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Introduction

Transoceanic Mobility and Modern Imperialism

Subversive Seas explores an important, yet little researched, subject within modern history – the transoceanic aspects of the twentieth-century Dutch empire.[1] During the 1920s and 1930s, Dutch ships flowed along global maritime networks connecting the Java and South China Seas, Indian Ocean, Red Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Atlantic and Pacific Oceans with port city nodes throughout Asia, the Middle East, Europe, Australia, and the Americas. Concurrently, colonial insecurities and fears intensified throughout the interwar years and helped shape maritime regulations during a period of increasing indigenous demands for religious autonomy, political independence, and cultural empowerment. The following chapters reveal the ways imperialism existed outside the geographic connections linking metropole and colony and show how maritime networks played an important role in defining colonial structures within Indonesia. Three areas of Dutch shipping are examined (Figure 0.1): hajj pilgrim shipping between colonial Indonesia and the Middle East on the Kongsi Tiga (Trio Line); Asian shipping on the Java-China-Japan Lijn (Java-China-Japan Line or JCJL) connecting colonial Indonesia with China, Japan, the Philippines, Indochina, and Malaysia; and the passenger liners run by Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland (Netherlands Steamship Company or SMN), Rotterdamsche Lloyd NV (Rotterdam Lloyd Limited

[1] Over the past few decades, researchers in the field of "new maritime history" have transformed the sea from a non-place dividing people, places, and things into a vibrant connective space itself worthy of historical investigation. A small sampling of this historiographical "oceanic turn" include Greg Dening, "Deep Times, Deep Spaces: Civilizing the Sea," in *Sea Changes: Historicizing the Ocean*, edited by Bernhard Klein and Gesa Mackenthun (New York: Routledge, 2004); Jerry H. Bentley, Renate Bridenthal, and Kären Wigen, *Seascapes: Maritime Histories, Littoral Cultures, and Transoceanic Exchanges* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007); M. Dusinberre and R. Wenzlhuemer, "Editorial – Being in Transit: Ships and Global Incompatibilities," *Journal of Global History*, 11, no. 2 (2016): 155–162; Anyaa Anim-Addo, Will Hasty, and Kimberley Peter, "The Mobilities of Ships and Shipped Mobilities," *Mobilities*, 9, no. 3 (2014): 337–349; Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, "The Mediterranean and 'the New Thalassology'," *The American Historical Review*, 111, no. 3 (2006): 722–740.

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or RL), and Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij (Royal Packet Navigation Company or KPM) linking European and Asian ports.[2] Beyond simply playing an economic role in imperial expansion, Dutch shipping companies served as political and cultural agents of empire and facilitated connections across global maritime networks that helped define anticolonialism during the interwar years.[3]

The Indonesian archipelago consists of over 17,508 islands forming the nexus of the Java Sea, South China Sea, Aratura Sea, Banda Sea, Pacific Ocean, Celebes Sea, Molucca Sea, Indian Ocean, Makassar Strait, Carimata Strait, and Strait of Malacca. This water-centric geography complicates the analytical framework connecting metropole and colony, which often obscures the majority of transnational exchanges and "lateral connections" across Southeast Asia's contiguous zones, impacting millions of colonial residents.[4] Approaching empire from a maritime viewpoint relegates the European metropole to one of many nodal points along global maritime networks, helping provincialize metropolitan power and highlight the "transcolonial links" between peripheries.[5] Ultimately, repositioning colonial Indonesia to a "sub-imperial center" at the nexus of its own connective maritime webs provides a deeper understanding of how the ocean's permeable boundaries created a simultaneously liberating and threatening maritime spatiality and exposes the fundamental differences between terrestrial and oceanic characteristics particular to the interwar Dutch empire.[6] *Subversive Seas* expands our notions of transnationalism – sometimes criticized for favoring global over local analyses – by incorporating local, national, and global "trans-alities" to illuminate

[2] Kongsi Tiga was a joint venture between the Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland (Netherlands Steamship Company), Rotterdamsche Lloyd NV (Rotterdam Lloyd Limited), and Nederlandsche Stoomvaart Maatschappij Oceaan (Netherlands Ocean Steamship Company). Dutch shipowners often used Chinese and Indonesian names to make their service more appealing. For example, the word *kongsi*, or company, was used by Chinese business associations. The names of all JCJL ships began with *Tji*, the Bahasa Sunda word for "river."

