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Beyond the Archival Grain:

An Archival-Practice Inquiry into the Internal Diversity of the
Chinese Population and its relationship with Inter-group
interaction in Dutch East Indies Colonial Possessions Between
the 17th and the 19th Century

By

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Abstract

Chinese communities have been settled in Maritime Southeast Asia since at least the beginning of the last millennium, as they began to arrive in the region as early as the 5th century CE. Before the arrival of the Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch colonial powers in maritime Southeast Asia, members of the diasporic Chinese community had established themselves as essential merchants, farmers, fishers, and various types of laborers. Diaspora Chinese Community maintained its significant presence throughout the three-century-long Dutch colonial era between 1596 and 1949, in what is now called Indonesia. This thesis is interested in the archival practice in the Dutch colonial rule, especially that of the VOC era between 1602 and 1799. This thesis applies the notion of the archive as an administrative instrument of intervention, based on the categorization of a population, to the VOC-Era Dutch archives. This thesis aims to investigate how the internal diversity of the diasporic Chinese community has shaped inter-group relationships through the lens of the digitized colonial Dutch archive. By combining the etic Dutch archival documents, old maps, and emic Chinese diasporic historical accounts, the thesis suggests the following inferences. The VOC recognized the internal diversity of the Chinese community and reacted to the change within and outside of the diasporic Chinese community by using intensive documentation not only as an instrument to keep track of the development, but also that enable devising measures. Meanwhile, the Chinese diasporic community under the rule of the VOC colonial possessions throughout the archipelago shared a similar vision with the Dutch authority regarding themselves and the surrounding society, but not without a certain amount of deviance. The exact nature of interaction between the diasporic Chinese community and outsiders is thus defined by the case-specific expressions of such internal diversity in different temporality and loci.

Keyword: Anthropology of Colonialism, Archive as Intervention. Etic and Emic, Indonesia, Dutch colonialism, Diasporic Chinese in Southeast Asia, Dutch East India Company, VOC, the Republic of the United Seven Provinces of the Netherlands

Introduction

Chinese communities have been settled in Maritime Southeast Asia since at least the beginning of the last millennium, as they began to arrive in the region as early as the 5th century CE.¹ By Maritime Southeast Asia, this thesis defines the region as the amalgamation of today's Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Timor-Leste, and the Philippines. The reason for adopting such a definition is that this thesis's research interest is situated in the colonial era. The colonies' boundaries, settled by different Western powers during this period, fundamentally determined the contemporary borders of nation-states. The colonial empires transformed the region tremendously, as external sovereign powers unified a diverse geographical region populated by vastly different languages, cultures, and societies into singular political entities for the first time. European colonial powers set precedents in Maritime Southeast Asia through economic, political, and social constructions, including economic models and social relationships.

The colonial possessions controlled by the Dutch colonial empire fell within the theatre of this historical process. The first Dutch Expedition to the Banten Sultanate in today's Java Island, Republic of Indonesia, was commenced in 1595, and the transfer of sovereignty from the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the newly independent United States of Indonesia (*Republik Indonesia Serikat/ Verenigde Staten van Indonesie*) happened in 1949. The formal decolonization of the region occurred between 1945 and 1970, amidst the global decolonization process during the Cold War. Since the 1970s, scholars across different disciplines and affinity backgrounds have accumulated a constantly growing body of academic literature on the multifaceted colonial history. These academic inquiries delve into various aspects of the three-century-long colonial era in

¹ Freta Oktarina and Kemas Ridwan Kurniawan, "History of Jakarta's Chinatown: The Role of the City Gate as a Transition Area and a Starting Point in the Spatial Transformation from the First Chinatown to the Renewal Phase," *SPAFA Journal* 5 (2021):2, <https://doi.org/10.26721/spafajournal.2021.v5.650>.

maritime Southeast Asia societies, encompassing changing economic factors, political organizations, social relationships, and cultural developments.

These academic inquiries have undoubtedly yielded fruitful results in advancing the understanding of the diasporic Chinese communities residing in Southeast Asian Dutch colonial possessions. It is worth noting that the first two centuries of Dutch colonial enterprise in maritime Southeast Asia took the form of the chartered company, *Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (United East India Company, or VOC). Under such administration, with quasi-state characteristics, commercial interest-driven considerations were the priority for the *Heeren XVII* (17 Gentlemen, the company's board of directors), based in the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands, and the *Gouverneur-generaal van Indië*, based in Batavia. Based on the multi-sourced accumulation of colonial era documentation, ranging from chartered company archives to later governmental archives, and coupled with personal accounts, researchers have assembled pieces of colonial societies under Dutch control through these discrete lenses.

Major concerns in colonial Dutch archives include the production of raw material (especially cash crops and ores), population growth, internal and external security, trade, transportation, and diplomacy. These archives are stored worldwide in archives in the Netherlands, South Africa, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and other nations involved with the company's operation. Among the dizzying racks of records, the documents created by the VOC between 1602 and 1799 were listed in the UNESCO Memory of the World List in 2003.² The VOC archive has been the primary source for researchers across disciplines, as the company's employees diligently tracked trade proceedings, governmental decrees, socio-cultural development, and diplomatic

² UNESCO, "Archives of the Dutch East India Company," UNESCO Memory of the World, N.d., <https://www.unesco.org/en/memory-world/archives-dutch-east-india-company>.

correspondence. Scholars from different academic backgrounds have been divided into this archive material repository to retrieve the information they deem valuable. Besides historians, archaeologists, and anthropologists craving for the information from the 17th and 19th-century Europe, Africa, and Asia, natural scientists, including meteorologists, reconstructed the historical El Niño events out of the records provided by the VOC archives.³ In some regions, the documentation from the VOC employees even became the first written record from or about the region's geography and society, attesting to the unique value of this documentation collection.⁴

As a chartered company with quasi-sovereign power and a quasi-independent relationship with the Republic of the United Seven Netherlands, the administration of colonies and trade posts (*Comptoir*, factories or offices) throughout the Indian Ocean and the West Pacific Coastal Region was among the priorities of the VOC's authority body. Administration is intrinsically linked to the overall commercial operation of the company, which was characterized by a monopoly on production, procurement, transportation, and sale of lucrative commodities both across the three continents and within the Indo-Pacific region. As the chartered company took control of important ports in the Indo-Pacific region through direct military conquest, diplomacy, or political maneuver, these ports and adjacent regions under the company's political and economic influence became the possessions of the semi-autonomous Dutch-based early example of a transnational enterprise.⁵ Governing these colonies became a tedious daily routine, and the high cost of maintaining the various colonies (especially when military force was involved) eventually became a factor in the VOC's liquidation in 1799.

³ UNESCO, "Memory of the World Register: nomination form," UNESCO Webform, December 30th, 2002, 3, https://media.unesco.org/sites/default/files/webform/mow001/netherlands_voc_archives.pdf.

⁴ Ibid, 4-5.

⁵ Felicia Gottmann and Philip Stern, "Introduction: Crossing companies", *Journal of World History* 31, no.30 (2020): 478, <https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/5/article/763248/pdf>.

Before the arrival of the Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch colonial powers in maritime Southeast Asia, members of the diasporic Chinese community had established themselves as essential merchants, farmers, fishers, and various types of laborers.⁶ The early VOC's operation in Maritime Southeast Asia benefited from the network built by Chinese merchants, whom the company employed as intermediaries.⁷ As a factor with an omniscient presence in the operational region and playing indispensable roles both for the company and for various societies, the VOC included the Chinese extensively in their documentation of diverse maritime Southeast Asia populations.

This thesis aims to answer the following question: From indispensable functionaries of the Dutch institution to rebels against it, how did the VOC authority perceive and react to the internal diversity of the diasporic Chinese community under its jurisdiction, and how did such understanding confirm or contradict the Chinese own perspective? By combining the etic Dutch archival documents, old maps, and emic Chinese diasporic historical accounts, the thesis suggests the following inferences. The VOC acknowledged the ever-evolving internal diversity of the Chinese diasporic population under its control, and the VOC archive was an instrumental functionary in the Dutch intervention through recording and categorizing such knowledge. Meanwhile, the Chinese diasporic community under the rule of the VOC colonial possessions throughout the archipelago shared a similar vision with the Dutch authority regarding themselves and the surrounding society, but not without a certain amount of deviance. The exact nature of interaction between the diasporic Chinese community and outsiders is thus defined by the case-specific expressions of such internal diversity in different temporality and loci.

⁶ Oktarina and Kurniawan, "History of Jakarta's Chinatown", 16.

⁷ Ibid, 7.

Theory, Methodology, and Source

The theory and methodology used in this thesis are derived from two main books: *Along the Archival Grain* by American anthropologist and historian Ann Laura Stoler (2008), and *Modern Inquisition* by another American cultural anthropologist, Irene Silverblatt (2004). *Along the Archival Grain* is a book about how the Dutch colonial authority in the Netherlands East Indies (today's Indonesia) used documentation as an instrument to construct solid definitions of socio-cultural common sense under colonialism between 1830 and 1930, especially when reality in the colony became the fundamental threat to such an ideological scheme through contradiction.⁸ *Modern Inquisition: Peru and the Colonial Origin of the Civilized World* is a book about a similar anxiety to construct categories for colonial subjects through inquisition system in colonial Peru under the Spanish rule between the 16th and 18th century, predate the period covered by Stoler's book and roughly contemporary to the scope of this paper, and how this anxiety became the foundation of modern racism.⁹

According to Silverblatt, racism and fascism have their root in the early days of colonialism in the Americas instead of what Hannah Arendt believed to come from the peak colonial period of the 19th century.¹⁰ However, Arendt discerned the crucial components of the roots of racism and fascism from the 19th-century imperialism: the bureaucratic system and the logic for "race thinking" and "race-making".¹¹ Silverblatt traced the origin of race-making and bureaucracy to the landfall of Colonialism in the Americas since 1492.¹² She argues that race-making, bureaucratic administration, and more importantly, the making of modern states, are intertwined since the late

⁸ Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Commonsense* (Princeton University Press, 2008), 59.

⁹ Irene Silverblatt, *Modern Inquisition: Peru and the Colonial Origin of the Civilized World* (Duke University Press, 2004), 20.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

15th century.¹³ The terminal phase of the 15th Century saw the authority of European monarchs, especially the Iberian ones, consolidating while extending beyond their related smaller range during the medieval period.¹⁴ From the inference of Silverblatt, the entangled triple mechanisms have their origins in the Spanish-Portuguese colonialism in the Americas. The logic behind making races is therefore the nuts and bolts of early modern statecraft. The Spanish and Portuguese colonialism eventually expanded into the Indo-Pacific region following the establishment of American colonies, and this process also shaped Spain and Portugal themselves. Dutch colonialism in Maritime Southeast Asia, which began about a century later, can thus be treated as an object for juxtaposition, as similar effects also appeared in the consolidation of the Republic of the United Seven Provinces of the Netherlands. Although institutionalized racism is not the center of this thesis *per se*, the bureaucratic categorization logic on population developed by the colonial institutions, the center of the thesis, eventually gave rise to the later ideological and institutional racism.

Colonial documents from the post-Napoleonic Kingdom of the Netherlands' former Ministry of Colonies are the backbone of Stoler's *Along the Archival Grain*, as the author was interested in the process of making a set of common sense within the Dutch colonial system. These archival materials were composed between the liquidation of the VOC and the outbreak of WWII, which eventually saw the decolonization of the Dutch Colonial Empire in the post-war decades.¹⁵ What attracted Stohler the most were the incidents that highlighted the vulnerability of this “commonsense” when challenged by the reality that did not conform.¹⁶ These incidents defied the methodically constructed “commonsense” in diverse ways, as shown by the following key

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid, 21-22

¹⁵ Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 332.

¹⁶ Ibid, 1.

phenomena. The frequent occurrence of the poor and delinquent mixed heritage *Inlansche kinderen* (literal meaning is native-born children, usually fathered by Europeans with native mothers) on the fringe of colonial Netherlands East India society in various types of documents attests the colonial authority's anxiety against such an exception for "perfect white or native people".¹⁷ The investigation documentation of the Sumatran Plantation's European planters torturing and even killing Chinese indentured laborers (who were perceived as inferior) expressed the colonial administrator's fear of the threat posed by the "cold-blooded white cruelty" against the perceived perfect "white morality."¹⁸

While scholars since the 1970s have begun to emphasize the need to notice the underlying purpose and intentions of archival creation, such caution against archival biases is usually a sidenote in each piece of academic literature that contains it. Given such circumstances, Stoler's *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* offers a unique close inquiry that runs against the grain of Dutch colonial archival habits.¹⁹ The Dutch colonialism in this archipelago has its roots in the VOC rule, including the colonial economy, bureaucracy, military, and archive system.²⁰ Understanding the VOC period through colonial documentation will also provide context for understanding the later developments in the colonies and the independent nation, one and a half centuries after the VOC's liquidation. The racial, ethnic, and religious categories in colonial documentation are not faithful reflections of reality but instruments for the colonial authority to understand the ever-evolving situations in the colonies. And based on this

¹⁷ Ibid, 137, Stoler quoted that "we do not want to create the imitation Europeans, we just need perfected natives" from AR, KV 28 March 1874, no. 47M.

¹⁸ Ibid, 225, 244, Stoler presented that the incident originated from the investigation of a murder case in which European planter Luhmann family was killed by "hot-blooded Malays" according to East Sumatra Coast's Assistant Resident Frans Carl Valck's correspondence, but his investigation exposed the abuses of these European planters against their laborers and indigenous inhabitants which might trigger what he speculated as vengeance-induced murders.

¹⁹ Leonard Blussé illustrated this precaution by referencing the VOC ordinances collection book *Plakaatboeken*, which categorized documentations for the company authority's own use (Leonard Blussé, *Strange Company: Chinese Settlers, Mestizo Women, and the Dutch in the VOC Batavia*, Foris Publication, 1986, 2).

²⁰ Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 24.

understanding, the colonial authority developed interventions to respond to these changes and shape the colonies into the desired form. As a company that prioritized monopolized economic interest through trade, military force, political control, and diplomatic meddling, the documentation of the Chinese in the colonies also carried a similar role to that made three decades later in Stoler's book.

This thesis thus synthesizes Silverblatt's thesis on the crucial influence exerted by "thinking and making of races" on the formation of early modern Western states, and Stohler's approach to Dutch colonial archives, which understands it as the instrument to both keep track of the situation in the colonies and facilitate the devising of policies. This thesis extrapolates Stoler's method, which extracts cases demonstrating such a track-and-response mechanism of the 19th and 20th century Dutch Ministry of Colonial archives for analysis, onto the preceding VOC era archives. This thesis examines the organization of the VOC authority's records on the Chinese population under their jurisdiction, specifically how they documented the internal diversity of the Chinese community and the diverse relationships between the Chinese and the company's authority.

This thesis thus drew primary data from digitized letters and papers received from various VOC posts to the Netherlands' company chambers, stored in the Dutch *Nationaal Archief*, and from digitized daily administrative records of the Batavian Government General of the Indies, stored in the Indonesian *Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia*. At the same time, this thesis also attempts to juxtapose the understanding of such diversity from the perspective of the Dutch chartered company, the Chinese diasporic community, and the indigenous inhabitants. In order to grasp the perspective of the diasporic Chinese community itself, the thesis also references the rare late 18th century historical account *开吧历代史记* (*The Chinese Annals of Batavia*) written by an unidentified author (s), and accounts from the archival thematic administrative documents of the

autonomous Batavian Chinese Council 吧城公案 (*The Batavian Kong Koan's archive*) from the Library of Leiden University. Besides written archival documents, the ArcGIS Pro vectorized and annotated version of archived old maps (by the author) created by Dutch cartographers of crucial trading cities under VOC control, also provides parallel spatial testimony for the company's rule-era inter-group relationships. Since early modern city planning constitutes an exercise of the Foucauldian 18th-century transition of governmental art to political science, which enables a state to exert control through secular science.²¹

The most comprehensive documents produced by the United Dutch East India Company are the Daily Registers (*Daghregister*) of the *Kasteel Batavia*, General Resolution of the Batavia High Government (*Hooge Regering*), and the Received Briefings and Papers from various VOC establishments to the Netherlands. The *Kasteel Batavia*'s Daily Register is the everyday record of communications and documentation in and out of the office of the governor-general's office of the VOC outside the Netherlands in Batavia's fortress, just south of the coast near the Ciliwung River. The general resolutions were the routine decisions made by the high government (also called the Council of Indies) of the VOC. Valuable portions of these documents were copied routinely by the VOC clerks and sent back to the Netherlands via shipments, comprising the Received Briefings and Papers (*Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren*). To facilitate better reference to the lengthy daily registers and general resolutions, these documents are accompanied by marginalia and realia, respectively, as an index written on the sides of the main passages. These digestive marginalia and realia become powerful helpers when searching for specific types of information from the archives, particularly when the original main-body text becomes unreadable due to erosion. Besides sending routine papers and briefings regularly to the Netherlands, the high government in Batavia also

²¹ Michel Foucault, *Power* (The New Press, 2001), 218-219.

composed *General Missiven* (official letters) reporting crucial developments in the VOC possessions and adjacent regions to the VOC's board of Directors. The published version of the 1610-1767 official letters, published between 1960 and 2017, is available through the digitization effort of the *Huygens Instituut*.

