *translation* of interests and information between scientists, fishermen, and the larvae of scallops (figure 3).³³ Despite their divergent interests and distinct capabilities, these groups find common ground, which is introduced by Callon as “*the Obligatory Passage Point (OPP)*,” when they encounter shared challenges or obstacles that can be overcome through collaboration and mutual support.³⁴ The translation process holds significant importance as it substantiates one of the fundamental tenets of ANT: the active agency of nonhuman entities. In Callon’s study, this extends to a specific type of scallops, demonstrating that nonhuman actors encompass not only natural elements but also an extensive array of entities such as machinery, commodities, literature, art, languages, concepts, and institutions.³⁵ The *translation* possesses two crucial characteristics: first, it is an ever-evolving process characterized by entities navigating through shifting obstacles and objectives; and second, it is susceptible to failure.³⁶ By examining the outcomes of various translation processes, both successful and unsuccessful, we gain a deeper understanding of the intricate interplay between kongsis and other regional units.

The kongsi Chinese occupied the critical niche between the Dayaks and regional authorities. Compared to the Dayaks, the Chinese were more politically and economically connected to Muslim sultans in major riverine and coastal towns like Pontianak and Sambas. They originally accepted the sultan’s ban on agricultural production and were willing to take official appointments assigned by the Dutch authority. However, none of these corporations with the states remained unchanged. In fact, the Chinese evaded political authorities just as much as they complied with them. In the late eighteenth century, they actively challenged the sultan’s ban on agricultural production and the Dutch monopoly over the importation of salt and opium in major port towns along the coast. Therefore, instead of creating a bifurcated and antithetical relationship between the kongsis and other regional actors, I propose an investigation of a very organic and malleable process existing in between. Drawing upon Callon’s insights into the networking of marine biological knowledge production (figure 3), I delve into how West Borneo networks contribute to the cultivation of the very existence of West Borneo kongsi (figure 4). The kongsi

serves as a unifying force, bringing together the Borneo highland, inland plains, urban authorities in major riverine or coastal port towns, and the maritime world into a cohesive and interconnected system. This integration not only showcases the strengths and power of authorities both within and outside of the system, but also reveals their inherent vulnerabilities and limitations. Interestingly, Heidhues notes that during the early stage of kongsis development in the mid-eighteenth century, Chinese miners' smuggling activities, in conjunction with their growing alliances with indigenous Dayak people, severely undermined the local sultanates' monopolies and reduced their income, ultimately forcing them to engage in coastal piracy.³⁷ The non-state activity depicted in figure 4 involves the participation of both state and non-state actors. Both the sultan and the Chinese contribute to the agency of the non-state activity, while the non-state activity, in turn, grants agency to both the sultans and the Chinese concurrently.

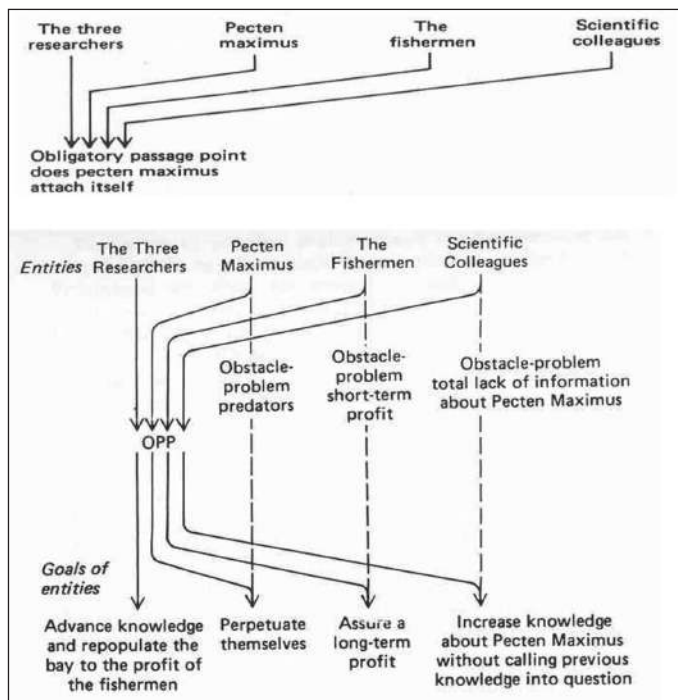


Figure 3. The problematization (upper diagram) and the translation (lower diagram) process of three marine biologists' research of the pecten maximus (by Callon).³⁸