[3] While Michel Foucault saw the ship as a perfect heterotopia or place of "otherness" – rendering it "by itself" as a "place without a place" – maritime historians have since shown ships to be more than objects simply connecting one point to another. Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics*, xvi (1986): 24, 27.

[4] Tracey Banivanua-Mar, *Decolonisation and the Pacific: Indigenous Globalisation and the Ends of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 9; Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997); Heather Sutherland, "Southeast Asian History and the Mediterranean Analogy," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 34, no. 1 (2003): 3; Eric Tagliacozzo, "An Urban Ocean: Notes on the Historical Evolution of Coastal Cities in Greater Southeast Asia," *Journal of Urban History*, 33 (2007): 914.

[5] Banivanua-Mar, *Decolonisation and the Pacific*, 9.

[6] Thomas R. Metcalf, *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860–1920* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 7–8.

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the networks and counternetworks connecting ships, shores, and oceans.[7] Exploring the world through a transoceanic lens exposes how identities were recognized, transformed, and reinvented across maritime networks – connecting ships on the open seas to littoral port cities – while recognizing global interconnectivities existed within a system of nation states that continued to define political, cultural, and geographic definitions of the world.[8]

Subversive Seas explores the simultaneous establishment and transgression of maritime boundaries and the Dutch colonial fears surrounding the interwoven complexities between power and agency, authority and transgression, and subversion and state power during an increasingly troubled period between colonizer and colonized.[9] Unlike other terrestrial exchanges, the transoceanic world's transformative possibilities result from the transversal movements of ships, inspiring maritime travelers and workers to reenvision their own

[7] Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton's use of *translocality* as a way of recognizing "spatial logics and the spatializing violence that global visions can and often do produce," encourages the fluid integration of the local, national, and global while encouraging a more "kinetic" idea of spatiality. Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, eds. *Moving Subjects: Gender, Mobility, and Intimacy in an Age of Global Empire* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 10.

[8] Anthropologist Steven Vertovec notes "the scales, spaces and mechanisms of globalization and transnationalism are just too entangled to allow [for] such clear abstractions" between the two concepts. Steven Vertovec, *Transnationalism* (London: Routledge, 2009), 3; Michael Lang, "Globalization and Its History," *The Journal of Modern History*, 78 (December 2006): 899–931; Philip Crang, Claire Dwyer, and Peter Jackson, "Transnationalism and the Spaces of Commodity Culture," *Progress in Human Geography*, 27, no. 4 (2003): 440; Peter N. Stearns, *Globalization in World History* (London: Routledge, 2010); See Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 91; Gregory Mann, "Locating Colonial Histories: Between France and West Africa," *The American Historical Review*, 110, no. 2 (April 2005): 410. Jerry Bentley reminds maritime historians "any project to construct maritime regions needs to devote careful consideration to the relationships between individual regions and the larger world." Jerry H. Bentley, "Sea and Ocean Basins as Frameworks of Historical Analysis," *Geographical Review*, 89, no. 2 (1999): 218; Marcus Rediker, "Toward a People's History of the Sea," in *Maritime Empires: British Imperial Maritime Trade in the Nineteenth Century*, edited by David Killingray, Margarette Lincoln, and Nigel Rigby (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2004), 195–206.

[9] Contemporary maritime historians dealing with these issues in terms of Dutch shipping include Joep à Campo's work on the KPM, which reveals how colonial shipping and government worked together in a shared colonial project. Jeroen Touwen explores the relationship between KPM and the colonial government, showing how ships helped bring the goals of the Ethical Policy to the Outer Islands. Frans-Paul van der Putten explores the political challenges and responses to JCJL in China during the interwar years. Hiroshi Shimizu traces connections between JCJL and Japanese shipowners. Although these historians explore the relationships between government and business, they work mainly from a socioeconomic viewpoint, leaving a gap in our knowledge over the sociocultural aspects of the modern Dutch maritime world. Jeroen Touwen, *Extremes in the Archipelago: Trade and Economic Development in the Outer Islands of Indonesia, 1900–1942* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2001); Hiroshi Shimizu, "Dutch-Japanese Competition in the Shipping Trade on the Java-Japan Route in the Inter-war Period," *Southeast Asian Studies*, 26, no. 1 (1988): 3–23; Frans-Paul van der Putten, *Corporate Behaviour and Political Risk: Dutch Companies in China, 1903–1941* (Leiden: Research School of Asian, African and Amerindian Studies, Leiden University, 2001).