In order to keep track of the company's administrative body's decisions for future reference, the VOC archive also collected and categorized past ordinances into the *Plakaatboeken* (books for placards). Today, the published version of these *Plakaatboeken* from the 19th century, together with the original archival *Daghregister* and the Batavia High Council's general resolutions, is available online through the VOC Archive Digitization Project thanks to the collaboration between the Dutch Couts Foundation and *ANRI*. The VOC era Dutch diplomatic correspondents regarding treaties between the VOC and the local rulers also included various segments recording Chinese people's activities in the region. These letters can be accessed through the digitized version of the *Corpus Diplomaticum* published by the *Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* (KITLV, Royal Institution for the Linguistic, Geography, and Ethnology) between 1907 and 1950.²² However, this thesis does not thoroughly cover these diplomatic-related correspondences due to the relatively low information density of the diasporic Chinese community's description compared to administrative archives.

²²The thesis provides two examples below:

1. "...Insgelijcx soo eeinge Chineesen buijten Comp logie schuldigh zijn en soll den Pangeran regh daerover mogen doen..." The Pangeran (ruler of Jambi, Sumatra) is allowed to punish the Chinese who are guilty of acting beyond the company's logic (VOC). From CLVI, Djambi, 6 Juli 1643, Mr. J. E. Heeres, Eerste Deel, *Corpus Diplomaticum* (KITLV, 1907), 409, <https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/pagebrowser/CorpusDiplomaticum-3-1/#source=1&page=441&accessor=thumbnails>.
2. "...Dat ik geen Chineesen, Macassaren, Bouginesen, Maleyers, Baliërs of eenige andere buytenlandse natien in mijn onderhorig district sal tolleren of admitteeren, dan met speciale voorkennis en toestemming van de Comp.." Without the Company's (VOC) special permission before the entrance, I (regent of Madura Island near Java) will not permit the entrance of Chinese, Makassarans, Buginese, Malays, and people from other foreign land into my district. From DCCCLXXXII. Java-Madoera, 15 November 1745, Dr. F. W. Stapel, Vijfde Deel, *Corpus Diplomaticum* (KITLV, 1938), 400, <https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/pagebrowser/CorpusDiplomaticum-3-5/#source=1&page=413&accessor=thumbnails&size=782&view=imagePane>.

Today, a small fraction of the Dutch-established autonomous Chinese Batavian Council's preserved records is stored at the library of the University of Leiden. The surviving documents from the Chinese Batavian Council (*Kong Koan*), or in Chinese 吧城公案, were produced between the 1780s and the 1940s, while those produced between 1780 and 1799 only occupied a small portion among the lucky survivors. These Chinese language-dominated archival papers include meeting minutes, legal case proceedings spurred by real estate disputes, administrative registrations on religion and education affairs, and numerous population-related documentation (i.e., birth, death, and marriage certificates). Fortunately, the terminal VOC era council minutes and marriage certificates are among the surviving *Kong Koan*, giving the later generations a discrete but invaluable window into the Chinese diasporic community from their own perspective. Besides archival material, the 1953 version of the late 18th-century Chinese Batavian historical account *The Chinese Annual of Batavia* (开吧历代史记), annotated and published by Singaporean historian Xu Yunqiao, also offered unique narratives of the diasporic Chinese people under the VOC rule on their own history for the past two centuries since the establishment of Batavia.

Apart from written accounts, the Dutch cartographers were diligent producers of oceanographic, regional, and city maps since the 16th century. They produced many of the earliest or earliest preserved maps of multiple locations in the Americas and along the coast of the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The colonial cities, serving as trading posts and regional headquarters for the VOC, were methodically documented in minute detail. This thesis selects digitized city plans from European archives, museums, and libraries of four representative VOC-era colonial cities: Banten, Batavia, Semarang, and Ambon; vectorizes and annotates them based on the legend and other indications on the plans. Dutch colonial city plans detailed the distribution of administrative and economic facilities, while also indicating spatial relationships of different residential areas

populated by people from diverse classes, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds. Urban planning, as a tool for social control and exercising power, can thus imply the relationship between the Dutch colonial authority that masterminded the city's construction and a specific group of dwellers. The proximity from a residential area to economic and governmental facilities, the degree of social disparity within a settlement, and special spatial treatment around a settlement (i.e., ghettoization) are all examples of how urban space manifests the inter-group relationships and related intra-group situations.

Literature Review

Gazing at the genesis of Dutch colonialism at the onset of further worldwide decolonization, scholars from different academic and social backgrounds began to examine various fabrics within the colonial societies. Understanding the details of various economic, political, and social fabrics originating from the colonial society is beneficial for comprehending the related post-colonial incarnation, which is prevalent in post-colonial nation-states, including the Republic of Indonesia. The introduction to these treaties is organized in the following thematic order: the historian's contested evaluation of the social status occupied and economic roles played by the VOC-era Chinese Diasporic Community, the VOC-era diasporic Chinese people's connection with their homeland, and the multidisciplinary research on the VOC-era Chinese diasporic community across the archipelago where the VOC once operated. The Dutch archival practice during the three-century-long colonial rule in Maritime Southeast Asia is the cornerstone of this thesis. However, due to such a high degree of importance and the significantly low amount of dedicated research coverage, it is not included in the review of past research on the VOC era Chinese community.

Dutch historian Leonard Blussé laid much of the groundwork for the multi-disciplinary research into the Sino-European interaction in the early modern period, especially around the VOC

meddling in Southeast Asia. His 1979 journal article *Chinese trade to Batavia during the days of the V.O.C.* conducted a chronological survey on Chinese sailors and merchants' roles in the interaction between early modern China and the Dutch chartered company.²³ As relatively early work dedicated to the issue, this article addressed immigrant Chinese laborers, in addition to the academic staples of traders, sailors, and shipowners.²⁴ Blussé addressed the flourish, interruption, and decline of the maritime trade between China, Japan, and Batavia roughly at the same period as the *de facto* Sino-Dutch alliance in the second half of the 17th century, and linked it to the relationship between the diasporic Chinese and the company authority.²⁵ He also provided an analytical and digested overview of the scarce late 18th-century historical accounts, *The Chinese Annals of Batavia*, produced by the Chinese living under the VOC administration themselves. With three selected and translated segments of the book, Blussé and the co-author of the overview, Nie Dening, concluded that the annual's anonymous author, crafted a narrated overview of diasporic Chinese interaction with the Dutch colonial authority at the end of the 18th century with collected anecdotes.²⁶

A.R.T. Kemasang is an Indonesian historian based in the United Kingdom for decades since the 1970s. His writings on the Chinese Indonesian experience during the Dutch colonial era sometimes ended with sharp criticism of the contemporary Suharto's junta in Indonesia and Western scholars. In his 1982 journal article *The 1740 Massacre of Chinese in Java: curtain raiser for the Dutch plantation economy*, he analyzed the economic conditions that led the company authorities to take drastic action against Chinese inhabitants in Batavia before criticizing the

²³ Leonard Blussé, "Chinese trade to Batavia during the days of V.O.C.", *Archipel* 18 (1979): 196, 204, https://www.persee.fr/doc/arch_0044-8613_1979_num_18_1_1509.

²⁴ Ibid, 208.

²⁵ Leonard Blussé, "No boats to China: the Dutch East India Company and the changing pattern of the China Sea Trade, 1635-169", *Modern Asian Study* 30, no. 1 (1996): 74, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/312901>.

²⁶ Leonard Blussé and Nie Dening, *The Chinese Annals of Batavia, the Kai Ba Lidai Shiji and Other Stories (1610-1795)* (Brill, 2018), 41.

Indonesian junta for marginalizing Chinese minorities.²⁷ Kemasang also attributed the delayed emergence of Indonesian bourgeois society to Dutch suppression in his 1985 article *How Dutch Colonialism foreclosed a domestic bourgeoisie in Java: The 1740 Chinese Massacres Reappraised*.²⁸ While treating primary historical sources in a highly critical lens unique to the contemporary, Kemasang's political activism against colonialism and dictatorship made his firebrand academic outputs as a historian decrease in objectivity.

Kemasang's 1989 review of Dutch historian Leonard Blusse's book, *Strange Company: Chinese Settlers, Mestizo Women, and the Dutch in VOC Batavia*, berated Blusse for perpetuating the rhetoric of Dutch colonizers by accepting Dutch records uncritically.²⁹ In response to the critical overview of his 1988 book by A.R.T. Kemasang, Blusse published a response in 1989, stating that Kemasang's furious inference on the 1740 Batavian Massacre against the Chinese as an orchestrated event obscured the economic contribution of the Chinese Indonesians in making modern Indonesia.³⁰ While opening new directions for the diasporic study of the Chinese Indonesians' history, Leonard Blusse's contribution still lies heavily in the loci of Chinese Batavian and neglects the Chinese diasporic presence in other locations across the archipelago.

For Blussé and Kemasang, discussing the importance of Chinese traders in Java is a necessity to understand the commercial and administrative function of the VOC, and early modern global trade with maritime Southeast Asia as a knot. Blussé pointed out that the large-scale importation of Chinese laborers into Batavia *Ommelanden* (Batavia's surrounding region), which

²⁷ A.R.T. Kemasang, "The 1740 massacre of Chinese in Java: Curtain raiser for the Dutch plantation economy", *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 14, no. 1(1982): 63, 71, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/14672715.1982.10412638>.

²⁸ A.R.T. Kemasang, "How Dutch colonialism foreclosed a domestic bourgeoisie in Java: The 1740 Chinese Massacres Reappraised", *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 9, no. 1 (1985): 75, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40241012>.

²⁹ A.R.T. Kemasang, "Dutch insanity: Indonesian historiography's new cathartic tool for colonialism?", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Deel 145, 2/3de Afl.* (1989): 336-337, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27864037>.

³⁰ Leonard Blusse, "Pioneers or the cattle in the slaughterhouse? A rejoinder to A.R.T. Kemasang", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Deel 145, 2/3de Afl.* (1989): 357, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27864038>.

eventually culminated in the fact that they were the majority of the 1740 rebels south of the city.³¹ Blusse also emphasized that the Dutch trade in 17th-century maritime Southeast and East Asia with China and Japan was interrelated to the domestic stabilities in the latter two parties Blussé.³² When China went into the chaos between the Ming and Qing dynasties, Dutch trade with Japan became more prominent.

While emphasizing the general economic factor locally and globally, Kemasang linked every VOC action regarding the Chinese population under their authority, including the massacre, the prolonged liquidation, and the restrictions on the coffee business, as organized political and economic maneuvers, instead of sporadic incidents.³³ From here, he criticized Blussé for not criticizing the old Dutch forefathers' colonial narratives of "benevolent foreign rulers" as someone who was based in Leiden, Netherlands.³⁴ At the same time, he also criticized the Dutch-made phenomenon of "wealthy Chinese" becoming the predecessors of his contemporary Indonesian narrative of Chinese Indonesians controlling its key economic functionaries.³⁵ He wrote this while based in the United Kingdom, which was contemporary to General Suharto's authoritarian regime. The regime enacted institutional discrimination against its Chinese descent citizens while allowing some Chinese Indonesian merchants to profit from Suharto's nepotism. The economic aspect of VOC resolutions is a well-received inference now, but Kemasang's politically charged activist academic inquiry led Blussé to counter-criticize him to win fame by staging himself as the speaker of the pool and the oppressed.³⁶

³¹ Blussé and Nie, *The Chinese Annals of Batavia*, 13.

³² Blussé, "No boats to China", 70-74.

³³ Kemasang, "The 1740 massacre of Chinese in Java", 63; Kemasang, "How Dutch colonialism foreclosed a domestic bourgeoisie in Java", 71.

³⁴ Kemasang, "Dutch insanity", 336-377.

³⁵ Kemasang, "The 1740 massacre of Chinese in Java", 71.

³⁶ Blussé, "Pioneers or the cattle in the slaughterhouse?", 358.

Blussé's link between the inter-regional trade, the Chinese settlement in the Dutch colonies, and the domestic situation in China is also attested by later scholars. The increase of Chinese residents in Java in the second half of the 16th century, including Batavia, is attributed to the need to flee the internal strife by Freta Oktarina and Kemas Ridwan Kurniawan in their 2020 publication.³⁷ Thus, a typical push-pull factor chain of immigration is established. Kemasang's strong link between economic factors and the fate of the Chinese in Java is also partially vindicated in Peter Carey's 2007 narration of the Java 1825 Uprising, as the Chinese tollgate keepers became the subject of anti-Chinese sentiments in the uprising.³⁸ The continuity of social conditions of the VOC era and the direct-administrative era is thus more intimate than the simple continuation of administrative behaviors alluded to by Stoler at the opening chapter of *Along the Archival Grain*.

The 1825-1830 Javan Uprising led by Prince Dipanegara against the Dutch colonial administration has become a quintessential event in the national consciousness of Indonesia. According to British historian Peter Carey's 2007 Book on the event, the Chinese community was intrinsically linked to the incident. For example, the extortionist Chinese tollgate keepers appointed by the *Kapitan Cina* since the late company era devastated the Javanese farmers' livelihood before the uprising; these *Kapitan Cina* were, in turn, appointed by the European authorities and local Javanese rulers, who eventually received their fair share of revenue from the omnipresent tollgates.³⁹ The 1825 uprising, therefore, according to Carrey, has its roots partially in the triangular relationship between the Chinese, the Javanese, and the European colonial rulers,

³⁷ Oktarina and Kurniawan, "History of Jakarta's Chinatown", 3.

³⁸ Peter Carey, *The Power of Prophecy: Prince Dipanegara and the End of An Old Order in Java, 1785-1855* (KILYV Press, 2007), 467.

³⁹ According to Peter Carey, the revenue from Chinese tollgate keepers was indispensable for Dutch colonial authority under French suzerainty and British occupation during the French Revolution and Napoleonic War (Carey, *The Power of Prophecy*, 467-47).

dating back to the late VOC era. Such historical continuity strengthens the need to expand the knowledge of the VOC-era social dynamics.

Glaring at the city of Batavia, today's Jakarta through the lens of another related discipline, architectural history, the map study conducted by Freta Oktarina and Kemas Ridwan Kurniawan in 2020 recreated the changing settlement patterns of the Batavian Chinese since the 17th century. The changing pattern of the Chinese resident area in and out of the Old Town vividly evidences the city's heterogeneous phases of development.⁴⁰ The pulse of urban space is a refreshing concept offered by the two authors, while the broader implications of social fabrics are not conceived in this article due to the priority of the paper being urban development above all other intellectual considerations.

The Chinese diasporic communities are liminal figures in an early global economic and political system. The 1974 *Pepper, guns, and parleys: the Dutch East India Company and China, 1662-1681* was written by historian John E. Wills Jr. This classic is a comprehensive account of Sino-Dutch high-level diplomacy in the latter half of the 17th century based on the archival documents from respective parties.⁴¹ While the Chinese Qing Court (1644-1912) and the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) loyalist Zhen's kingdom in Taiwan were central players in the regional affairs, the Chinese Batavian had a substantial presence in the story as intermediaries.⁴² The diplomatic-driven research interest of Wills limited the space for discussing other angles outside the interaction between the Chinese court, the VOC, and their shared adversary, Zhen's small kingdom in Taiwan.

⁴⁰ Oktarina and Kurniawan, "History of Jakarta's Chinatown", 2.

⁴¹ John E. Wills Jr, *Pepper, guns, and parleys: the Dutch East India Company and China, 1662-1681* (Harvard University Press, 1974), 4.

⁴² Ibid, 201.

Many scholars are now aware that Chinese people have been entangled with the archipelago far beyond the centuries of colonialism. The East Indonesian Islands, which attracted the interest of the Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch colonizers with the islands' exclusive cloves and nutmegs, their unique and exquisitely prized products have been well-known to the Chinese since the first century CE.⁴³ The Chinese rulers and elites' desire for cloves fueled the Chinese merchants to fill the demand with goods from coastal and maritime Southeast Asia.⁴⁴ The same case also happened on the island of Java, as Chinese people had immigrated to the island as traders, farmers, and fishers since no later than the 14th century.⁴⁵ Such a lengthy presence in the region since the pre-colonial era marked the Chinese diasporic life in maritime Southeast Asia as a unique topic for scholars to pursue.

Methodologically, beyond the necessary archival material now stored in the Netherlands *Nationaal Archief* and Indonesian *Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia*, maps become an indispensable primary source for understanding the Chinese mobility and settlement patterns. Batavian Chinese residential pattern change is tracked by maps in Oktarina and Kurniawan's 2020 article; historian Xu Guanmian tracked Chinese navigation and charting knowledge with the Chinese ancient navigation charts in his 2020 publication. The lack of traceable colonial-period material evidence in the Chinatowns of Minahasa also led Archaeologist Irfanuddin Wahid Marzuki to frequently employ maps, photos, and archival documents as secondary datasets in the archaeological survey for Minahasa Chinese settlements in 2021.⁴⁶ The multi-disciplinary desired

⁴³ Xu Guanmian, "Junks to Mare Clausum: China-Maluku Connections in the Spice Wars, 1607–1622", *Itinerario* 44, no. 1(2020): 198, [Xu Guanmian's 2020 journal article](https://doi.org/10.1017/S016511531900055X) <https://doi.org/10.1017/S016511531900055X>.