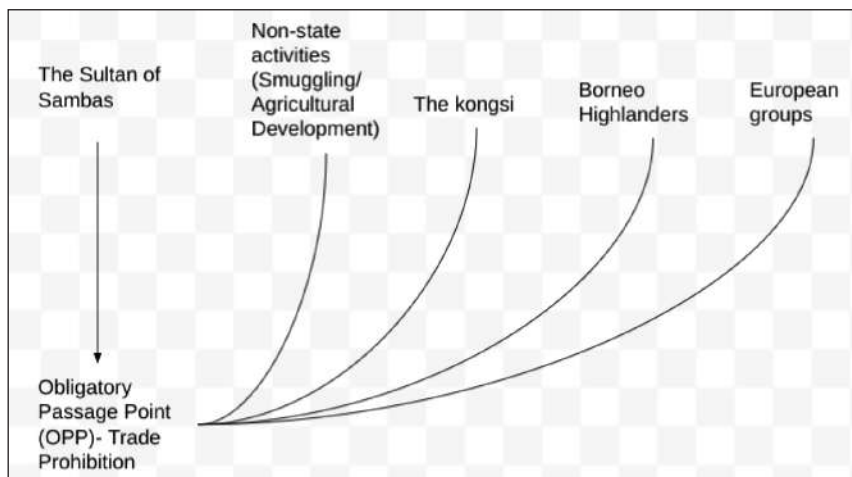


Figure 4. The Problematicization of Sultan's Prohibition.

J.J. de Groot defines the kongsis as regimes with significant republican spirits. Yuan Bingling uses the compelling term “Chinese democracies” to imply a feasibly new form of political culture shared by the Chinese miners.³⁹ Cherishing the political independence and cultural novelty of the kongsi, these works intend to differentiate the internal organization of kongsis from other more hierarchical and centralized structures. The utilization of ANT offers insights into the persistent enigma surrounding the definition of West Borneo kongsis, addressing the challenge of defining and rationalizing these overseas Chinese communities within their historical context. ANT aids in unraveling the complexities of the kongsi by shedding light on the intricate web of relationships and interactions that shape their existence (Figure 5). Expanding on these captivating insights, we can now showcase the inherent complexity of defining different West Borneo kongsis, as their *translation* fluctuates significantly across diverse temporal periods and historical entities. The convergence of the kongsis, as the *OPPs*, institutions, and actors is the result of diverse *translations* of meanings, interests, and powers among various economic, political, and ethnic entities. Each entity faces unique obstacles and pursues distinct goals, forming their own networks and generating new translation processes. In the 1840s,

British missionaries from Singapore observed the Chinese residents of Monterado establishing what they termed an “independent colony.” This colony operated under the dual jurisdiction of both the Sultan of Sambas and the Dutch East Indies. Within this community, the Chinese maintained full control over internal governance and the administration of justice, while the sultan retained an absolute monopoly over opium imports, and the Dutch were granted the authority to levy poll taxes on the Chinese.⁴⁰ Therefore, I refer to figure 5 as “a glimpse,” as it represents the dynamic nature of these translations. The translations that give rise to the kongsis also generate other entities, such as ethnic groups, behaviors, policies, and empires.