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identities and those of others encountered along maritime networks.[10] The fluidity of the transoceanic world encourages "mental remapping" for maritime actors by providing a place of change, movement, and reinvention. Some academics term this transit-based transformation of traveler and migrant identity as "cultural flexibility," while others see the fluid properties of water itself as helping to "liquefy" geographies and identities that would otherwise create barriers between people moving across maritime networks.[11] Due to the fluidity of ships as "mobile elements" negotiating the maritime world's shifting spatiality, maritime actors are able to simultaneously manipulate the real and imagined spatiality of onboard spaces.[12]

Despite increasing technological hegemony both at sea and on shore, Dutch fears over the oceanic "wild space" surrounding colonial Indonesia grew substantially during the interwar period due to heightened paranoia over increasing imperial instability.[13] Colonial fears over the maritime world's transformative possibilities stemmed from the spatiality of ships themselves, which served as diminutive models of colonial society – what Paul Gilroy calls "a living, micro-cultural, micro-political system in motion."[14] Dutch authorities were often challenged by colonial subjects who expressed their own ideas about how the sea could – and should – be used and maritime travel encouraged some to reevaluate their identities and those of others while at sea. However, the effects of transoceanic mobility on travelers and maritime laborers and the transformative spatiality of ships and oceans themselves skewed this colonial reflection in unexpected and unpredictable ways.[15] Dutch ships served as *refracted* images of colonial society, only partially reflective

[10] Maria Borovnik, "Seafarers' 'Maritime Culture' and the 'I-Kiribati Way of Life': The Formation of Flexible Identities?," *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 26, no. 2 (2005): 138.

[11] Markus P. M. Vink, "Indian Ocean Studies and the 'New Thalassology'," *Journal of Global History*, 2, no. 1 (2007): 52; Susan C. Anderson and Bruce H. Tabb, eds., *Water, Leisure and Culture: European Historical Perspectives* (Oxford: Berg, 2002); Crang, Dwyer, and Jackson, "Transnationalism and the Spaces of Commodity Culture," 440.

[12] See Carolyn Cartier, "Cosmopolitics and the Maritime World City," *The Geographical Review*, 89, no. 2 (April 1999): 278–289; Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 16.

[13] Eric Tagliacozzo uses similar concepts in his work on maritime borders and smuggling in Southeast Asia between 1865 and 1915, highlighting the concomitant relationship between boundary production and boundary transgression. Eric Tagliacozzo, *Secret Trades, Porous Borders: Smuggling and States Along a Southeast Asian Frontier, 1865–1915* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 3.

[14] Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 4.

[15] Tony Ballantyne, "Rereading the Archive and Opening Up the Nation-State: Colonial Knowledge in South Asia (and Beyond)," in *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking With and Through the Nation*, edited by Antoinette Burton (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 104. See also Simon J. Potter, "Webs, Networks, and Systems: Globalization and the Mass Media in the Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century British Empire," *Journal of British Studies*, 46 (July 2007): 621–646.

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of imperial hierarchies based on race, class, gender, and religion.[16] In order to control these potentially dangerous refractions of imperial norms outside the terrestrial confines of colonial Indonesia, the Dutch government and businesses policed and surveilled transoceanic networks and connectivities. Through their oceanic mobility, colonial subjects who used the maritime world for their own purposes exposed the vulnerabilities and limitations of Dutch imperial authority, which often "leaked like an old rowing boat."[17]