⁴⁴ Xu, "Junks to Mare Clausum", 199, 202.

⁴⁵ Oktarina and Kurniawan, "History of Jakarta's Chinatown", 4.

⁴⁶ Irfanuddin Wahid Marzuki, "The Pattern of Minahasa Chinatown Settlement in Colonial Era: Urban Archaeology Study", *Proceedings of the 9th Asbam International Conference (Archeology, History, & Culture In The Nature of Malay), Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research* 660 (2021): 79, <https://www.atlantis-press.com/proceedings/asbam-21/125973527>.

spatial presence of the Chinese in the colonial-era Dutch holdings thus contextualized the historians' research topics.

The research coverage of Chinese activities elsewhere in the archipelago during the Dutch East India Company's existence is rare, compared to the sheer number of treaties on the Chinese in Java. Xu Guanmian's 2020 journal article on the role of Chinese merchants in the Banda Islands at the turn of the 17th century illustrates the diasporic Chinese influence beyond the main islands in the western half of the archipelago. Playing the role of indispensable intermediaries between the rivaling and even fighting Malukans, Portuguese, and Dutch newcomers, Chinese traders carved out their niches in the maritime crossroads of the global spice trade.⁴⁷ The intensified competition between the European colonial power in the Banda Sea even helped the Chinese merchants strengthen their bond with the Malukan people as close trade partners.⁴⁸ Xu's research broadened the scope of diasporic and overseas early modern Chinese presence in Maritime Southeast Asia, providing quintessential background knowledge about the condition during the Dutch exploration encounters. However, no information about the Chinese other than male merchants' presence in the region is included in the article.

Archaeology of the VOC, particularly archaeology about the Chinese residential areas under the VOC rule in Maritime Southeast Asia, is scarce. Such scarcity highlights the uniqueness of the 2021 qualitative surface survey by Indonesian archaeologist Irfanuddin Wahid Marzuki from Minahasa, Sulawesi Island. The author surveyed old Chinese settlements (China Kampong) constructed in the Minahasa region between 1655 and the early 20th century, concluding that Chinese residential areas are adapted to the local conditions, interacting with the local societies

⁴⁷ Xu, "Junks to Mare Clausum", 215.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

while retaining certain Chinese traits brought from their homeland.⁴⁹ The paper is a typical combination of archival material, maps, and archaeological survey results, communicating the usually separated fields. However, archaeologists can still expect to develop deeper archaeological survey projects in the centuries-old residential areas exemplified by the Manado Chinatown. Such a primary survey also suggested the potential to include Islands beyond Java and Sumatra in the compendium of research of the Chinese immigrant community in the VOC-controlled maritime Southeast Asia.

After the accumulation of academic research by historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, political scientists, and more for more than half a century, academia has achieved a substantial understanding of the social fabrics in the maritime Southeast Asia under the VOC and the Dutch Ministry of Colonies' (*Ministerie van Koloniën*) control. The Chinese diasporic community, due to its sheer population, diversity, and duration of establishment in the region, has become an imperfect but unavoidable window into the colonial society. Almost every scholar has engaged the Chinese diasporic community during the VOC era for different purposes.

Unfortunately, the dialogues between scholars are far from frequent among these academic surveys into the VOC-era and immediate post-VOC-era Chinese communities under the Dutch colonial administrations. Leonard Blusse was undoubtedly cited frequently by his contemporaries and later scholars due to his prolific research outputs. His research has already become the scaffolding of later research. His fierce and vibrant interaction with Kemasang regarding the nature of the 1740 Government of Indies-sponsored massacre, however, is very rare and unique among the related academic literature. Meanwhile, although nobody can escape from his or her own bias, one should avoid allowing one's political activism to obscure the objectivity of an academic

⁴⁹ Marzuki, "The Pattern of Minahasa Chinatown Settlement in Colonial Era", 83.

professional conduct, as exemplified by Kemasang's dubious inference on scapegoated Chinese. This caution is necessary given the political sensitivity of the Chinese diasporic topic for the current geopolitical status. Indeed, both parties in this dispute assembled a more balanced chronology of the Chinese under the VOC authority that this thesis subscribed to: Chinese merchants, sailors, laborers and farmers were highly valued by the VOC from the enactment of the charter to its liquidation, they were intermediate functionaries of the institution and the major component of the regions' workforce. Simultaneously, the diasporic Chinese were also the victims of the colonial institutions' persecution when the company's fortune deteriorated, and the allies, partners, or enemies of the native inhabitants depended on specific scenarios.

To summarize, fruitful outcomes have been accumulated by scholars from the past half a century on the understanding of the Chinese diasporic community's diversity and complicated relationship with the Dutch and the native people in the archipelago. However, limitations in the lack of communication and the type of evidence are still prime targets to be addressed by future scholars. These research projects are usually siloed in a specific location and population within the Netherlands East Indies Archipelago, with Dutch language colonial archives as the most prevalent primary source. To address the academic void created through such a mode of accumulation, this thesis attempts to connect the perspectives of different parties regarding the internal diversity and intergroup relationship of the diasporic Chinese community under the two-century-long VOC rule by juxtaposing Dutch archives, Dutch maps, Chinese historical accounts, and Chinese own archival documents.

Results

I. Chinese in the Dutch Documentation: The Fluctuating Frequency of Occurrence

The first criterion to analyze is the frequency with which Chinese people are mentioned in the documents over the two centuries. The following are the variations of frequency mentioning Chinese in Maritime Southeast Asia (*Chinees/Chineesen*) in the received documents in the Netherlands. Chart 1 is based on the count of descriptions for the passages on the scanned received letters and papers available on the *Nationaal Archief* website, based in Den Haag.

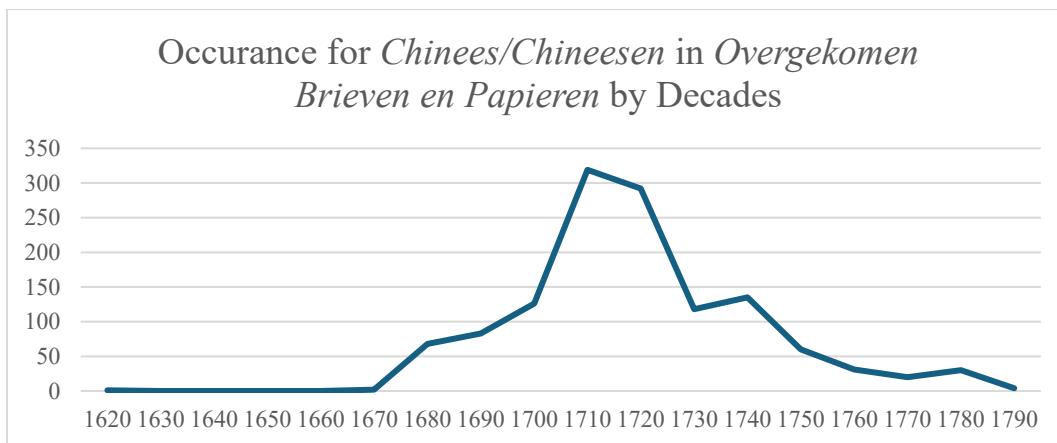


Figure 1. Occurrence for *Chinees/Chineesen* by decades mentioned in *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren* between 1620s and 1790s, produced based on the descriptions of archival document passages in the online archive catalogue *VOC: overgekomen brieven en papieren, 1609-1795* from *Nationaal Archief*, the Kingdom of the Netherlands.⁵⁰

Based on the line chart, the general trend of archive records of Chinese people in the VOC-controlled region was scarce before 1670, especially for those sent back to the Republic of the United Seven Netherlands. Since the 1670s, the abundance of records about the Chinese community has drastically increased. Between 1700 and 1710, the documentation of Chinese people in the VOC's possessions reached its peak production rate, and then decreased drastically

⁵⁰This line chart is made from the document's online catalogue description from the *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, *VOC: overgekomen brieven en papieren, 1609-1795, 1.04.02 Inventaris van het archief van de Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC), 1602-1795 (1811)*, Special collection and Archive, *Nationaal Archief*, Den Haag, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, <https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/1.04.02>.

between 1720 and 1730. A lower peak in documentation production emerged in the 1740s and then entered a constant decline.

The following line charts 2 and 3 demonstrate the fluctuation in the frequency of Chinese being mentioned in the Daily Register (*Daghregister*) and General Resolutions (*Generaale Resolutie*) available on the VOC archive digitization website *Sejarah Nusantara*, based on the counts of realia and marginalia containing the vocabulary when referring to the diasporic Chinese population, respectively. The original paper archival pieces are stored in the *ANRI*, based in Jakarta.

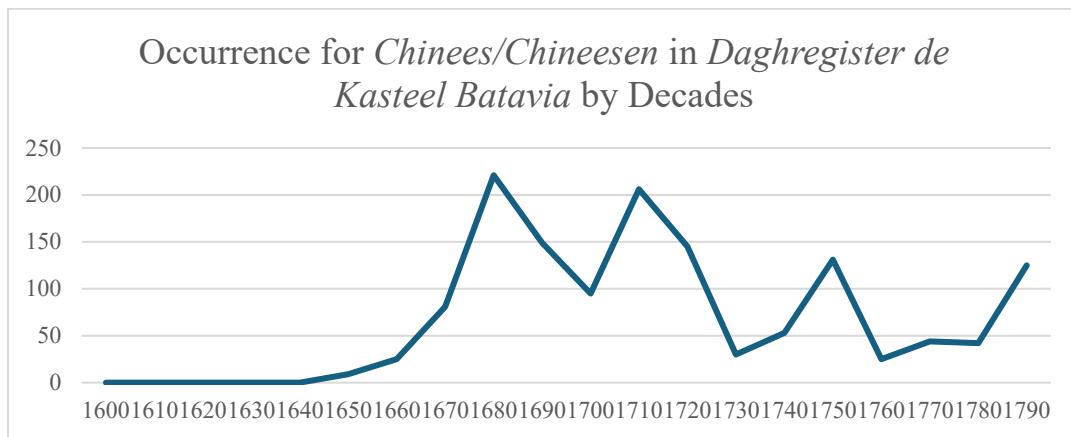


Figure 2. Occurrence for Mentioning *Chinees/Chineesen* by decades in *Daghregister*, based on the marginalia of the *Daghregister 1659-1807* from the online archive catalogue *Sejarah Nusantara: treasury from the 17th- 19th Century VOC Archive*, from *Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia*, Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia.⁵¹

⁵¹ This line chart is made from *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, Marginalia of the *Daghregister 1659-1807*, *Sejarah Nusantara: treasury from the 17th- 19th Century VOC Archive*, Special Collection and Archive, *Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia*, Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia, <https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/marginalia/>.

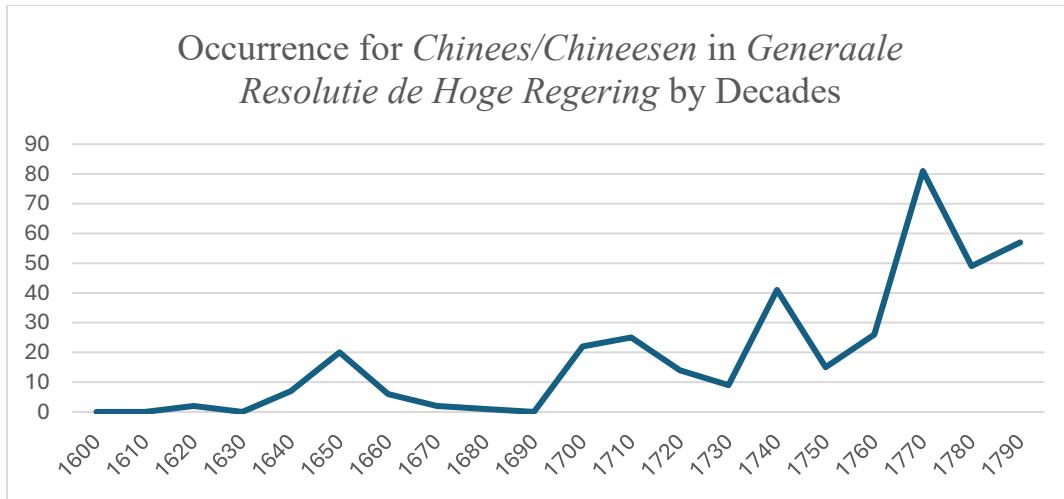


Figure 3. Occurrence for Mentioning *Chinees/Chineesen* by decades in the General Resolution of the High Council in Batavia (*Hoge Regering*), based on the realia of *Generaale Resolutie de Hoge Regering 1610-1808*, from the online archive catalogue *Sejarah Nusantara: treasury from the 17th- 19th Century VOC Archive*, from *Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia*, Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia.⁵²

The following line chart 4 is created based on the occurrence of mentioning the Chinese diasporic community in the published placard books (*Plakaatboeken*) available through the VOC archive digitization website *Sejarah Nusantara*. Mr. J. A. van der Chijs, the Director of *Batavia Landsdrukkerij*, published the original books between 1885 and 1900.

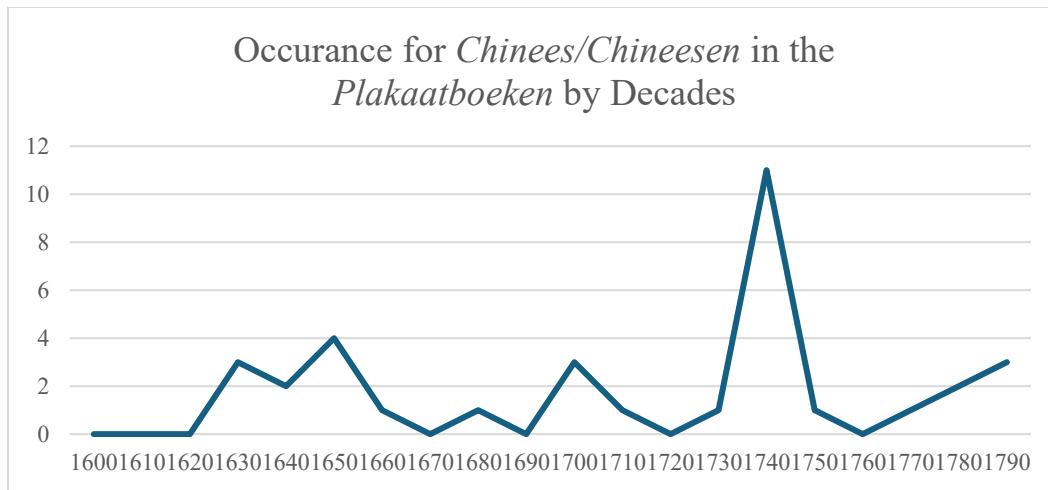


Figure 4. Occurrence for Mentioning *Chinees/Chineesen* by decades in the *Plakaatboeken*, published by *Batavia Landsdrukkerij* between 1885 and 1900. *Batavia Landsdrukkerij* is the predecessor to today's *ANRI*.⁵³

⁵² This line chart is made from *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, Realia of the *Generaal Resolutie 1610-1801*, *Sejarah Nusantara: treasury from the 17th- 19th Century VOC Archive*, Special Collection and Archive, *Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia*, Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia, <https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia/>.

⁵³ This line chart is made from Mr. J. A. van der Chijs, *Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek, 1602-1811* (Batavia Landsdrukkerij, 1885-1900), <https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/placard-publication-volumes/>.

The daily register, the general resolutions, and the placard books from today's *ANRI* all confirm a similar trend of archival accumulation. All three types of archival documentation regarding Chinese people under the company's jurisdiction saw the first wave of significant increase between the 1660s and 1670s. Another major rapid increase in administrative documentation of the Chinese community and its members occurred around the 1740s, and in the decades after, the documentation saw a decrease of different magnitudes for different types of archives, followed by a shared trend of steady increase. Among the three types of archives, general resolutions passed by the Batavia High Government even saw the peak decade rate of archival accumulation in the whole duration of the existence of the VOC between the 1770s and 1780s. The post-1750s accumulation within the Dutch colonial archive practices in the maritime Southeast Asia dedicated to the Chinese community's affairs is thus different from the important communications sent back to the Netherlands, as the latter entered steady decline even when the colonies were still documenting the Chinese people rigorously.

Such a difference in the coverage of a certain group in archival practice is analogous to the difference in the public knowledge of poor white and mixed-heritage people with European fathers in the later Netherlands East Indies and that in the metropolitan Kingdom of the Netherlands, highlighted by Stohler. However, one should bear in mind that the VOC era difference is a product of differentiated priorities in creating various archives, while the direct administrative era difference is the result of deliberately hiding a group's existence from the metropolitan publics by documenting these people with secret archives in the Ministry of the Colonies.⁵⁴ Such an analogous development in the archival phenomenon attests to the continuity between the company-era administrative archival behaviors and those of the governmental administrative era.

⁵⁴ Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 43.