By applying the *translation* process to the kongsi study, I approach critical research subjects such as the kongsi Chinese, regional authorities, and Borneo highlanders not as static entities but as ever-evolving actor-networks in their own right, engaged in continuous acts of translation with one another. For instance, we can now understand how the Dutch translated their monopolistic laws to other groups, while the latter simultaneously translated their own interests and powers to each other. An illustrative example is Batavia’s directive to its Resident in Sambas, instructing the ban of maritime trade in nearby Chinese ports during the 1820s. This prohibition reverberated not only among Dutch officials but also resonated within the kongsis, other European parties, and the sultans, each translating the implications within their own networks. The sultan of Sambas, for instance, employed patrolling forces along the coastline as part of their translation process. The Chinese, on the other hand, engaged in the act of submission to the Dutch through their letters while concurrently participating in smuggling activities. As for other Europeans, their translation process manifested through frequent complaints and protests against Dutch monopoly, which found voice in both Singaporean newspapers and British parliamentary hearings.⁴¹ In other words, in such a ANT-kongsi model, we can now view the Euro-centric power structure and the recognition of non-state agency as different lanes within a larger interchange. Countless actors act as nimble cars that navigate between these lanes based on traffic conditions, regulations, and the status of others.

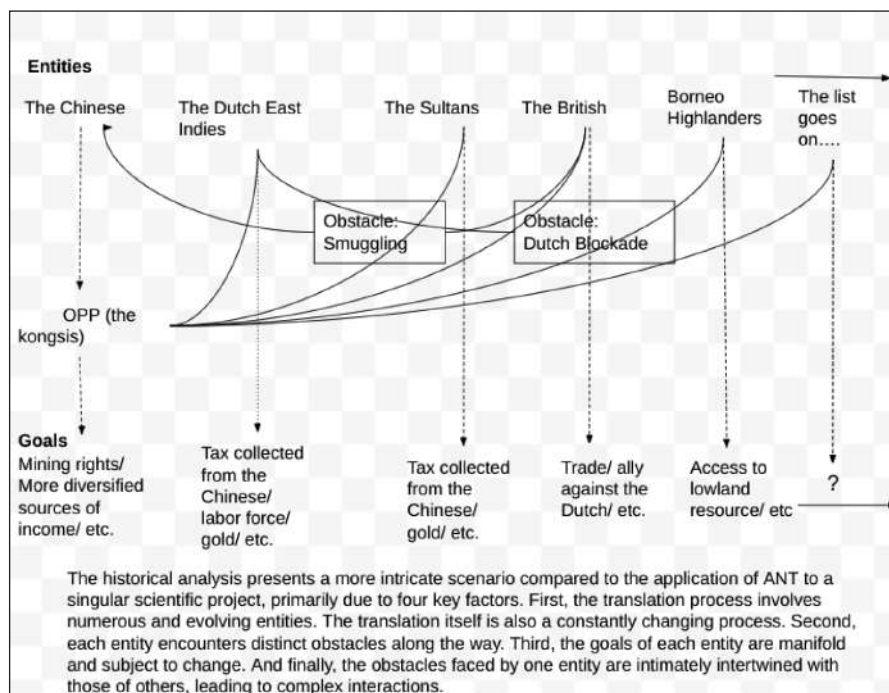


Figure 5. A glimpse of the translation process of the kongsi.

Furthermore, the kongsi-ANT approach provides us with a new perspective to rethink the historical reality of trade and commodities. Although it is undeniable to argue that the VOC interest in West Borneo largely lies in monopoly, monopoly varied concerning different products, and it mainly concentrated on the profitable sectors for Dutch state treasuries. From spice to tin, coffee, sugar, and later opium cultivation, the VOC company and later the Dutch East Indies government made tremendous coercive efforts to monopolize the cultivation, collection, and exportation of these critical resources.⁴² But what about other tropical products in other regions that were not included in the core of Dutch monopolistic scheme? The state value exploited upon these groups did not abide by the monopoly over the resources directly. Rather, the economic benefits generated from subjugating and taxing laborers were the two more prominent sources of income for the state treasury. That is to say, the use value and the market value of these less profitable commodities largely remained in the

hands of non-state laborers.