Subversive Seas repositions the oceanic world to the center of the narrative, uncovering the mechanics of transoceanic empire and exposing the oppositional yet interconnected histories of movement, transgression, and fluidity on the one hand and rigidity, hierarchy, and control on the other. The actual mechanisms of imperial oversight and resistance outside the confines of colonial Indonesia have yet to be fully analyzed by historians. What exactly did colonial control and surveillance look like in the maritime world? How did shipping companies participate? What were the connections between maritime and terrestrial systems of surveillance, regulation, and control? How did the maritime world function as a space of anticolonial resistance? While the Dutch administration and shipping companies worked together to control and constrict the maritime world, colonial subjects and others used the maritime world to subvert imperial systems.[18] At the heart of the story are ships themselves, which, despite being yoked to modes of governance on land, served as loci of modernity during the early twentieth century: moving cultural, political,

[16] Eric Tagliacozzo, "Navigating Communities: Distance, Place, and Race in Maritime Southeast Asia," *Asian Ethnicity*, 10, no. 2 (2009): 114.

[17] Jonathan Hyslop, "Steamship Empire: Asian, African and British Sailors in the Merchant Marine c. 1880–1945," *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 44, no. 1 (2009): 51; Mark Ravinder Frost, "Asia's Maritime Networks and the Colonial Public Sphere, 1840–1920," *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, 6, no. 2 (December 2004): 93; Glen O'Hara, "'The Sea is Swinging into View': Modern British Maritime History in a Globalized World," *English Historical Review*, cxxiv, no. 510 (October 2009): 1124–1125; Tamson Pietsch, "A British Sea: Making Sense of Global Space in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Global History*, 5, no. 3 (2010): 423–424.

[18] Scott Taylor, Emma Bell, and Bill Cooke, "Business History and the Historiographical Operation," *Management & Organizational History*, 4, no. 2 (2009): 161–162; Steve Toms and John Wilson "In Defence of Business History: A Reply to Taylor, Bell and Cooke," *Management & Organizational History*, 5, no. 1 (2010): 110–111; Paul C. Godfrey and Nile W. Hatch, "Researching Corporate Social Responsibility: An Agenda for the 21st Century," *Journal of Business Ethics*, 70, no. 1 (2007): 94; Tyler Earle Wry, "Does Business and Society Scholarship Matter to Society? Pursuing a Normative Agenda With Critical Realism and Neoinstitutional Theory," *Journal of Business Ethics*, 89, no. 2 (2009): 151–152; For examples see Michael Miller, "The Business of the Hajj: Seaborne Commerce and the Movement of Peoples" (paper presented at the Seascapes, Littoral Cultures, and Trans-Oceanic Exchanges Conference sponsored by the American Historical Association, Washington, DC, 12–15 February 2003); Van der Putten, *Corporate Behaviour*.

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and material goods across vast oceanic spaces and facilitating the migration, tourism, and transport of various peoples around the globe.[19]

Understanding Dutch Maritime History

Not surprising for a country quite literally reclaimed from the sea, the Netherlands has always had a contentious relationship with water.[20] On the one hand, water has served as an enemy to the nation's very existence while, on the other, oceans have provided a connective space central to the Netherlands' global history over the past half-millennium. Within this waterlogged landscape, the maritime world has played a fundamental role in Dutch historiography, however most studies overwhelmingly focus on the Dutch Golden Age – spanning the late sixteenth to the early eighteenth centuries – and explore the Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie or VOC's pivotal role in creating, using Charles Boxer's classic term, the Dutch seaborne empire.[21] Unfortunately, the rich historiography and theoretical considerations of early modern maritime history are not matched by the historiography of nineteenth- and twentieth-century shipping, which has captured fewer imaginations amongst Dutch historians.[22]

[19] Daniel Headrick's classic work specifically emphasized the integral role modern shipping played as a "tool of empire" in European expansion. Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).

[20] I limit myself in this study to maritime connections between Southeast Asia, East Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, tying together different regions of Afro-Eurasia. While the scope of this book does not allow for the discussion of maritime routes connecting North and South America across the Pacific and Atlantic, such a study is still needed.