II. Maps and Census: Chinese Diasporic Community in a Colonial Space

Besides understanding the exact type of documentation and its respective purpose, the development in the Indo-Pacific Region and the VOC itself should be considered. As previously mentioned, documentation is an instrument deployed in response to dynamic situations within the jurisdiction of the documentation-generating agency. The dramatic political and social change in China from the Ming to the Qing Dynasty during the mid-17th century was considered to be a pushing factor for many Chinese in the coastal region to migrate to Southeast Asia: Vietnam, Siam (Thailand), and Maritime Southeast Asia.⁵⁵ The center of the VOC operation in Southeast Asia, Batavia, witnessed significant population growth during this period; the western portion of the city was even widely populated by Chinese immigrants. The following city plans of the VOC's crucial trading hubs and colonial centers —Bantam, Batavia, Semarang, Makassar, and Ambon —are georeferenced, colored, and annotated by the thesis author based on the original archived historical maps produced by Dutch cartographers between the 17th and 19th centuries. Map 5 below is a map of the aforementioned cities within the territory of modern Indonesia produced by the thesis's author.

⁵⁵ Oktarina and Kurniawan, "History of Jakarta's Chinatown", 3.

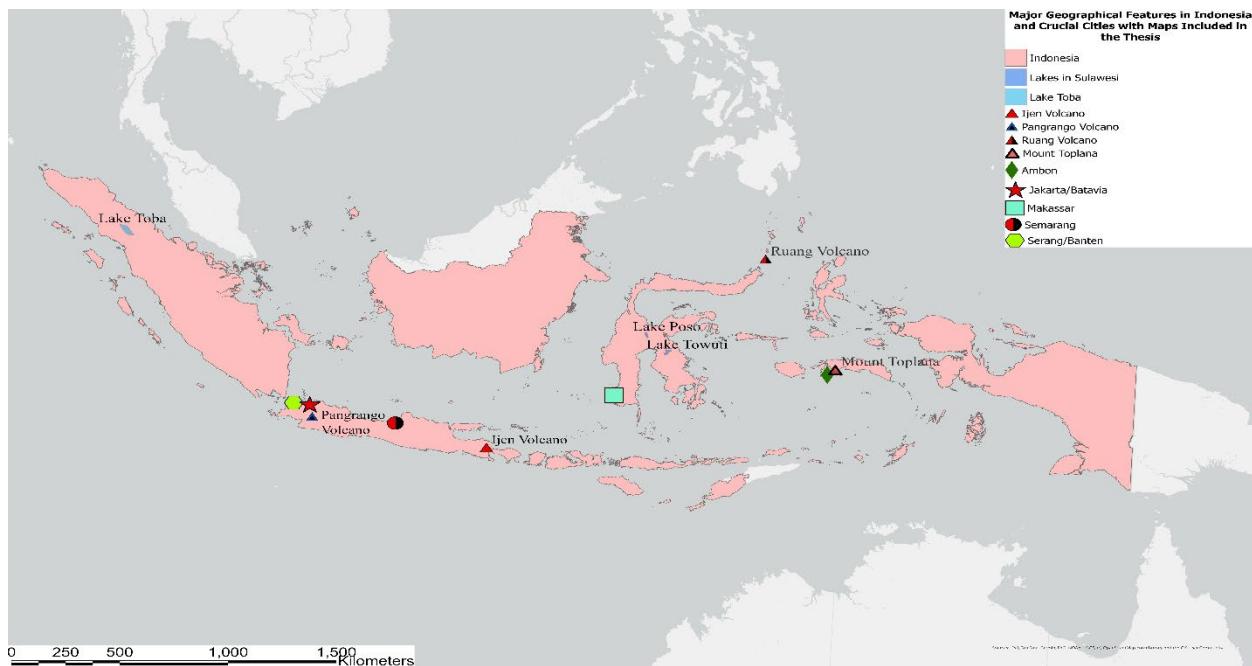
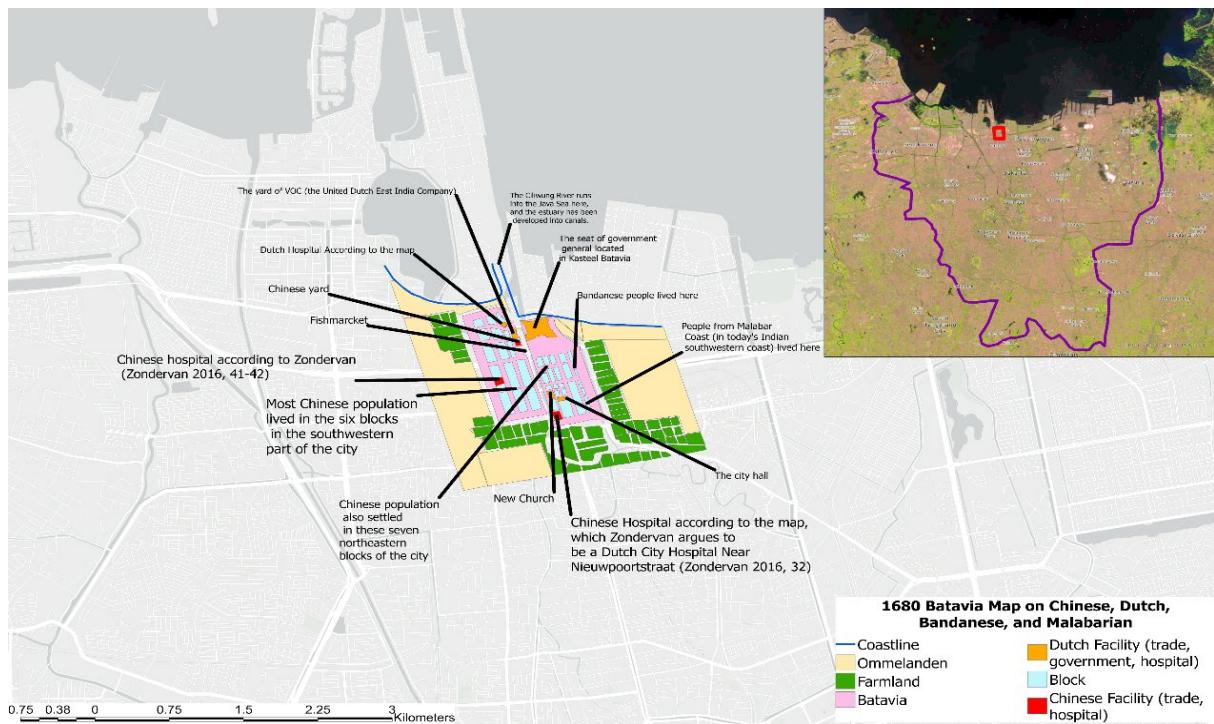


Figure 5, Important VOC trading hub and colonial possessions 'locations: Banten (in modern Serang), Batavia (modern Jakarta), Semarang, Makassar, and Amboina (Amboin) in modern Republic of Indonesia, coupled with the country's major water bodies and volcanoes.

The following map 6 is a reproduction from *Waere afbeeldinge wegens het casteel ende stadt Batavia gelegen opt groot eijlant Java, anno 1681* from *Nationaal Archief*, detailing residential blocks, *Kasteel Batavia*, and port facilities for both the company and the Chinese residents of the city. Census data from 1680 recorded that 30,740 people resided in the city; while the 1,309-strong Chinese Batavian was separated into 411 men, 378 women, 47 boys, and 39 girls above the age of 14, with 215 boys and 219 girls below the age of 14 (the potential age of marriage).⁵⁶ The map shows that the Chinese people had their own dock facilities and unrestricted residential areas in the city, similar to the company's European inhabitants, unlike the people from the Banda Islands (in today's eastern Indonesia) and the Malabar Coast (in today's India), who were restricted to several specific blocks. The settlement pattern of Batavian Chinese at this period also suggests their relatively high social status and amount of wealth, as their unrestricted

⁵⁶ Dr. A.J. Gooszen, *Population census in VOC-Batavia, 2000*, distributed by DANS Data Station Social Sciences and Humanities, V2, <https://doi.org/10.17026/DANS-ZD2-S4M7>.

settlement in the old town of Batavia allowed them to access better resources and facilities than those of city dwellers who did not enjoy such privileges. This phenomenon is confirmed by the census data from 1680, as different quarters inside the city wall possessed varying amounts of Chinese population.⁵⁷ Although one should be aware of the fact that the census covered the surrounding *Ommelanden* only since 1690, which means the census did not reflect the population fluctuation outside the wall.⁵⁸ The following decades saw the golden age of the VOC's profit, and the Chinese merchants, farmers, and laborers were important assets of the company, as were many local rulers alike.⁵⁹



⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Peter Carey, "Changing Javanese Perceptions of the Chinese Communities in Central Java, 1755-1825", *Indonesia* 37 (1984): 5, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3350933>

Figure 6, ArcGIS Pro vectorized and annotated 1681 Batavia Map from *Waere afbeeldinge wegens het casteel ende stadt Batavia gelegen opt groot eijlant Java, anno 1681* from *Nationaal Archief*.⁶⁰⁶¹

The somewhat allied-for-convenience relationship between the Chinese, the Dutch, or even the local rulers was not restricted to Batavia. Before the arrival of the predecessor companies of the VOC in 1596, the Chinese merchant community had established their dwelling spaces in the capital of the Banten Sultanate. As the 1660 Banten Map from the Italian *Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana* detailed, the Chinese community shared the same residential space with the English East India Company (EIC) near a major river, to the west of the city. The Chinese and British quarters in 1660 Banten were both located outside the city wall, similar to the large marketplace (Passer) and adjacent residential area for the subjects of the sultanate located to the east of the walled city. The Banten city was urbanized in a low-density manner, unlike the contemporary colonial cities exemplified by Batavia with rigid grids. The spatial arrangement of the precolonial city of Banten suggests that the local ruler of the sultanate viewed the Chinese community as a crucial foreign group, similar to the English chartered company.

⁶⁰ J. Janssonius and Waerberger, *Waere afbeeldinge wegens het casteel ende stadt Batavia gelegen opt groot eijlant Java, anno 1681*, 430, 4. *VELH Inventaris van de verzameling buitenlandse kaarten Leupe, supplement, 1621-1813* (1925), Special Collection and Archive, *Nationaal Archief*, Den Haag, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/4.VELH/invnr/430/file/NL-HANA_4.VELH_430?eadID=4.VELH&unitID=430&query=.

⁶¹ According to Zondervan, the Dutch hospital, named *Binnenhospitaal* (city hospital) was located at the *Nieuwpoortstraat* between 1641 and 1808, while the Chinese hospital was located in the western portion of the city near a *Spinhus* (spinning-house for women's correction) between 1640 and 1912. However, the map indicates the Dutch hospital was located near the northern end of the city, while the Chinese hospital was located at the *Nieuwpoortstraat* in 1681. (Sjoerd Zondervan, "Patients of the Colonial State: The Rise of a Hospital System in the Netherlands Indies, 1890-1940" (PhD diss., Universiteit Maastricht, 2016), 32, 41, 42, Universiteit Maastricht (<https://doi.org/10.26481/dis.20160929sz>).

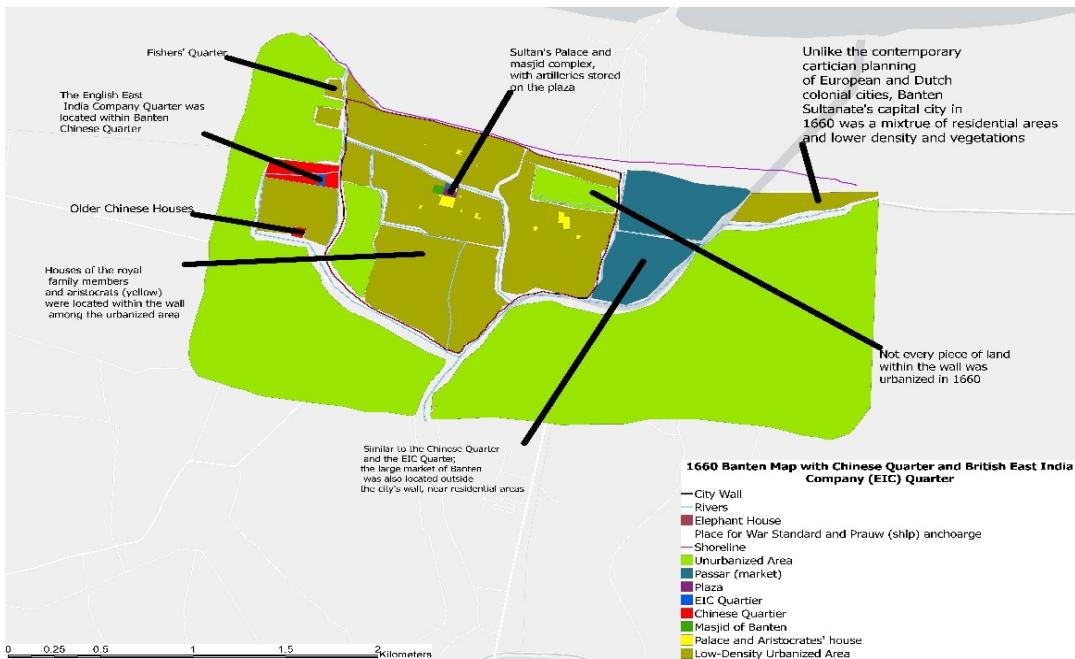


Figure 7. ArcGIS Pro vectorized and annotated 1660 Banten Map from *Vue de la ville de Bantam, Capitale de l'isle de Java* from Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana.⁶²

Chinese quarters were also located adjacent to the Dutch administrative and economic facilities in other colonial cities. Semarang, Java, was an indispensable pillar for anchoring regional trade for the VOC. Semarang is intrinsically associated with trade in the VOC records, as the city's name is a staple in the records of cargoes and monetary transfers.⁶³ The city originally had a significant Chinese quarter just adjacent to the European quarters. According to 1741 *Accurate afteekening van de present-situatie. Soo van 's Ed. Comp.s nieuwe aangelegde fortificatie-werken als de opgerigte bentings der rebellerende Chineesen en Javanen tot Samarangh*, this Chinese quarter even possessed an area larger than its European-occupied counterparts. Unlike its counterpart in Batavia, the 1741 city plan depicted the Chinese quarter of

⁶² Vingboons Johannes, *Vue de la ville de Bantam, Capitale de l'isle de Java* from Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, 1660, Special Collection and Archive, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence, Repubic of Italy, <https://www.atlasofmutualheritage.nl/page/2524/map-of-bantam>.

⁶³ Example: “*Lijste der zeeder primo Augustus 1767 te Samarang aangekomene vaartuigen met aanwijsing van dies lading en monteeringen.*” List of vessels arrived in Semarang since the beginning of August 1767 and potential loads and mountings (on the ships). From NL-HaNA, NL-HaNA_1.04.02_7874_0172, Folio 179, File 7874, Deel II/E.5.04 Java's Oostkust, 1.04.02 Inventaris van het archief van de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC), 1602-1795 (1811), 1766 sep.5-1767 sep.30, Special Collection and Archive, Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/1.04.02/invnr/7874/file/NL-HaNA_1.04.02_7874_0172?eadID=1.04.02&unitID=7874&query=.

Samarang as a large residential area without a Cartesian organization that divided the residential area into blocks. Such a spatial treatment of the Chinese residential area in Semarang suggested that claiming the diasporic Chinese community as the VOC colonial possession's middle stratum does have a kernel of truth.

Outside Java Island, the city of Ambon (also called Amboina in the Dutch language) also has a dedicated “Chinese Camp” facing the sea near the main dockyard. The city plan during the VOC's heyday was detailed in the 1780 *Plattegrond van de stad Amboina, zoo als het was in den Jaare 1718*. Ambon possessed a population of around 78,000 in the early 18th century, as 78,191 *onderdanen* (subjects) were reported under the jurisdiction of the Government of Ceram (Seram Islands, where the city is located) in a 1723 *Generale Missive* sent from Batavia to the Netherlands.⁶⁴ The Banda Sea Region, where Ambon is located, is a region that seems to lie far away from the center of civilization in the archipelago. However, people have settled on the islands in the region for thousands of years.⁶⁵ The Banda Islands, located just south of Ambon, are the origin of nutmeg cultivation, which was the original attraction for Western colonial powers to strive for establishing a monopoly on trade and spice production in the region. The bloody Dutch conquest of the Banda Islands in 1621, with the assistance of Japanese mercenaries, motivated Amitav Ghosh to write about the inherited connection between genocide, colonialism, and the birth of the destructive capitalist mode of production in *The Nutmeg Curse*.⁶⁶ The Chinese population size in Ambon remained highly limited during the years of the company rule, as suggested by the

⁶⁴ “30 juni woonden 78191 V.O.C. onderdanen in het gouvernement, het is er lustig, maar.” On 30th July (of 1724), 78191 subjects of the VOC lived in that government (of the Seram Islands, jurisdiction including Ambon). From XXII, Hendrik Zwaarddecoorn, Mattheus De Haan, Anthony Huysman, Cornelis Hasselaar, Joan Adriaan Crudop, Laurens Tolling, Hans Frederik Bergman, Diderik Durven, Ewout van Dishoeck en Wijbrant Blom, Batavia 15 October 1723, Dr. W. PH. Coolhaas, Deel VII, *General Missiven van Gouverneur-Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie, 1713-1725* (Huygens Instituut, 1979), 661, <https://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/retroboeken/generalemissiven/#page=674&accessor=toc&source=7>.