In the case of the kongsi, in the eighteenth century, local sultans prohibited the Chinese miners from cultivating and importing any self-sustaining provisions and ordered annual tributes paid by the kongsis in their early stage of development in the mid-eighteenth century. However, as we observe in Earl's story, these restrictions were soon jeopardized by the rapid growth and expansion of the Chinese population in the area.⁴³ In other words, compared to gold itself, tributary fees and poll taxes collected from the rapidly growing Chinese labor population remained the steadiest source of income for regional authorities. Therefore, there were two layers of struggles between states and non-state actors. The first layer rests on evading labor exploitation and taxation, while the second layer rests on acquiring and maintaining the direct entitlement to the value of respective resources. Nonstate actors sometimes would sacrifice the first layer to preserve the second layer. The Chinese miners paid polled taxes and tributes to different authorities and accepted the latters' appointments to maintain peaceful relationships with them and to protect their rights to control the gold mines.

Scholars have paid close attention to the Dutch and local sultans' monopolies over profitable industries, including the tin and spice trade and plantation economies.⁴⁴ These works carry a significant implication: monopoly is not merely a simple hierarchy, but rather a complex relationship that often masquerades as a hierarchy. The endurance of a monopoly is not maintained through coercive restrictions, but rather through mutual agreements and shared interests among multiple parties. These networks are not closed loops, but instead coexist and interact with industries that are not under direct monopolistic control. In the context of the kongsi study, West Borneo kongsis have faced dual monopolies, first from local sultans and then from the Dutch, regarding provisions such as rice, salt, foodstuff, and opium, as well as artilleries, from the very beginning.⁴⁵ While gold itself was not monopolized, everything related to it was. Chinese gold miners, indigenous Dayaks, and even some members of the sultanates themselves have constantly challenged these strict regulations. As we see in Earl's story, even the Dutch Resident himself did not strictly enforce monopolistic

surveillance measures, except in certain towns. Monopoly, therefore, has two layers of meaning. First, it was used to generate profits for regional authorities indirectly from certain tropical products. Second, it created a space, a space of the *OPP*, between state restrictions and non-state challengers to operate and translate on each other's behalf.

Conclusion

This conclusion serves as both a starting point and a true reflection of the great academic potential of the kongsi study for future references. The scarcity of historical accounts concerning these unique Chinese gold mining organizations that no longer exist can be disheartening. However, it is also invigorating for the same reason. By integrating historical, sociological, and philosophical frameworks, these organizations offer fertile ground for historians to cultivate new insights into history beyond the dichotomy of the kongsi Chinese and other regional groups, and to reevaluate European empires in relation to non-European groups. Furthermore, more recent scholarships have been producing fruitful works regarding the kongsi study. In 1989, Arena Wati translated and published a collection of war poems obtained from Leiden University. These poems were authored by indigenous Dayak individuals, documenting their collaboration with the Dutch during conflicts against the Monterado Chinese in the 1850s.⁴⁶ In 1993, Blusse translated two Chinese texts, while Ank Merens translated a Malay text documenting the local history of the Da Gang (Ta(i)-Kang) kongsi in Monterado, dating back to the early nineteenth century.⁴⁷ Later, in her groundbreaking research, Yuan Bingling made a significant discovery: *the Chronicle of the Lanfang Kongsi*, a detailed Chinese biographical record spanning ten generations of leadership within the Lanfang Kongsi in Mandor between the 1770s and the 1880s.⁴⁸ She also addressed Blussé's translation and other important "newly discovered sources" in Chinese preserved by Leiden University.⁴⁹ Recently, in mainland China and Taiwan, Li Xinxiang, Lin Feng, Zhou Yunshui, and Xie Yongmao contribute to the most updated and solid Chinese genealogical and

bibliographical research of the kongsis.⁵⁰ Collectively, their works demonstrate that a substantial number of undiscovered Chinese records pertaining to the kongsis still await exploration.

The study of West Borneo kongsis engages in extensive dialogue with the historiography of the second British Empire, the VOC, and the Dutch East Indies, as well as the study of overseas Chinese and Southeast Asia in general. It also contributes to the ongoing discussion surrounding historical actors and agencies. In a word, I find the interdisciplinary approach of weaving together broader arguments about global historical development with philosophical ideas and methods to be a captivating avenue for historians to construct critical narratives. This approach is precisely what previous studies on the kongsis have been lacking.