[21] Like Fernand Braudel's work on the Mediterranean, Charles Boxer's book is still a definitive work on Dutch maritime history. See C. R. Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire, 1600–1800* (New York: Knopf, 1965). Many studies on Dutch participation in the early modern maritime world cover an immense range of topics including a rich historiography of VOC ships themselves, commodities exchanged along maritime routes, Dutch interactions with indigenous actors, and relationships between the Netherlands and the world. See for example Robert Parthesius, *Dutch Ships in Tropical Waters: The Development of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) Shipping Network in Asia 1595–1660* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010); Kerry Ward, *Networks of Empire: Forced Migration in the Dutch East India Company* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[22] For an overview see Frank Broeze, "At Sea and Ashore: A Review of the Historiography of Modern Shipping since the 1970s." *Nederlandsch Economisch-Historisch Archief (NEHA) – Bulletin*, 12, no. 1 (1998): 3–37; Frank Broeze, *Maritime History at the Crossroads: A Critical Review of Recent Historiography* (St. John's: International Maritime Economic History Association, 1995). For shipping during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries see for example E. M. Jacobs, *Merchant in Asia: The Trade of the Dutch East India Company During the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: CNWS Publications, 2006); J. R. Bruijn, *Varend Verleden: de Nederlandse Oorlogsvloot in de Zeventiende en Achttiende Eeuw* (Amsterdam: Balans, 1998); Frank Broeze, *De Stad Schiedam: De Schiedamse Scheepsreederij en de Nederlandse Vaart op Oost-Indië omstreeks 1840* ('s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1978); Femme Gaastra, "Vragen over de koopvaardij: de 'Enquête omtrent den toestand van de Nederlandsche koopvaardijvloot' uit 1874 en de achteruitgang van de handelsvloot" (Inaugurele rede Universiteit Leiden, Leiden,

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The very structures inherent to modern imperialism have played a role in this disparity and, as Sugata Bose notes, "colonial frontiers came to obstruct the study of comparisons and links across regions and left as a lasting legacy a general narrowing of scholarly focus within the framework of area studies."[23] *Subversive Seas* augments our knowledge of twentieth-century maritime history – following newer historical approaches on studies of the early modern Atlantic, Indian, and, more recently, Pacific Oceans – by exploring transnational connections and interactions between different regions and peoples across oceanic rims.[24]

Nineteenth-century technological advances revolutionized the shipping industry and multiplied transoceanic networks through faster and cheaper travel and transport.[25] The Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland (SMN) was founded in Amsterdam in 1870, followed shortly after by Rotterdamsche Lloyd NV (RL) in 1883.[26] The two were collectively known as the "Dutch Mails"

2004). For connections between the VOC and more contemporary maritime histories see Jelle van Lottum, *across the North Sea: The Impact of the Dutch Republic on International Labour Migration, c. 1550–1850* (Amsterdam: Aksant Academic Publishers, 2007).

[23] Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 7.

[24] For the Atlantic see Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2000); Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*. For the Indian Ocean see K. N. Chaudhuri, *Asia before Europe: Economy and Civilization of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); M. N. Pearson, *The Indian Ocean* (London: Routledge, 2003); Bose, *A Hundred Horizons*; Pamila Gupta, Isabel Hofmeyr, and M. N. Pearson, eds., *Eyes across the Water: Navigating the Indian Ocean* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2010); Sujit Sivasundaram, *Islanded: Britain, Sri Lanka, and the Bounds of an Indian Ocean Colony* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2013). For the Pacific see Matt K. Matsuda, *Pacific Worlds: A History of Seas, Peoples, and Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); David Igler, *The Great Ocean: Pacific Worlds from Captain Cook to the Gold Rush* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Banivanua-Mar, *Decolonisation and the Pacific*. For the Red Sea see Alexis Wick, *The Red Sea: In Search of Lost Space* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2016). For Dutch relationships to India see C. G. Brouwer, *Al-Mukhā: The Transoceanic Trade of a Yemeni Staple Town as Mapped by Merchants of the VOC, 1614–1640: Coffee, Spices & Textiles* (Amsterdam: D'Fluyte Rarob, 2006); Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal, 1630–1720* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985).