⁶⁵ Sue O'Connor, Shimona Kealy, Lucas Wattimena, Adam Black, Muhammad Husni, and Mahirta, “Sailing the deep blue sea: The rock art of Wetang Island, Maluku Barat Daya, Indonesia”, *The Journal of Island and Coastal Archaeology* 18, no. 3 (2023): 421, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/15564894.2021.1991056?needAccess=true>.

⁶⁶ Amitav Ghosh, *The Nutmeg Curse: Parables for a Planet in Crisis* (University of Chicago Press, 2021), 58.

July 1740 census in Ambon: 116 men, 105 women, and 229 children lived exclusively in the Chinese Camp, out of the total city population of 70,679.⁶⁷ The dedicated Chinese Camp for a minuscule population, detailed in the 1718 Map of Ambon, witnessed the indispensable role of the Chinese community played in this VOC headquarters within the spice-producing islands, and, insofar, the birth of early capitalism, even with a small-scale community.

The colonial trading hub of Makassar on Sulawesi Island also became the home for the Chinese diasporic community for four centuries and has developed a similar Chinese district within its old town.⁶⁸ In 1677, only 1384 residents were reported in the census; among them were 45 Chinese men, seven Chinese women, one Chinese boy, and one Chinese girl above the age of 14, complemented by seven Chinese boys and 12 Chinese girls under 14 years old, taking residence only in the city's Quarter D and Quarter E.⁶⁹ The total subject population of Makassar in 1740 was 44, 830, suggesting either a dramatic increase in the city's population or an improvement in the VOC census coverage.⁷⁰ Unfortunately, the first detailed city plan of Makassar only emerged in 1880, when the Dutch Ministry of Colony governed over the singular Netherlands East Indies, decades after the liquidation of the VOC. This lack of available digitized VOC-era maps is an obstacle to locating the quarters and population concentration detailed in the census.

⁶⁷ NL-HaNA, NL-HaNA_1.04.02_7914_0703, Folio 687, File 7914, Deel II / E.5.05 Ambon, *1.04.02 Inventaris van het archief van de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC), 1602-1795 (1811)*, 1740 juni 12-sep.28, Special Collection and Archive, *Nationaal Archief*, Den Haag, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/1.04.02/invnr/7914/file/NL-HaNA_1.04.02_7914_0702?eadID=1.04.02&unitID=7914&query=.

⁶⁸ Gabrielle von Kispal-van Deijk, "Ubiquitous but Elusive: The Chinese of Makassar in VOC Times", *Journal of Asian History* 47, no. 1 (2013): 81, <https://oxis.org/articles-k-z/deijk-2014.pdf>.

⁶⁹ NL-HaNA, NL-HaNA_1.04.02_1320_0588, Folio 275, File 1320, Deel I/E.5.a Overgekomen brieven en papieren uit indië aan de Heeren XVII en den kamer Amsterdam, *1.04.02 Inventaris van het archief van de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC), 1602-1795 (1811)*, 1677, Special Collection and Archive, *Nationaal Archief*, Den Haag, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/1.04.02/invnr/1320/file/NL-HaNA_1.04.02_1320_0588?eadID=1.04.02&unitID=1320&query=.

⁷⁰ "30 juni 1740 waren er 44.380 onderdanen, onder wie 1587 Europeanen en 795 inheemse militairen..." On 30th July 1740, 44,380 subjects (lived in Makassar), among them were 1587 Europeans and 795 native military personnel. From XIII. Adriaan Valckenier, Koan Paul Schaghen, Johannes Thedens, Herman van Suchtelen, Pieter Rochus Pasques de Chavonnes, Pieter Duquesne, Elias Guillot, Nicolaas van Berendregt, Nicolaas Crul, Johannes Macare, Daniel Nolthenius en Maurits van Aerden, Batavia 25 maart 1741, J. van. Goor, Deel X, *General Missiven van Gouverneur-Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie, 1731-1743* (Huygens Instituut, 1979), 609, <https://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/retroboeken/generalemissiven/#page=619&accessor=toc&source=10>.

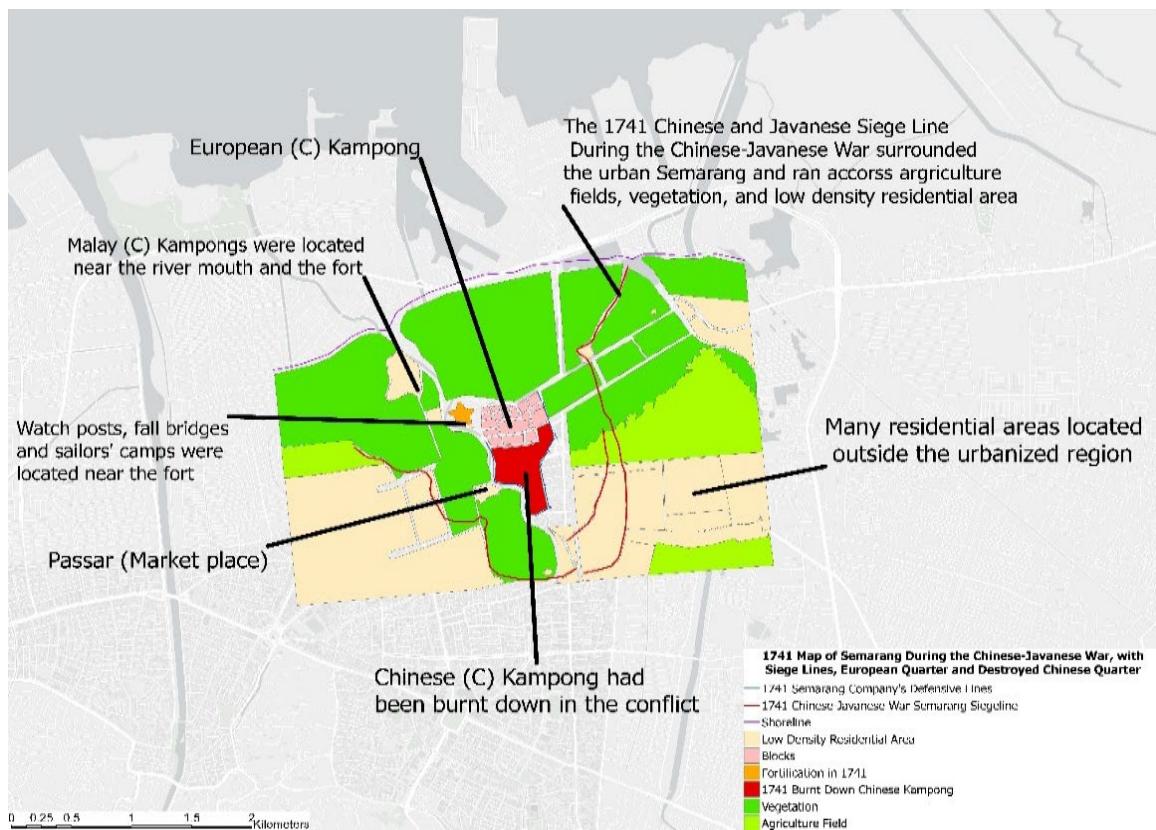


Figure 8. The ArcGIS Pro vectorized and annotated 1741 *Accurate aftekening van de present-situatie. Soo van 's Ed. Comp.s nieuwe aangelegde fortificatie-werken als de opgerigte bentings der rebellerende Chineesen en Javanen tot Samarangh*. during the 1741-1742 War of Chinese and Javanese, following the Batavia 1740 Massacre, note the Chinese residential area had been burnt down in the conflict while the Chinese and Javanese rebels were sieging the city, from *Nationaal Archief*.⁷¹

⁷¹ 1261, *Accurate aftekening van de present-situatie. Soo van 's Ed. Comp.s nieuwe aangelegde fortificatie-werken als de opgerigte bentings der rebellerende Chineesen en Javanen tot Samarangh*, 4.VEL Inventaris van de verzameling buitenlandse kaarten Leupe, 1584-1813 (1865), Special Collection and Archive, Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/4.VEL/invnr/1261/file/NL-HaNA_4.VEL_1261?eadID=4.VEL&unitID=1261&query=.

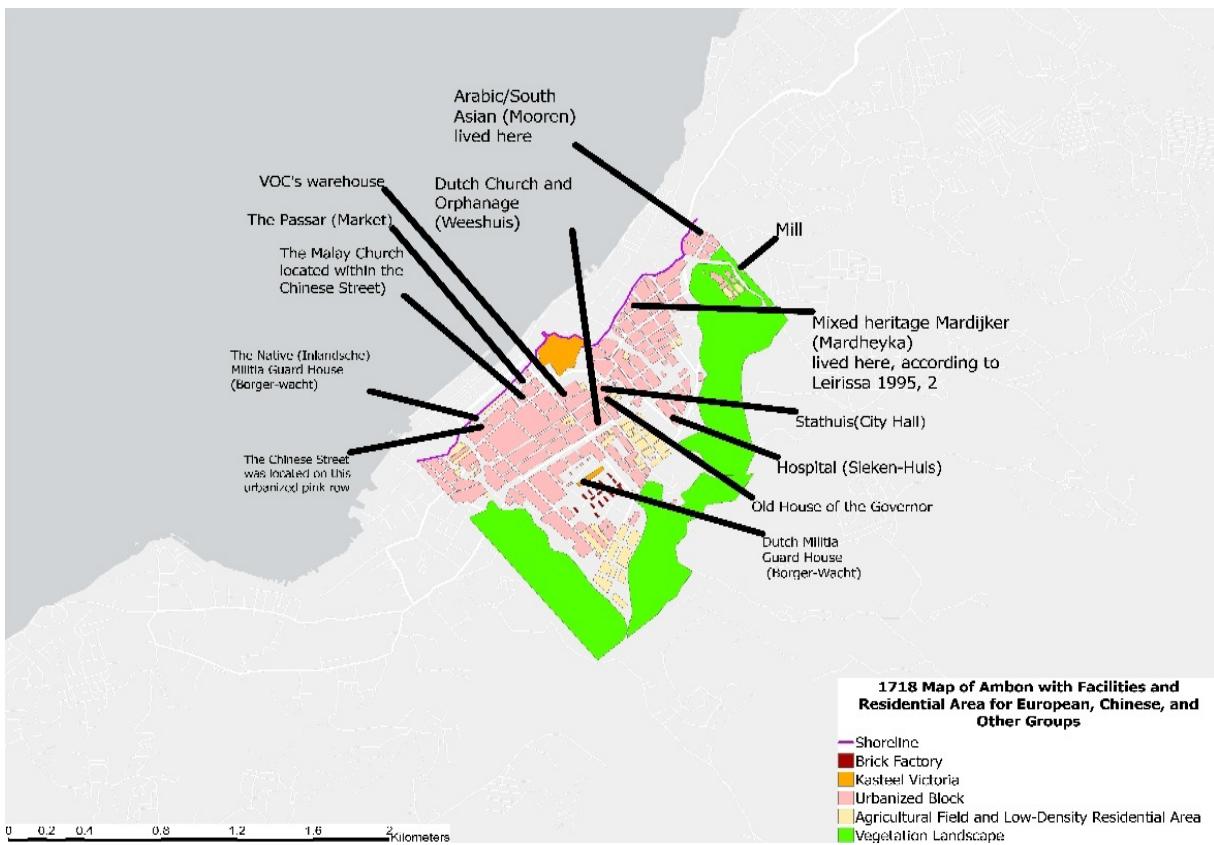


Figure 9. The ArcGIS Pro vectorized and annotated 1780 *Plattegrond van de stad Amboina, zoo als het was in den Jaare 1718* by Jacob van der Schley from Rijksmuseum.⁷²⁷³

⁷² Jacob van der Schley, NG-2014-24-6, *Plattegrond van de stad Amboina, zoo als het was in den Jaare 1718*, 1747-1780, Special Collection and Archive, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/object/Plattegrond-van-de-stad-Amboina--5cc3c3e95d55d6c52059b0360ab1eff?query=Amboin&collectionSearchContext=Art&page=2&sortingType=Popularity>.

⁷³ R.Z. Leirissa identified the *Mardika* district of the map as the residential area for the mixed-heritage Mardijker people, descended from freed enslaved people under Portuguese or Dutch custody. (R.Z. Leirissa, "Social Development in Amboin during the 19th Century: Amboinese Burger", *Cakelele* 6 (1995): 2, <https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/d3d952b8-82f0-4a7d-9a64-80502a766864/content>.)

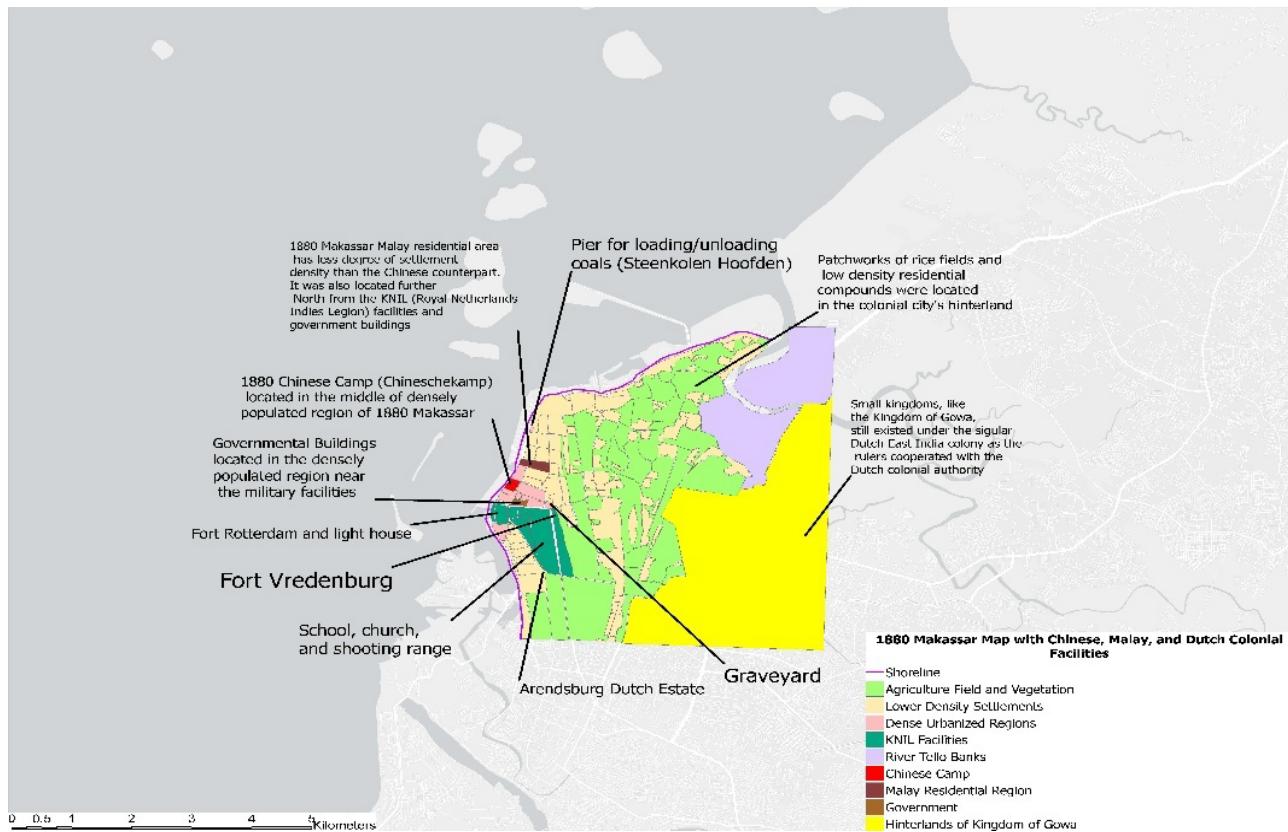


Figure 10. The ArcGIS Pro vectorized and annotated 1880 *Kaart van de Hoofdplaats Makassar en Omstreken*, from *Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia*.⁷⁴

However, as the company shifted from profiting from sugar (largely produced by Chinese-operated sugar mills) and spice to coffee and tea, coupled with the company's deficit increasing significantly during the 18th century, the relationship between the overseas Chinese community and the VOC in its Southeast Asian holdings deteriorated.⁷⁵ An animosity began to grow between the Chinese, the company, other foreign residents, and Native people on islands like Java between the 1720s and 1740s. Such development was contemporary to the period, with a temporary decline in documentation of the Chinese. Such animosity eventually culminated in the 1740 Batavia Massacre of Chinese and the 1741-1742 Chinese and Javanese War, which saw some Javanese

⁷⁴ Topografische Dienst, C79, *Kaart van de Hoofdplaats Makassar en Omstreken*, Maps De Haan, *Sejarah Nusantara: treasury from the 17th- 19th Century VOC Archive*, 1880, Special Collection and Archive, *Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia*, Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia, <https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/pagebrowser/DeHaan-11-C/#source=1&page=151&accessor=thumbnails>.

⁷⁵ A.R.T. Kemasang, "Overseas Chinese in Java and Their Liquidation in 1740", *Southeast Asia Study* 19, no. 2 (1981): 127-134, <https://repository.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2433/56053/1/KJ00000133766.pdf>.