Notes

- 1 George Windsor Earl, *The Eastern Seas* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).
- 2 Earl, *The Eastern Seas*, 217. Singkawang was, and still is one of the major seaports along the coast of West Borneo and was the original destination for Earl to seek trading opportunities with the “Chinese colonists.”
- 3 Earl, *The Eastern Seas*, 220.
- 4 Earl, *The Eastern Seas*, 221.
- 5 Earl, *The Eastern Seas*, 278.
- 6 Rumswinkle held a reception dinner for Earl. Four European gentlemen were there, “who, himself included, formed the whole of the European community of Sambas, with the exception of the private soldiers.” Earl later visited the local Dutch stockade, and calculated about forty soldiers with “a moiety being Europeans.” Earl, *The Eastern Seas*, 221, 222.
- 7 Jans Cator Writser, *The Economic Position of the Chinese in the Netherlands Indies* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1936), 149.
- 8 For more details on the British naval presence in Indonesia, see Carey, Peter & Reinhart, Christopher, “British Naval Power and its Influence on Indonesia, 1795-1942: An Historical Analysis,” in *Journal of Maritime Studies and National Integration*, 5(1) (2021) 14-29. “The Governor-General of Bengal, Lord Minto (in office, 1807-1813), was instructed in 1809 by the British Government and the British East India Company (EIC) Directors to eject the French from all their posts and fortified strongpoints in the

- Indian Ocean, including Réunion (Île de Bourbon), Mauritius (Île de France), and Java.” (Carey & Reinhart, 2021).
- 9 Ji Fangchao, “The Chinese Kongsis in West Borneo: The Rise of the Chinese in Global Trade in the Early and Mid-19th Century,” MA thesis, Brandeis University, 2018.
 - 10 Li, Xinxiang 李欣祥, *Xiaoshi de Haiwai Hua Bang: Xipoluo Zhou Huaren Zhengquan de Xingwang* 消逝的海外华邦：西婆罗洲华人政权的兴亡 [The Fading Overseas Chinese State: The Rise and Fall of Chinese Power in West Borneo] (Beijing Daxue Chubanshe 北京大学出版社 [Beijing University Press] 2022).
 - 11 For the broader transition of entire Southeast Asia during this period, see Wells, J. Kathirithamby, “The Age of Transition: The Mid-eighteenth to the Early Nineteenth Centuries,” in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, edited by Nicholas Tarling (1992), 572-612.
 - 12 Reid, Anthony, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce 1450-1680* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1993).
 - 13 For more details on the event, see A.R.T. Kemasang, “The 1740 massacre of Chinese in Java: Curtain raiser for the Dutch plantation economy,” in *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, 14:1, pp. 61-71; “How Dutch Colonialism Foreclosed a Domestic Bourgeoisie in Java: The 1740 Chinese Massacres Reappraised,” in *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, Vol. 9, No. 1, (Summer, 1985), 57-80.
 - 14 Kwee, Hui Kian, *The Political Economy of Java’s Northeast Coast, c. 1740-1800*, (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2006).
 - 15 Kwee, *The Political Economy of Java’s Northeast Coast, c. 1740-1800*, p. 20, 163. The Dutch oppression against Pakubowono II gave rise to other local leaders. For example, through the 1755 Treaty of Giyanti, the Dutch and Pakubowono III agreed to recognize Prince Mangkubumi, the brother of Pakubowono II, as a new sultan of Mataram. Together, they divided central Java into two. When Pakubowono (the Sukaharata Sultanate) maintained his governance in the eastern part of the area, Mangkubumi ruled the western part of Central Java and emerged as the Yogyakarta Sultanate, which lasted until today.
 - 16 Yuan Bingling, *Chinese Democracies: A Study of the Kongsis of West Borneo (1776-1884)*, (The Netherlands: Universiteit Leiden, 2000), 3.
 - 17 So far, several nineteenth-century Dutch scholars’ works, especially J.J. de Groot’s *Het Kongsivezen van Borneo*, are the earliest independent and full-fledge research of the kongsi in the western scholarship; Wang Tai Peng’s thesis research, *The Origin of Chinese Kongsis*, Yuan Bingling’s *Chinese Democracies* and Mary Somers Heidhues’ *Goldiggers, Farmers, and Traders in the “Chinese Districts” of West Kalimantan, Indonesia* bring more nuanced and substantial analysis of the social and economic aspects

- of kongsis history; Leonard Blussé's work also contributes to the discovery and translation of the Dutch records of the kongsis. For more nineteenth-century Dutch scholars' works concerning the kongsis, also see Schaank, S.H., "De kongsis van Montrado, Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis en de kennis van het wezen der Chineesche verenigingen op de Westkust van Borneo," in *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkund*, 35, 5/6 (1893); Veth, P. J. *Borneo's Wester-Afdeeling: Geographisch, statistisch, historisch, voorafgegaan door eene algemeene schets des ganschen eilands*, (Zaltbommel: Joh. Nomanen Zoon, 1854).
- 18 These definitions probably overlap with each other on a case-by-case basis. The communal structure and culture varied across different kongsis, depending on the geographical origins of kongsis members and the size of the organization. For example, when smaller kongsis were more like blood-oath organizations, bigger kongsis formed a united confederation or functioned in a more company-like business mode.
 - 19 Carl A. Trocki, "Opium in the Chinese Nanyang Trade," in *Chinese Circulations: Capital, Commodities, and Networks in Southeast Asia*, edited by Eric Tagliacozzo and Wen-Chin Chang, 84-107. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press), 88.
 - 20 Wang, Tai Peng, *The Origin of Chinese Kongsis*, 3.
 - 21 Li, Xinxiang 李欣祥, Xiaoshi de Haiwai Hua Bang: Xipoluo Zhou Huaren Zhengquan de Xingwang 消逝的海外华邦: 西婆罗洲华人政权的兴亡 [The Fading Overseas Chinese State: The Rise and Fall of Chinese Power in West Borneo] (Beijing Daxue Chubanshe 北京大学出版社 [Beijing University Press] 2022).
 - 22 Trocki, "Opium in the Chinese Nanyang Trade," 89.
 - 23 Jackson's mapping still exerts a fundamental impact of our current understanding of the West Borneo kongsis today. Yuan Bingling, in her book in the 2000s, uses and cites Jackson's maps directly. See James S. Jackson, *Chinese in the West Borneo Goldfields: A Study in Cultural Geography* (University of Hull Publications, 1970).
 - 24 Heidhues, 53.
 - 25 Jackson, 21, 27.
 - 26 For scholarly attention on the maritime connection of the kongsis, which I will elaborate in the following section, see Chan Ying-kit, "The Founding of Singapore and the Chinese Kongsis of West Borneo (ca. 1819-1840)," in *Journal of Cultural Interaction in East Asia*, volume 7, (March, 2016), 99-121; Frank Andrew Smith, "missionaries, mariners, and merchants: overlooked British travelers to West Borneo in the early nineteenth century," in *Borneo Research Bulletin*, Vol. 33 (2002), 45- 61. Moreover, Mary Sommers Heidhues addresses the early flourishing import and export trade between the kongsis and overseas groups several times in her work. For example, "by 1822, most of the gold was certainly going to China, but a considerable amount also went to British traders in