(especially those from the Mataram Sultanate of central Java) allied with the Chinese, while other Javanese and people from other islands residing in Java allied with the VOC authority.⁷⁶ Indeed, the 1741 Semarang city plan emphasized that the siege line surrounding the city was garrisoned by both Chinese and Javanese rebels in its original map legend. The Chinese rebellion under the VOC rule, particularly one reinforced by native people and other ethnic groups, was a rare incident that nevertheless struck against the clichéd middleman stereotype.

During the 1740s, following the end of the rebellion, the documentation of the Chinese population in all four categories observed small-scale reversals of the previous trend, as the tremendous and multifaceted military, economic, and administrative efforts to pacify Java Island meant more documentation dedicated to the need. Unlike other ethnicities dwelling in Batavia, the Chinese Batavian population was even absent from the 1740-1742 census record, testifying to the massacre-induced demographic change in Batavia.⁷⁷ After the Chinese and Javanese War, the Chinese population was still valuable for the VOC, as Batavia still welcomed them to settle in the city, but this time, they were required to concentrate in a region outside Batavia's old city wall (this place eventually became today's Glodok Chinatown). The following reproduced map, based on *Plan der stad en n't Kasteel Batavia, A. v. Kreveld, sculpsit Amsterdam 2/2 1780*, details this loss of significance and status spatially, coinciding with the steady decrease of documentation of Chinese in the received correspondence back in the Netherlands. The 1780 census broke Batavian residents into 12,851 city dwellers and 129,943 *Ommerlanden* (adjacent area of the city) dwellers.⁷⁸ The 390 city-dwelling Chinese Batavian is categorized into 201 men, 70 women, and

⁷⁶ Carey, "Changing Javanese Perceptions of the Chinese Communities in Central Java, 1755-1825", 11.

⁷⁷ Dr. A.J. Gooszen, *Population census in VOC-Batavia, 2000*, distributed by DANS Data Station Social Sciences and Humanities, V2, <https://doi.org/10.17026/DANS-ZD2-S4M7>.

⁷⁸ Dr. A.J. Gooszen, *Population census in VOC-Batavia, 2000*, distributed by DANS Data Station Social Sciences and Humanities, V2, <https://doi.org/10.17026/DANS-ZD2-S4M7>.

119 children; while the 31,058 Chinese Batavian living outside the city is comprised of 15,594 men, 8,321 women, 1,564 boys and 1384 girls above the age of 14, complemented with 2,309 boys plus 1,886 girls under such age.⁷⁹ The significant disparity between the population of the Chinese Batavian inside Batavian old town and the *Ommerlanden* commensurate with the spatial realignment of Batavian Chinese town.

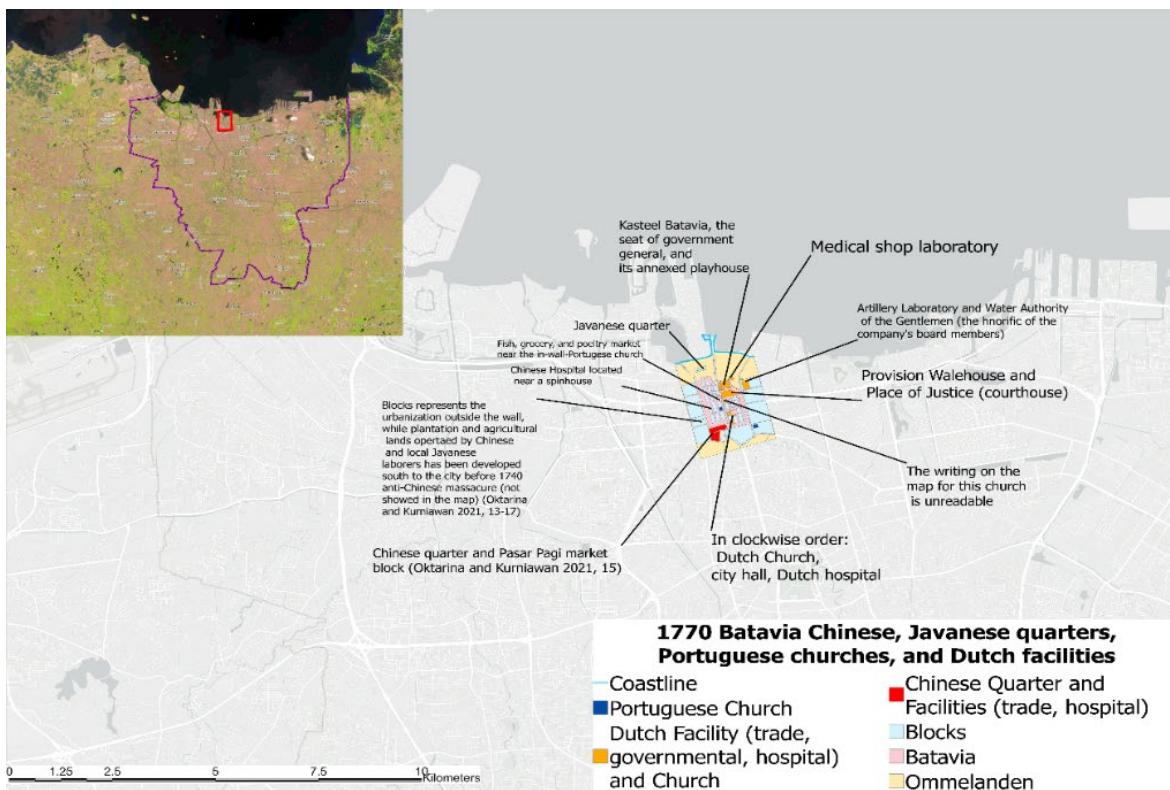


Figure 11. The ArcGIS Pro vectorized and annotated 1770 Batavia Map from *Plan der stad en n't Kasteel Batavia, A. v. Kreveld, sculpsit Amsterdam 2/2 1780* from Leiden University Library Digital Collection.⁸⁰

The post-1740s Semarang also observed a similar urban transformation, as the prewar Chinese and *Moorsche* (South Asian and Arabic Muslims) settlements became concentrated and fully urbanized. The old non-Cartesian Chinese quarter had been destroyed in the conflict. The

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Claudius Anthony von Luepken and A. van Kreveld, KK 161-02-03, *Plan der stad en n't Kasteel Batavia, A. v. Kreveld, sculpsit Amsterdam 2/2 1780*, Special Collection and Archive, Leiden University Library, Leiden, the Kingdom of Netherlands, https://digitalcollections.universiteitleiden.nl/view/item/2011873?solr_nav%5Bid%5D=4d649a5ee7e3ca35ab92&solr_nav%5Bpage%5D=225&solr_nav%5Boffset%5D=4.

new residential area for the Chinese and *Moorsche* community in Semarang was now concentrated but separated in the prewar Chinese residential area, while the city's original bastion was demolished in favor of a new one surrounding the European quarter of the city. Such development in multiple pivotal colonial cities with significant diasporic Chinese populations prompted scholars, championed by Kemasang, to subscribe to the contentious definition of ghettoization when framing such development in the 18th-century VOC colonies in the Maritime Southeast Asia. Unfortunately, not every city under VOC control was affordable for the luxury of a population census (*zielen beschrijving*, souls description) commissioned by the company in Batavia, Makassar, and Ambon. Banten and Semarang, albeit serving as early attractions and pillars in the VOC enterprise in Java, did not leave census records in the archive. The following reproduction of the 1788 archival map of Semarang details an overhaul of colonial urban planning in Semarang.

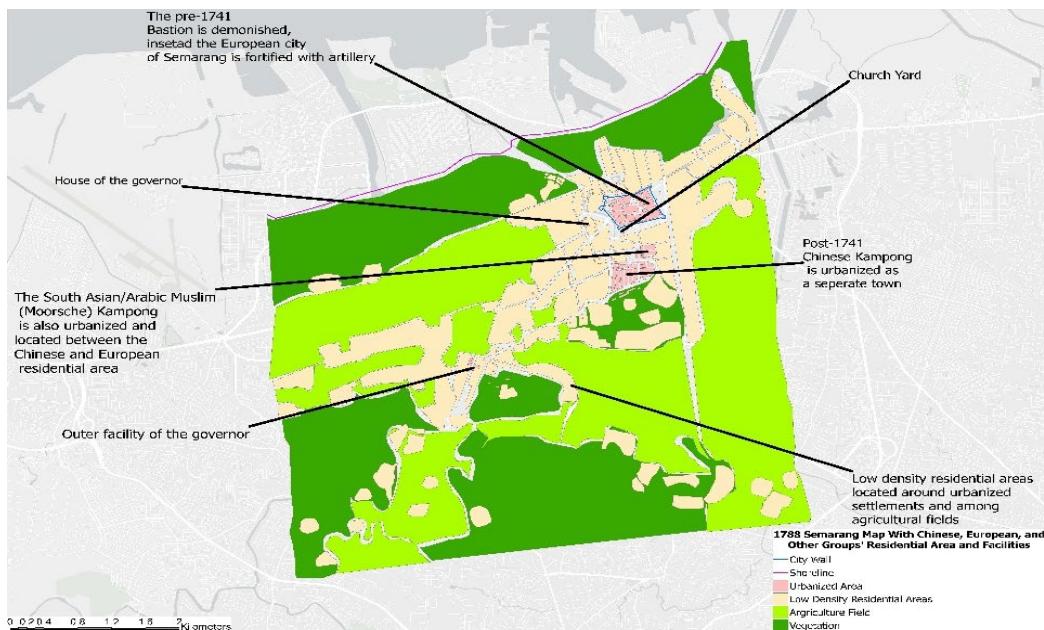


Figure 12. The ArcGIS Pro vectorized and annotated 1788 *Plan van de stad en omleggende landeryen van Samarang, sig strekkende 1200 Roeden Bezuyden, 1085 R Beoosten, 1570 T bewesten, benoorden tot aan zee*.from *Nationaal Archief*.⁸¹

⁸¹ Grote Atlas van de Oost-Indische Compagnie, 1267, *Plan van de stad en omleggende landeryen van Samarang, sig strekkende 1200 Roeden Bezuyden, 1085 R Beoosten, 1570 T bewesten, benoorden tot aan zee*.from *Nationaal Archief*, 4.VEL Inventaris van de verzameling buitenlandse kaarten Leupe, 1584-1813 (1865), Special Collection and Archive, *Nationaal Archief*, Den Haag, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/4.VEL/invnr/1268/file/NL-HaNA_4.VEL_1268?eadID=4.VEL&unitID=1268&query=.

The constantly fluctuating frequency of documenting Chinese has therefore formed a highly causal relationship with the situation regarding the Chinese population for the company, suggesting the instrumental usage of archives for the VOC beyond simply keeping track of the situation. The need to increase or decrease documentation of a certain community, in this case, the Chinese diasporic community, can never be separated from the economic and political development in the global market (i.e., the changing European demand for spices, coffee, tea, textiles, and porcelain) and regional complications in the Indo-pacific region where the VOC operated. A deeper dive into specific segments of the VOC's archival practice on the diasporic Chinese population as an administrative instrument will further demonstrate the continuity of Dutch colonial archival behaviors.

III. The Information Regarding the Chinese Diasporic Community Attested from the Dutch Documentation

After comprehending the changing frequency for the VOC clerks to create records about the Chinese, it is logical to wonder what kind of information regarding the overseas Chinese population under their jurisdiction was recorded. In general, these are the archives for a chartered company that profited from monopolizing Dutch trade in the Indo-Pacific region. The majority of documentation, communications, and correspondence are oriented around trade-related development. However, since the trade model required the VOC to administer trading posts and production regions of certain merchandise, other information was still diligently recorded.

Take the example of *zielen beschrijving* or simply population census, the census coverage and depth in census detail varied. In many important VOC possessions, no census records were left or even conducted. In the cities that left census records, cities exemplified by Batavia and Makassar yielded relatively detailed census records by separating each ethnic group residing in

different blocks into men, women, boys, and girls, older and younger than the age of 14; a catch-all category of enslaved people did not enjoy the specification of children's age difference.⁸² While cities exemplified by Ambon categorized every ethnicity, including the enslaved people, into man, woman, and child, or only provided a general population number in surviving documents.⁸³

Some other aspects of the internal social fabrics of the diasporic Chinese were also recorded by the VOC in the process of acquiring the intelligence that the company was always in demand in the name of maximizing the company's profit.

Occupations: beyond Merchants, Ship Owners, and Headmen

As a chartered company that prioritizes the maximization of profits for its shareholders above everything, the VOC has constantly tracked the value generated from the colonial subjects residing in its trading and cash-crop producing colonies. Under such priority, the Chinese merchants, laborers, and farmers' entrance into the Dutch-controlled colonies in the Maritime Southeast Asia was either encouraged, discouraged, or regulated by the company authority according to the economic and political situation it faced. Besides the most frequently recorded Chinese working as merchants or ship owners (also called *Nachodas*), many Chinese immigrants to the VOC-held regions in Maritime Southeast Asia took up occupations as sugar mill workers or became owners of sugar mills. The VOC archives also diligently recorded the inseparable ties

⁸² Men as *man*, women as *vrouw*, boys above/under the age of 14 as *joonge boven/beneden jaar 14*, girls above/below the age of 14 as *dogter boven/beneden jaar 14*, while the enslaved people were called *lijfeigen*, literally life-own. Example from NL-HaNA, NL-HaNA_1.04.02_1642_0426, Folio 1341, File 1642, Deel I/E.5.a Overgekomen brieven en papieren uit indië aan de Heeren XVII en den kamer Amsterdam, 1.04.02 *Inventaris van het archief van de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC), 1602-1795 (1811)*, 1702, Special Collection and Archive, Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/1.04.02/invnr/1642/file/NL-HaNA_1.04.02_1642_0426?eadID=1.04.02&unitID=1642&query=.

⁸³ The enslaved people are divided into *Slaven van Macassar en Bouton* (slaves from Makassar and Buton in Sulawesi) and *Slaven van allen lande zoot* (slaves born from all other lands), m for *man*, v for *vrouw*, and k for *kind* (child). Example from NL-HaNA, NL-HaNA_1.04.02_7950_0982, Folio 335, File 7950, Deel II/E.5.05 Ambon, 1.04.02 *Inventaris van het archief van de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC), 1602-1795 (1811)*, 1780 sep.15-1781 sep.28, Special Collection and Archive, Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/1.04.02/invnr/7950/file/NL-HaNA_1.04.02_7950_0982?eadID=1.04.02&unitID=7950&query=.

between the Chinese community and the sugar industry, which helped the VOC generate immense wealth during its heyday between the 1650s and 1740s. Such ties can be manifested best in the conflict between the company authority and the Chinese in Java between 1740 and 1742, as the rebellious Chinese near Batavia were predominantly Chinese laborers who worked in the sugar mills. The sugar mills became the rallying point for the uprising, according to the Dutch contemporary archive, as exemplified in the *Daghregister* on 8th October 1740.

*Berigt dat bij de suykermolen omtrent Chondik gelegen 6 à 700 chinesen bijeengerot sijn.*⁸⁴

The report says 600 to 700 Chinese gathered at the sugar mill near Chondik (from Marginalia).

After the Chinese and Javanese War ended in 1742, the Dutch authority enacted a temporary policy to restrict Chinese immigration into its Southeast Asian colonies. The archive during the immediate post-war period highlighted the Chinese people who took up occupations that received much less attention from scholars compared to the contemporary Chinese merchants and *Kapitein China*.

*Scheepenen moeten opgeeven het benodigde getal van Chineesen tot de suykermolens, arraksbrandereyen, landbouw en andere ambagten in de Bataviase Colonie, 16 Maart 1742.*⁸⁵

⁸⁴ ID-ANRI, ID-ANRI_K66a_NL, Folio 735, File 2571, *Daghregister, Sejarah Nusantara: treasury from the 17th- 19th Century VOC Archive*, 1st January 1740-31st December 1740, Special Collection and Archive, *Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia*, Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/pagebrowser/icaatom-dasa-anri-go-id_339-ead-xml-1-2571/#source=1&page=667&accessor=thumbnails&size=782&view=imagePane.

⁸⁵ ID-ANRI, ID-ANRI_K66a_EN, Folio 534, File 994, *Generaal Resolutie, Sejarah Nusantara: treasury from the 17th- 19th Century VOC Archive*, 2 January 1742-30 March 1742, Special Collection and Archive, *Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia*, Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/pagebrowser/icaatom-dasa-anri-go-id_339-ead-xml-1-994/#source=1&page=632&accessor=thumbnails&view=imagePane.

Ships should report the actual required number of Chinese taking occupation in sugar mills, brewing, agriculture, and other industries in the Batavia Colony, 16th March 1742 (from Realia).

This piece of record indicated a significant population of Chinese immigrants working as farmers, brewing workers, and laborers in other industries in the Dutch colony of Batavia. The Dutch decree also highlighted their attitude towards immigrant Chinese laborers. From the perspective of the VOC, newly arrived Chinese laborers are an indispensable workforce for agriculture and a host of industries. But that does not mean the immigration of Chinese laborers should always be maximized. The regulation of labor immigration from China was decided thus by the economic priority of the company and the political reality in the colonies under its jurisdiction. Although the academic discussion of Chinese laborers has long centered around the indentured and free laborers who immigrated in the following centuries, the VOC archive attests to the diverse occupations the Chinese diaspora community had participated in before the emergence of the unified Netherlands East India.