- exchange for opium, textiles, and iron. The rest was sent to Siam and exchanged for salt, opium, and textiles; gold also went, mostly in Bugis ships, to Java, for cash or for oil, tobacco, and cloth. Soon, Singapore joined the other destinations of gold exports.” Mary Somers Heidhues, *Golddiggers, Farmers, and Traders in the Chinese Districts of West Kalimantan, Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2018), 50.
- 27 *Ibid.* Also see Carey, Peter & Reinhart, Christopher, “British Naval Power and its Influence on Indonesia, 1795–1942: An Historical Analysis,” in *Journal of Maritime Studies and National Integration*, 5 (1) (2021), 14-29.
- 28 Trocki, 89.
- 29 Carl A. Trocki, *Prince of Pirates: The Temenggongs and the Development of Johor and Singapore, 1784-1885* (Singapore: the National University of Singapore Press, 2007).
- 30 Eric Tagliacozzo, *Secret Trades, Porous Borders: Smuggling and States Along a Southeast Asian Frontier, 1865-1915* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).
- 31 James Warren’s work on the Sulu Zone illustrates a comprehensive picture of the dynamic maritime trade, supported by Sulu Sultanate through the hands of Chinese private junk traders, between southeastern China and the Sulu Sea. Leonard Anadaya’s careful investigation of the ethnohistory of the Malay world highlights the importance of Orang Laut people in the formation of early modern Southeast Asian states. Others, including Blussé, Bien Chiang, and Kwee Hui Kian, draw attention to more nuanced examinations of some overlooked commodities (Bird’s Nest and textiles) beyond the realm of spice, sugar, opium, and coffee. See James Warren, *The Sulu Zone: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery, and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State, 1768-1898* (1981); Leonard Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree: Trade and Ethnicity in the Straits of Melaka* (2008); Leonard Blussé, “In Praise of Commodities: An Essay on the Crosscultural Trade in Edible Bird’s- Nests,” in *Emporia, Commodities and Entrepreneurs in Asian Maritime Trade, C. 1400-1750*, edited by Roderich Ptak and Dietmar Rothermund (1991); Kwee Hui Kian and Bien Chiang’s works on Indonesian textile and bird’s nest in *Chinese Circulations: Capital, Commodities, and Networks in Southeast Asia*, edited by Eric Tagliacozzo and Wen-Chin Chang (2011).
- 32 See Bruno Latour, *Science in Action : How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1987); Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- 33 Michel Callon, “Some Elements of a Sociology of Translation: Domestication of the Scallops and the Fishermen of St Brieuc Bay,” *The Sociological Review* 32, no. 1_suppl (May 1984), 196-233.

- 34 As outlined by Callon, the process of translation can be divided into four fundamental stages: problematization, intersement, enrolment, and mobilization. The concept of the *Obligatory Passage Point (OPP)* usually arises during the initial stage of problematization, as different groups recognize the challenges associated with the project and acknowledge the necessity of uniting at a specific point (OPP) to collectively address these issues. See Callon, "Some Elements of a Sociology of Translation," 7-8.
- 35 Edwin Sayes, "Actor–Network Theory and Methodology: Just What Does It Mean to Say That Nonhumans Have Agency?," *Social Studies of Science* 44, no. 1 (December 30, 2013), 134-149. Sayes not only elucidates the concept of nonhuman actors within ANT but also offers a compelling reevaluation of the concept of agency re-defined by Latour. According to Latour and Sayes, agency goes beyond mere notions of "intentionality, subjectivity, and free will;" it encompasses the remarkable capacity to "make a difference in the course of some other agent's action." See Sayes, 141; Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 63-86, especially on page 71.
- 36 Callon, "Some Elements of a Sociology of Translation," 1.
- 37 Heidhues, 53.
- 38 Callon, "Some Elements of a Sociology of Translation," 20. Problematization serves as the initial stage of translation in Callon's research, wherein each entity involved (the three researchers, the scallops, the fishermen, and the scientific colleagues) aligns themselves with the shared conjuncture (the OPP) by recognizing the problems and obstacles that necessitate their engagement in the translation network.
- 39 The cultural and structural peculiarities of kongsis is well-addressed by Heidhues: "certainly the kongsis evidenced many similarities to Chinese village life, but there were differences, too. Participation was carefully limited to those of mixed blood and locally born, thus inverting usual village practice. Voting rights were reserved to miners, whereas villages in Chinese were dominated by agriculturists. Finally, the commercial interest- gold mining- overrode other local interests, just as the miners outvoted other inhabitants." (Heidhues, 60).
- 40 Lamphon, "Tour On Borneo," in *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, June 6th, 1844, page 2.
- 41 For example, "it is generally believed that the Dutch intend to subjugate the entire interior of that part of Sumatra lying between Padang on the west coast, and Siak and Indingire on the east. If they succeed, they will doubtless, according to their custom, do all in their power to injure and ruin the commerce at present existing between the native ports on the east coast of Sumatra, with Singapore." S. G. Bonhajn, Esq., to H. T. Prinsep, in "Papers relative to the Proceedings of the Netherland Authorities in the Island of Sumatra, presented to the House of Commons by the Queen's Command," *House of*