Religion: Christian and Peranakan

The VOC census revealed no religious difference within the Chinese population on the majority of occasions. However, Scattered records from day registers, general resolutions, and papers sent back to the Netherlands did. Nobody represents the interaction between the Chinese and the native people of the archipelago better than the Peranakans. The term “peranakan” means “the child of someone”; originally, this was a term denoting any people with foreign ancestry born and living in Indonesia, but it has also been associated with mixed-heritage Chinese people born in Indonesia for several centuries, especially those who belong to the Islamic faith. Interestingly, the Dutch documentation of this term only emerged steadily after the 1760s, though intermarriage

between the Chinese population and native people of Maritime Southeast Asia had long been practiced before the advent of European colonialism. The Dutch authority's attitude towards mixed-heritage marriage between Chinese and people from other cultural, linguistic, religious, and racial backgrounds (which was still in the formation process) during the VOC era, from the perspectives of these Archives, was neither endorsing nor condemning. Nevertheless, "peranakan" was employed by the VOC as a practical denotation for certain members of the Chinese community under their jurisdiction. Such designation is common among the records of banished Chinese people, as the following case exemplifies.

*De van Java herwaards gezondene Javaan Goeno Wongso en den Parnakan Chinees Loa Sipio ad vitam naar Ceylon te relegeren, 9 October 1787.*⁸⁶

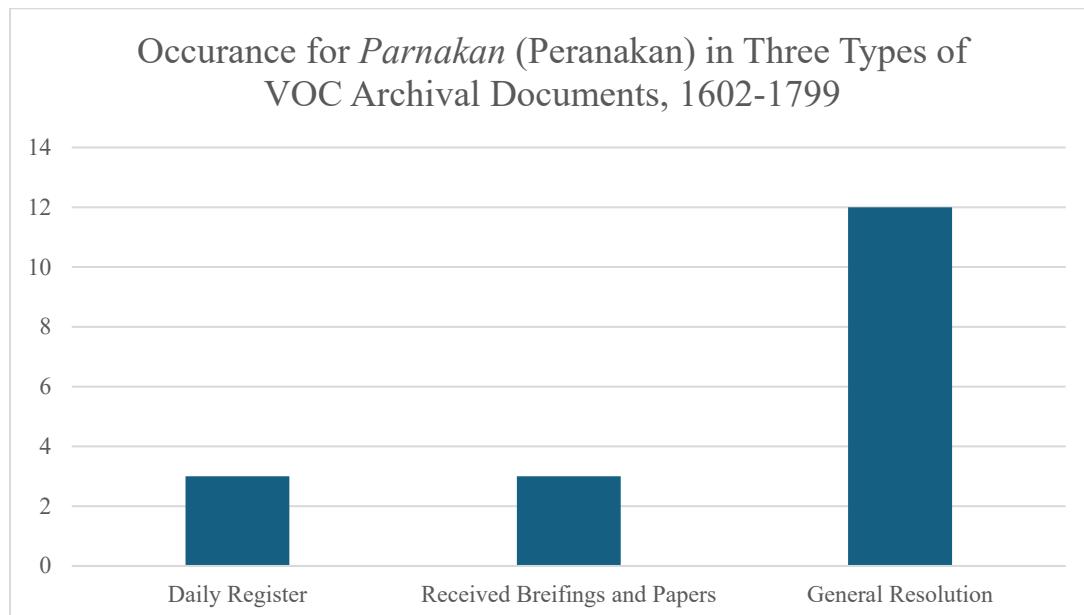
The Javanese Goeno Wongso and the Peranakan Chinese Loa Sipio, who were sent here from Java, are banished to Ceylon (Sri Lanka, at the time also held partially by the VOC) for life (*ad vitam*) (from realia).

The following Figure 13 is a comparison between the amount of documentation mentioning *Parnakan* (now frequently spelled as Peranakan) in three types of VOC archival documents within the duration of the company's existence. Unfortunately, the only placard issued by the *Hoge Regering* explicitly containing the denotation was from 1809, which fell into the early years of direct Dutch administration as a "sister republic/kingdom" of Revolutionary France, 10 years after the company's liquidation.⁸⁷ Thus, the placard is not included in the bar chart. Nevertheless, the

⁸⁶ ID-ANRI, ID-ANRI_K66a_EN, Folio 4752, File 1101, *Generaal Resolutie, Sejarah Nusantara: treasury from the 17th- 19th Century VOC Archive*, 1787 October 1-1787 November 19, Special Collection and Archive, *Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia*, Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/pagebrowser/icaatom-dasa-anri-go-id_339-ead-xml-1-1101/#page=183&accessor=thumbnails&source=1.

⁸⁷ "14 Februarij Afschaffing der verstrekking van smeerkassen, oly en katoen aan inlandsche en paranakan-Chineesche wachten." February 14th, 1809, Abolition of the furnishing of smooth cheese, oil, and cotton for the indigenous and Peranakan Chinese guards. From 1809, H. W. Daendels, Mr. J. A. van der Chijs, Vijftiende Deel, *Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek, 1602-1811* (Batavia Landsdrukkerij, 1896), 524, <https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/placard-publication-volumes/>.

denotation of the guards as Peranakan Chinese indicated that the Dutch colonial authority in the historical period shortly after the VOC era also acknowledged and paid significant attention to the diversity of its subjects, especially within the colonial armed forces. Such continuity advocates for the value of research in the VOC era colonial society to further the understanding of the Dutch colonial empire's scaffolding before its 1930s peak. The listing of Peranakan Chinese alongside indigenous (*Inlandsche*) guards potentially suggests the differentiation within the Chinese community from the colonial authority's perspective, as the Chinese community during the VOC era and the period immediately after the nationalization of the company were largely divorced from the Dutch-sponsored military actions or weaponry, with a highly limited number of exceptions.⁸⁸



⁸⁸ “Op ijder Chinees suykermolen twee geweeren te houden, en werd de molenaars teffens gepermitteerd, na de bovenlanden gaande twee man met geweer te mogen meede neemen, 6 Augustus 1743.” Each Chinese sugar mill will be placed with two muskets (although *geweer* later means rifles, the weapon had not been widely adopted yet in the 1740s), and the millers are allowed to bring two men with the muskets when going upland, August 6th, 1743. From the realia of ID-ANRI, ID_ANRI_K66a_EN, Folio 302, File 999, *Generaal Resolutie, Sejarah Nusantara: treasury from the 17th- 19th Century VOC Archive*, 28 May 1743-30 December 1743, Special Collection and Archive, *Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia*, Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/pagebrowser/icaatom-dasa-anri-go-id_339-ead-xml-1-999/#source=1&page=338&accessor=thumbnails&view=imagePane&size=782.

Figure 13. Occurrence of *Paranakan* being mentioned in Daily Register, Received Briefings and Papers, and General Resolution, produced based on online archive catalogue *VOC: overgekomen brieven en papieren, 1609-1795* by *Nationaal Archief*, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and *Sejarah Nusantara* online catalog for general resolution realia and daily register marginalia of *ANRI*.⁸⁹

The overwhelming disproportion of the term in the general resolutions than the more registration and report-oriented archives suggests the term was employed in the VOC's colony as an instrument of differentiation of the Chinese community after the 1760s, an instrument for action. Muslims with Chinese ancestry were nothing new in Maritime Southeast Asia; indeed, some of the major contributors to the original conversion of the archipelago had Chinese ancestry.⁹⁰ The relatively late emergence of this term in Dutch documentation suggests the need for the Dutch to highlight this difference, instead of tracking a completely new development in the colonies. The attention of the Dutch colonial authority on the Peranakan Chinese is manifested in the following occasion, when the Dutch even appointed a dedicated headman of this mixed-heritage subcommunity. Such treatment is usually granted by the VOC or local rulers to a group of significant size, wielding unignorable economic and political influence. Unfortunately, the surviving and digitized Dutch documentation leaves no traces for the evolution of the term *Paranakan*.

*De kommandant der Parnakan Chineesen gepermitteerd een tempel te stigten, 14 Juni 1785.*⁹¹

The commandant of the Peranakan Chinese is permitted to establish a temple, July 14th, 1785 (From Realia).

⁸⁹ This bar chart is created from the count of *Daghregister*'s realia, *Generaal Resolutie*'s marginalia, and the description of the passages from *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren* containing the vocabulary *Paranakan* when referring to the mixed heritage Chinese individuals. From *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, Marginalia of the *Daghregister* 1659-1807, *Sejarah Nusantara: treasury from the 17th- 19th Century VOC Archive*, Special Collection and Archive, *Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia*, Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia, <https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/marginalia/>. From *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, Realia of the *Generaal Resolutie 1610-1801*, *Sejarah Nusantara: treasury from the 17th- 19th Century VOC Archive*, Special Collection and Archive, *Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia*, Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia, <https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia/>. From *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, *VOC: overgekomen brieven en papieren, 1609-1795*, 1.04.02 *Inventaris van het archief van de Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC), 1602-1795 (1811)*, Special collection and Archive, *Nationaal Archief*, Den Haag, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, <https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/1.04.02>.

⁹⁰ Carey, "Changing Javanese Perceptions of the Chinese Communities in Central Java, 1755-1825", 5.

⁹¹ ID-ANRI, ID-ANRI_K66a_NL, Folio 946, File 1088, *Generaal Resolutie, Sejarah Nusantara: treasury from the 17th- 19th Century VOC Archive*, 7 January 1785-28 June 1785, Special Collection and Archive, *Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia*, Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/pagebrowser/icaatom-dasa-anri-go-id_383-ead-xml-1-1088/#page=943&accessor=thumbnails&source=1.

This scenario is unique among the occasions involving the Peranakan Chinese in the VOC archive, as the VOC explicitly recognized the connection between the Peranakan Chinese and the Muslims. The VOC, unlike contemporary counterparts, especially the Iberian Catholic powers, also tolerated religions other than Calvinist Christianity to be practiced. Indeed, this is an incident for the certain regional authority reported to the VOC opened its first case of constructing religious architecture for Muslims under its jurisdiction regardless of ethnicity. Such a connection is attested on the same page, in the paragraph following the original text, which the realia above summarize.

*Dat sij tae gedaan zijnde den Mahoemoth ann de godsdiens...nog geen tempel hebben...hunnen propheet eigen tempel besetten.*⁹²

The Muslims (Mahoemoth) don't have a temple for their religion yet...a temple belongs to their prophet to be established.

Although the Dutch recognized the unique characteristics of the Peranakan Chinese, this does not always exempt them from the duty laid upon other Chinese people by the VOC, as manifested in the following decree on the head tax.

*De pagtconditien der Jacatrasche Domeinen, pro A0 1760, onder 't hoofdgeld der Chineeschen te amplieeren, dat de parnakan Chineeschen hetzelve ook betaalen zullen, 11 December 1759.*⁹³

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ ID-ANRI, ID-ANRI_K66a_EN, Folio 934, File 1026, *Generaal Resolutie, Sejarah Nusantara: treasury from the 17th- 19th Century VOC Archive*, 1759 August 2-1759 December 31, Special Collection and Archive, *Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia*, Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/pagebrowser/icaatom-dasa-anri-go-id_339-ead-xml-1-1026/#page=430&accessor=thumbnails&source=1&view=imagePane.

The leasing condition in the Jakarta Domain, pro A0 1760, under this leasing condition, the head tax paid by the Chinese people should be expanded, and the amount paid by the Peranakan Chinese should be the same, 11th December 1759.

Another common denotation of Chinese people's religion is Christianity. The following Figure 14 is a comparison of the phrase *Christen Chinees* (Chinese Christian) in the three types of documentation. The absence of religious denotation on the Chinese individual or population in the placards is worth noting, as the placards about the Chinese people are dominated by the names of the VOC-appointed Chinese community's headmen, namely the *Kapitein* (甲毕丹) or *Luitenant* (雷珍兰) .

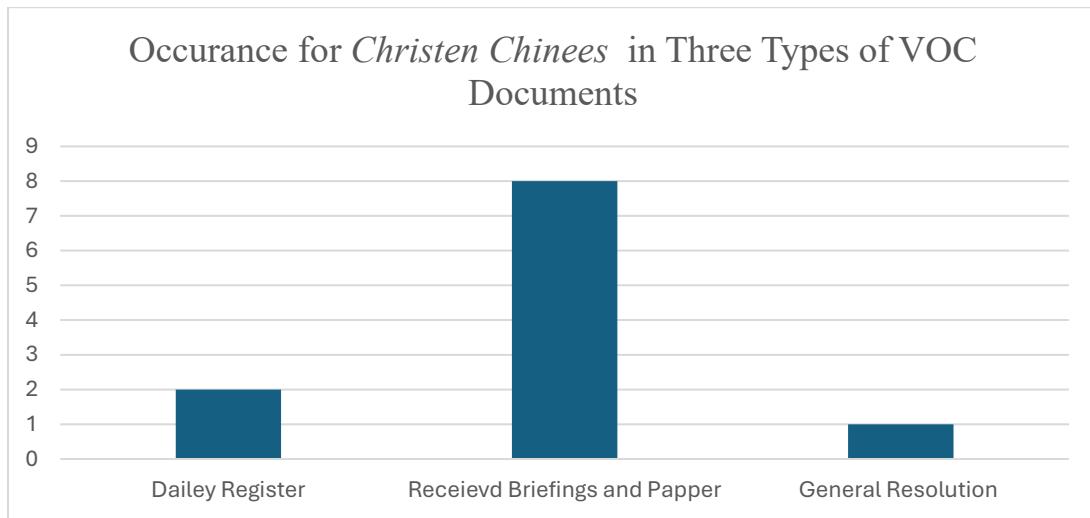


Figure 14. Occurance for *Christen Chinees* mentioned in Daily Register, Received Briefings and Papers, and General Resolution, produced based on online archive catalogue *VOC: overgekomen brieven en papieren, 1609-1795* by *Nationaal Archief*, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and *Sejarah Nusantara* online catalog for general resolution realia and daily register marginalia of *ANRI*⁹⁴

⁹⁴ This bar chart is created from the count of *Daghregister*'s realia, *Generaal Resolutie*'s marginalia, and the description of the passages from *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren* containing the vocabulary *Paranakan* when referring to the mixed heritage Chinese individuals. From *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, Marginalia of the *Daghregister* 1659-1807, *Sejarah Nusantara: treasury from the 17th- 19th Century VOC Archive*, Special Collection and Archive, *Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia*, Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia, <https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/marginalia/>. From *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, Realia of the *Generaal Resolutie 1610-1801*, *Sejarah Nusantara: treasury from the 17th- 19th Century VOC Archive*, Special Collection and Archive, *Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia*, Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia, <https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia/>. From *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, *VOC: overgekomen brieven en papieren, 1609-1795, 1.04.02 Inventaris van het archief van de Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC), 1602-1795 (1811)*, Special collection and Archive, *Nationaal Archief*, Den Haag, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, <https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/1.04.02>.

For the VOC, the missionization of Christianity, especially Calvinism intrinsically connected to the Dutch Identity, was not always a priority. The VOC supported the limited missionization in the archipelago when it was beneficial for business conduct. However, it wasn't uncommon to see Chinese people who interacted with the VOC to be Christian. The highlight of such identity in the VOC colonial accounts may suggest that the company viewed this difference from other Chinese as highly important and worth mentioning. As an undeniable marker of a person's identity, religious factors have eventually attracted special attention from the Dutch authorities when they intrinsically interacted with criminal tendencies and political affiliations.

Political Affiliation and Relationship with the Dutch

From the VOC archive, we can summarize three types of major relationships between the Chinese and the Dutch colonial authority: collaborators, rebels, or subjects. Rebellious Chinese was exemplified by the 1740-1742 Chinese and Javanese War, which was indeed a rarity considering their long-term relationship with the Dutch. In the two centuries, the Chinese had been crucial couriers and reporters of all kinds of intelligence for the company. An example of collaborating with the Chinese company can be seen in the following Daily Register marginalia.

*Briefen van Banda per den Christen Chinees Jacob Abrasmz.*⁹⁵

Letter from Banda written by the Chinese Christian Jacob Abrasmz.

In this example, the Christian Chinese is the reporter of the information, crucial for the commercial operation, with him even abandoned his Chinese surname. This short but precise excerpt from the *Daghregister*'s marginalia implies the VOC's preference towards the Christian

⁹⁵ ID-ANRI, ID-ANRI_K66a_EN, Folio 648, File 2513, *Daghregister 1659-1807, Sejarah Nusantara: treasury from the 17th- 19th Century VOC Archive*, 31 May 1694-31 December 1694, Special Collection and Archive, *Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia*, Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/pagebrowser/icaatom-dasa-anri-go-id_339-ead-xml-1-2513/#source=1&page=241&accessor=thumbnails&view=imagePane.

members of the already valuable diasporic Chinese community, viewing them as incredible collectors of information. Intelligence is always crucial for both business and administration.

*Regeering merkt als een slappe justitie aan de gedecerneerde lijffstraffe jegens den heydens chinees Kier over het verkragten van een christen meysje van 7 à 8 jaaren, nadien hij al 14 jaren oud geweest zijnde, ook de dood verdiend hadde, 12 Juni 1719.*⁹⁶

The government notified that sentencing the heathen (*heydens*) Chinese Kier to physical punishment (*lijffstraffe*) for raping (*verkragten*) a Christian girl between seven and eight years old was too lenient, as he was already 14th years old at the time and eligible to die.