- Commons Papers*, May 28th, 1840, S. G. Bonhajn, Esq., to H. T. Prinsep, 3.
- 42 In the eighteenth century, there were three main ways to attract Dutch coercive intervention in local affairs: nonstate actors causing trouble for the colonial administration, nonstate activities threatening the economic benefits of the state, or the Dutch were invited to provide political support and join the throne disputes by Muslim sultans. Obviously, these three aspects overlap with each other in a very popular manner. But in general, the VOC did not seek monopolization over violence and interfere with local politics actively. As Kwee stresses, “throughout the history of the Dutch company in Asia, its participation in warfare occurred mostly as a result of invitation from indigenous power-holders” (Kwee, 6).
- 43 Wang Tai Peng, 55-57.
- 44 For example, Reinout Vos conducts a nuanced study of the tin trade in the Malay peninsula to demonstrate how the VOC commodified their military and political strengths and sold them to local sultans in exchange for trading privileges and monopolistic rights. James Rush’s research on the nineteenth-century opium farms in Java show how the Dutch monopoly over opium gave significant economic and political powers to different local groups, especially Chinese farmers. See Reinout Vos, *Gentle Janus, Merchant Prince: the VOC and the Tightrope of Diplomacy in the Malay World, 1740-1800* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1993); James, R. Rush, *Opium to Java: Revenue Farming and Chinese Enterprise in Colonial Indonesia, 1860-1910*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2020).
- 45 Heidhues, 52.
- 46 Arena Wati, *Syair Perang Cina di Monterado*, Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1989.
- 47 Leonard Blussé & Ank Merens, “Nuggets from the Gold Mines: Three tales of the Ta-Kang Kongsis of West Kalimantan,” in *Conflict and Accomodation in Early Modern East Asia : Essays in Honour of Erik Zürcher*, edited by Blussé Leonard, Harriet T Zurndorfer, and Zürcher Erik, (Leiden: Brill, 1993).
- 48 Lanfang Gongsi Lidai Niance 兰芳公司历代年册.
- 49 Yuan, 258. Chinese manuscript, kept by the library of Sinological Institute of Leiden University. In her appendix, Yuan provides a very detailed and organized summary of the kongsis-related Chinese collections preserved at Leiden University Library.
- 50 Among these following Chinese works, Li Xinxiang’s book, published in 2022, is the most updated and consolidated Chinese research of West Borneo kongsis. Li Feng and Zhou Yunshui’s work in 2018 conducts detailed examination of Chinese primary sources and material records regarding the kongsis. See Li, Xinxiang 李欣祥, Luo Fangbo Ji Dongwanlv Lanfang Zhengquan Yanjiu 罗芳伯及东万律兰芳政权研究 [A Reserach on Lo Fang-bo and Lan-fang Regime in Mandor Borneo] (Zhongguo Wenhua Chubanshe

中国文化出版社 [China Culture Publishing House] 2015); Lin, Feng 林峰 & Zhou, Yunshui 周云水, *Xipoluo Zhou Huaren Gongsis Shiliao Jilu* 西婆罗洲华人公司史料辑录 [A Historical Bibliography of Chinese kongsis in West Borneo] (Jinan University Press 暨南大学出版社, 2018); Li, Xinxiang 李欣祥, *Xiaoshi de Haiwai Hua Bang*: *Xipoluo Zhou Huaren Zhengquan de Xingwang* [The Fading Overseas Chinese State: The Rise and Fall of Chinese Power in West Borneo] (Beijing Daxue Chubanshe 北京大学出版社 [Beijing University Press] 2022); Xie, Yongmao 谢永茂, *Lanfang Gongheguoshi* 兰芳共和国史 [The History of Lanfang Republic], (世界客属总会 [The World Hakka Federation], 2021).

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