This opinion from the Batavian High Government for the Dutch Malaka authority's sentencing of the Chinese person under its jurisdiction demonstrates the diasporic Chinese status as subjects, in this case, a non-Christian Chinese. As subjects under the Dutch jurisdiction, they were considered under the law by the Dutch colonial authority, instead of the enemy, who were outside the law. Religious denotation is a crucial feature in this legal record, as the perpetrator's non-Christian identity and the young victim's Christian identity are emphasized in the day register.

The political affiliation among the Chinese in the VOC control region was also noticed by the company, as the political realignments back in China left them with physical differences that could be found from the outside. *Geschoren* is a Dutch term for a shaved head. The VOC used this term to refer to the Chinese people who came to Southeast Asia after the mid-17th century, during the Qing Dynasty, the government mandated that every man shave their forehead and have a queue behind their head; this hairstyle could not be found in Chinese men who immigrated earlier.⁹⁷ This

⁹⁶ ID-ANRI, ID-ANRI_K66a_EN, Folio 344, File 946, *Generaal Resolutie, Sejarah Nusantara: treasury from the 17th- 19th Century VOC Archive*, 3 January 1719-30 December 1719, Special Collection and Archive, *Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia*, Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/pagebrowser/icaatom-dasa-anri-go-id_339-ead-xml-1-946/#source=1&page=544&accessor=thumbnails.

⁹⁷ Carey, "Changing Javanese Perceptions of the Chinese Communities in Central Java, 1755-1825", 12.

term appears in all three types of Dutch documentation between 1690 and 1720. The following general resolution's realia provided an example of how the Dutch used this physical difference as a marker for the new arrivals.

*Alle aankomende geschoren Chinezen te doen opvatten en herwaarts zenden, 3 Februari 1711.*⁹⁸

Arrest every arrived shaved Chinese and bring them here, 3rd February 1711 (from realia).

In this example, when arresting newly arrived Chinese in Java, the VOC authority denoted their identity with the hairstyle, suggesting the instrumental usage of social categories within the Chinese in the VOC archive.

Although the Dutch archive did not include the explicit relationship between the “shaved Chinese” and the “unshaved Chinese” in the colonies they controlled, the VOC did intervene in the changing Chinese political landscape in the second half of the 17th century. In *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys*, Wills wrote about the provisional alliance between the Qing Dynasty China and the United Dutch East India Company against the Ming loyalist Zheng Chenggong (Coxinga) who took Taiwan from the Dutch in the mid-17th century, that *de facto* alliance ended at the end of the century, just before the term *geschoren* emerged in the documentation.⁹⁹ The *de facto* alliance period saw the overseas Chinese merchants, ship-owners, and sailors become the liminal informants for both the company and the Chinese officials to understand each other, attesting how diasporic communities could be liminal figures between two cultures and political systems.

⁹⁸ ID-ANRI, ID-ANRI_K66a_EN, Folio 85, File 931, *Generaal Resolutie, Sejarah Nusantara: treasury from the 17th- 19th Century VOC Archive*, 2 January 1711-11 June 1711, Special Collection and Archive, Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/pagebrowser/icaatom-dasa-anri-go_id_339-ead-xml-1-931/#source=1&page=281&accessor=thumbnails.

⁹⁹ Wills, *Pepper, guns, and parleys*, 202.

IV. Going Beyond the Archival Grain: Emic Perspective through Kong Koan and the Chinese Annals of Batavia

The majority of the preserved archival records about the VOC-era Chinese people residing in the Dutch colonies are undoubtedly from an etic perspective. In contrast, those from the emic perspective are very scarce, especially after the 1965 Indonesian Anti-communist purge, when many Chinese Indonesian records were destroyed due to Chinese Indonesians and expatriates being suspected by the native population to be cadres of the *PKI* (Communist Party of Indonesia) or agents of the People's Republic of China.¹⁰⁰ Fortunately, a small fraction of the Chinese language accounts written by the diasporic Chinese authors themselves still survives to this day, especially those from Batavia. The proceedings and records from the Batavian Chinese Council preserved discrete details of the Batavian Chinese society, as a related but separate companion to the VOC archive. *The Chinese Annals of Batavia*, meanwhile, is a rare sample of historical narrative crafted by the VOC-era Chinese Batavian author. These written accounts provided insight into how the VOC-Era Chinese Batavians perceived themselves and the outside environment they were facing. From these accounts, a similar but different reconstruction of VOC-era Chinese diasporic society from what the Dutch archive pictured appears in front of the later generations.

***Kong Koan* of Batavia's Paper (吧城公案)**

Since the middle of the 18th Century, the Dutch authority granted the establishment of the autonomous council of the Chinese Batavian to handle administrative and legal proceedings for the city's Chinese residents. The operation of *Kong Koan*, the Batavia Chinese Council, or 吧城公馆, lasted until the early days of the modern Republic of Indonesia, as the last construction

¹⁰⁰ Gabrielle von Kispal-van Deijk, "Ubiquitous but Elusive", 81.

certification submitted to the council dated to 1964, during President Sukarno's Guided Democracy Era.¹⁰¹ The two-century-long duration of this Chinese council (*Chineesen Raad*) originally produced a lengthy collection of archival materials. However, most of them have been lost due to different reasons, ranging from preservation issues, changing political structure, conflicts, and social upheavals. The Leiden University Library has collected and digitized the majority of preserved archives from the Batavia Chinese Council between the 1780s and the 1960s. The Leiden Collection of the *Kong Koan*'s archive included minutes for council meetings, legal proceedings, population certification from the cradle to the grave, supervision records for the Chinese community's religious and educational activities, as well as other records, including the written oaths and real estate proofs. The VOC era archive survives in the form of the council's legal proceedings (under the catalogue *Minutes*) and marriage records produced between 1770 and 1799.

The reports from *Kapitein* of Chinese people in each VOC-controlled possession left in the Dutch day registers are summaries of major developments under their jurisdictions, instead of reproducing their daily routines. The availability of the late company rule era *Kong Koan* paper thus allows the researchers to access the information that the Dutch archive hardly preserves or has limited records of. The marriage certificates reveal that Batavian Chinese formed their own family in the VOC possessions, which the VOC's own Dutch-language archive seldom reflects, except for the population census, and the Chinese community leaders were the witnesses of these

¹⁰¹ Kong Koan NM10, Minutes of Council Meetings 番字案簿, 1958.07.16 – 1964.07.08, *Kong Koan Paper*, Special Collection and Archive, Leiden University Library, Leiden, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, <http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:1935189>.

marriages.¹⁰² Unfortunately, the list of presented people and the age of married couples were the only types of information available on these marriage certificates.

The court cases, meanwhile, contain many graphic and vivid details of the property or monetary-induced disputes between the Chinese Batavians (including the Dutch-archived-ignored-women who were frequently involved in business disputes), which the Dutch archives usually only briefly included in the record composed from the reports of the headmen or individual complaints from the Chinese stakeholders filed to the colonial authority.¹⁰³ Although the court cases resulted exclusively from the disputes between the diasporic Chinese people, native people were still involved in a limited number of these cases as a third party who was not present in the court. One rare and unique occasion involving local people from the archipelago that survived in the late VOC era *Kong Koan*, was that the *Kapitein* of Chinese refused to allow a Chinese person to marry a native female servant born in Batavia.¹⁰⁴ Such an incident testified not only to the intermarriage between the Chinese and the native people in the VOC possessions, but also to the fact that the community headmen, including the *Kapitein*, were liable for civil lawsuits.

Unfortunately, no dedicated records from the VOC era Chinese Council about the religions of the Batavian Chinese community survived in the Leiden University Collection, as the earliest

¹⁰² Example: “...男家何才生年二十一岁，女家王玉娘二十一岁……甲毕丹雷珍兰列位大人台前察夺成婚...” The groom is 21 years old, while the bride is also 21 years old...they got married in front of the witnesses of various Lords, including *Kapitein* and *Luitenant*...From *Kong Koan* 51101, Marriage Register, *Kong Koan Paper*, 13th May 1773, Special Collection and Archive, Leiden University Library, Leiden, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, <https://digitalcollections.universiteitleiden.nl/view/item/1935174>.

¹⁰³ Example: “罗左娘供谓廖亚华有欠氏五十六文四方屡讨不还“Mrs. Luo Zuo Niang sued Mr. Liao Ya Hua that the latter has long refused to pay back the money (56 wen, a Chinese unit for copper coins) she lent to him. From *Kong Koan* 21001, Folio 1, Minutes, 公案簿, 1787.10.31 – 1791.02.08, *Kong Koan Paper*, Special Collection and Archive, Leiden University Library, Leiden, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, <http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:1935736>.

¹⁰⁴ “...女婢名唠吉系吧产今换唐人名唤陈贤娘曾求唐人蔡敦官甲毕丹给付交寅字以遂唐人礼法...甲毕丹执意不许。不知何故又仍奉命权知...谕到甲毕丹厅公堂给婚字...被面阻痛骂赶出...” A female servant named Lao Ji, who was native to Batavia, now received a Chinese name, Chen Xianniang. Her original owner (a Chinese Batavian) once applied to the honorable *Kapitein* Cai to allow them to marry (*Jiao Yin*, from the Malay term *Kahwin*, which means getting married) in accordance with the Chinese tradition...The *Kapitein* fiercely refused this proposal. But for some unknown reason, the couple received the order to receive marriage permission at the office of the *Kapitein*...the *Kapitein* refused their plea in their faces when they came and furiously ordered them to leave... From *Ibid*, Folio 53.

records from Chinese temples came from the late 19th century.¹⁰⁵ The similarities and differences between the information contained in the records on the diasporic Chinese Batavian society from the Dutch and Chinese perspectives stress the purpose-oriented and instrumental nature of archival practice: it is always a selection of reality for reference and intervention, rather than faithfully obtaining every aspect of a singular “truth”.

The Chinese Annals of Batavia (开吧历代史记)

Unfortunately, the ethnohistorical accounts from the VOC-era Chinese are fundamentally scarce. *The Chinese Annals of Batavia*, or 开吧历代史记, remain the most intact sample of the emic historical narrative of the Chinese experience in the archipelago since the establishment of Batavia. The exact authors remain undetermined. The version referenced by this thesis was annotated and published by Singaporean historian Xu Yunqiao in 1953 in the ninth issue of the South Sea Journal (南洋学报). According to Xu, the historical accounts were written and edited by different authors between 1729 and 1832, with the first section even written by the author when he had returned to China, a timely reminder of the link between the diasporic community and their land of ancestry.¹⁰⁶ Besides the original authors’ linear narration of the Chinese experience in the maritime Southeast Asia and Batavia between the early 17th and the late 18th century, Xu Yunqiao’s

¹⁰⁵ Kong Koan 81001, Balance of Wan Kiap Sie Temple 完劫寺地租 Xianniang.ng Koan Paper, Special Collection and Archive, Leiden University Library, Leiden, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, <http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:1935288>.

¹⁰⁶ “‘噶喇叭记略’作者名姓氏不详, 一七二九至一七三六曾旅吧城七载...一八三二年陈乃玉续成之。 “*A Brief History of Sunda Kelapa* (old name for Jakarta’s old port, the first section of the book) is written by an author with an unknown surname; we only know his given name is Kai. He lived in Batavia for seven years between 1729 and 1736...it (*The Chinese Annual of Batavia*) is eventually extended by Chen Naiyu. From Xu Yunqiao, “开吧历代史记许云樵校著本”, *Journal of the South Sea Society* 9, no.1 (1953): 2.

version also added a list of the VOC-appointed officials, including the Governor-general of the Indies, the *Kapitein China*, the Chinese bookkeepers, and the director of the Chinese orphanage.¹⁰⁷

Although *the Chinese Annals of Batavia* contains the same narrative sequence for historical incidents as the Dutch records, it offers details within the Chinese society, especially how the overseen Chinese understood their surroundings, which no etic accounts captured. The best example is how the Chinese addressed various officials of the VOC instead of directly borrowing the Dutch term for the Governor-General or the Board of Trustees, the Chinese author from Batavia subscribed to the different terminology of kings in Chinese. The Governor-general is addressed as the King (王) of Batavia, while the members of *Heeren XIV* are addressed as the Ancestor King (祖家王).¹⁰⁸ *The Chinese Annals of Batavia* is not famous for its accuracy; indeed, this book contains various errors regarding historical details of the Dutch capture of Malacca and the 1740 Batavia Massacre.¹⁰⁹ However, one can still assemble an inevitably murky but more detailed image of the VOC colonial society when triangulating Chinese, Dutch, and, if possible, indigenous or other parties' accounts. *The Chinese Annals of Batavia* nevertheless produced a window for peering into how the Chinese community in Batavia perceived their surroundings and the foreign political system, offering a unique historical source for juxtaposing with other historical accounts produced from or reproduced after its contemporary period.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ “开吧历代王位表”，“开吧历代甲毕丹姓氏名次”，“历代雷珍兰名氏”，“历代武直迷姓氏名次”，：历代吧国公堂书记题名录。”List of Kings (governor general) of Batavia, List of Chinese *Kapitein* of Batavia, List of Chinese *Luitenant* of Batavia, List of Chinese *Weeskamer* (Orphanage) Directors, and List of Batavian Chinese Council's Secretaries, from Ibid 15-21.

¹⁰⁸ “所谓祖家王亦非荷兰王，是为荷兰东印度公司之董事也。” The so-called *Ancestor King* was not the Dutch King, but the Board of Directors of the VOC, from Ibid, 23.

¹⁰⁹ “余攷“吧记”一七七五年前之记载颇多讹误...” I (Xu Yunqiao) think *The Chinese Annual of Batavia* contains many errors in its account before 1775, from Ibid, 2.

¹¹⁰ “开吧历代史记所记载红溪事，与莱佛士所叙此事，颠末大可互相作证，尤可校范慕伦书之得失。”One can compare *the Chinese Annual of Batavia*'s record on the 1740 Batavia Massacre with that from Sir Stamford Raffles' *History of Java*, to evaluate the book on the same issue written by J. Th. Vermeulen, from Ibid, 7.

Discussion and Conclusion

The difference in the archival behavior of the VOC era Dutch colonial authority and the Chinese Council attested the instrumental nature of archival behavior in a colonial society: they are selective recorders of an “iceberg tip”, aiming to devise interventions instead of faithfully reproducing the reality of the colonial society. Although the notion of race was still under formation during the era of the VOC, the category-seeking and category-making logic based on religion, language, and ancestry of a certain group has been a driving force under the colonial Dutch archive. Under such an intellectual basis, the internal diversity of the Chinese people based on religion, political affiliation, and occupation was acknowledged, utilized, and, to a certain degree, weaponized (i.e., when dealing with the uprising and its aftermath) by the VOC authority in maritime Southeast Asia, as the colonial archive witnessed.

Although the Dutch colonial archives during the company rule era are selective and interventionist, they nevertheless yielded valuable information that challenges the status quo on the understanding of the diasporic Chinese community in the region between the 17th and 19th centuries. Besides taking up merchant and sailor occupations, they were also indispensable sugar mill laborers, farmers, and brewing laborers. The contemporary Chinese Council’s archive documented the establishment of the Chinese family under its jurisdiction, while the *Chinese Annals of Batavia* opened a somewhat flawed but unique portal into the emic perspective of the VOC era diasporic Chinese experience and understanding in Java. The combined image demonstrates the fruitfulness of juxtaposing emic and etic sources for reconstructing the past colonial society.

This thesis is grounded in employing an anthropological lens to the colonial history, with an attempt to extrapolate what Stohler has done to the later Dutch Ministry of Colonies’ archive.

As stated in the literature review section, the research on the Dutch colonial society is still dominated by historians, while scholars from other disciplinary backgrounds are still underrepresented. Advocating for broadening the disciplinary approach is not new for the research of the VOC's legacy, as some archaeologists have advocated for combining the underwater archaeology of VOC shipwrecks and historical research of the company archive.¹¹¹ As the 16th March 1742 excerpt from the *Generaal Resolutie* indicated, the Chinese immigrant laborers worked for the sugar, agriculture, and brewing sectors in the VOC era in the company's colonies. Future inter-disciplinary research, when combined with the emerging archaeology of colonialism in the Indo-Pacific Region, can address the archival information with the survey on material cultural remnants (i.e., plantations).

To conclude, internal diversity of the diasporic Chinese community in the VOC era maritime Southeast Asia's Dutch possessions shaped their interaction with other groups fundamentally, in a case-specific pattern that cannot be easily generalized or oversimplified. The Dutch utilized such diversity as a quintessential mechanism of colonial chartered company operation, while the indigenous and other foreign populations interacted with the Chinese according to specific scenarios. One should always bear in mind that colonial society is not simply divided into static oppressors and oppressed, as these unsurprisingly hierarchical societies were also permeated with nuance and caveats. This institution has undeniably participated in the creation of the modern world.

¹¹¹ J. Bas Kist, "Integrating Archaeological and Historical Records in Dutch East India Company Research", in *Maritime Archaeology*, edited by Laurence E. Babits and Hans Tilburg (Springer 1998), 42.

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Digital Maps

Primary Source

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