[25] Most notably the Suez Canal, completed in 1869, and the availability in 1880 of triple-compound engines specifically designed for ocean liners traveling through deep waters over longer distances. For more on the Suez Canal see Frank Broeze, "The International Diffusion of Steam Navigation: The Myth of the Retardation of Netherlands Steam Navigation to the East Indies," *Economisch- en Sociaal-Historisch Jaarboek*, 45 (1982): 77–95. For the history of maritime technologies see C. A. Davids, "The Transfer of Technology between Britain and the Netherlands, 1700–1850," in *Anglo-Dutch Mercantile Marine Relations 1700–1850*, edited by J. R. Bruijn and W. F. J. Mörzer Bruyns (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum "Nederlands Scheepvaart-museum," 1991), 7–23.

[26] Rotterdamsche Lloyd NV began as Stoomboot Reederij "Rotterdamsche Lloyd," founded in 1875, which expanded into Stoomvaart Maatschappij "Rotterdamsche Lloyd" in 1881.

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and transported cargo, passengers, and post between Europe and colonial Indonesia, stopping at port cities in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, India, and Southeast Asia along the way.[27] In 1888, SMN and RL jointly founded the Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij (KPM) to serve as a feeder service for coastal transport to local ports throughout the colonial Indonesia archipelago and its ships began operating in 1891. Together, the SMN, RL, and KPM worked to expand their shipping routes around the globe by establishing additional feeder lines, including the Java-China-Japan Lijn (JCJL) started in 1902, which transported cargo, passengers, and laborers around the Nanyang or Southern Ocean.[28] In 1891, British shipping company Alfred Holt, entered the Amsterdam-Java route with vessels owned by the newly formed Nederlandsche Stoomvaart Maatschappij Oceaan (Netherlands Steamship Company Ocean or NSMO) – part of the Blue Funnel Line – in partnership with Amsterdam's J. B. Meyer and Co. which ran the firm out of its Amsterdam offices. All NSMO ships sailed under the Dutch flag and employed only Dutch captains and officers, alongside Chinese crews. In exchange for eschewing colonial Indonesian coastal trade, KPM negotiated a deal with NSMO that the British company would receive an equal share in the annual pilgrim traffic between colonial Indonesia and Jeddah.[29] Thereafter, NSMO, SMN, and RL created a hajj shipping pool called Kongsi Tiga or the Trio Line transporting hajj pilgrims between Southeast Asia and the Middle East.[30]

Despite economic downturns after World War I and during the 1930s, SMN, RL, KPM, JCJL, and NSMO all experienced substantial, albeit fluctuating, growth between 1900 and 1942.[31] Exhibited in the metropole through the

[27] Despite these new Dutch firms, the official government mail contract was given to the British-owned company (albeit under a Dutch name) Nederlandsch-Indische Stoomvaart Maatschappij (NISM), which had a monopoly over Indonesian shipping from 1865 to 1890. NISM's contract was eventually overturned by Parliament in 1888 because it was based in Singapore and the Dutch were increasingly weary of relying on foreign companies for essential needs concerning their colonies.

[28] SMN and RL also established the Java Bengalen Lijn in 1906 with a regular service between Java and Calcutta, via Sabang and Rangoon. By the next year, the SMN and RL were sending twelve round-trip voyages between Java, Rangoon, and Calcutta as part of the JBL and the following year that number had climbed to fifteen. Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland (SMN), 1869–1972, nummer toegang 2.20.23, inventarisnummer 396, 1906; NL-HaNA, SMN, 2.20.23, inv.nr. 396, 1907.

[29] Malcolm E. Falkus, *The Blue Funnel Legend: A History of the Ocean Steam Ship Company, 1865–1973* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1990), 42–43, 56; Francis E. Hyde and J. R. Harris, *Blue Funnel: A History of Alfred Holt and Company of Liverpool from 1865 to 1914* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1957), 84–85.

[30] Joseph Norbert Frans Marie à Campo, *Engines of Empire: Steamshipping and State Formation in Colonial Indonesia* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2002), 244.

[31] For example, between 1900 and 1914 SMN and RL's combined profits from passenger transport averaged ƒ2,767,561 per year. This more than quadrupled between 1920 and 1929 to ƒ12,261,896 per year, before dropping to ƒ9,219,449 per year from 1930 to 1939. NL-HaNA,

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newly built Shipping House (Scheepvaarthuis) containing the head offices of SMN, KPM, and JCJL, Amsterdam's ornate building embodied the success of Dutch maritime enterprise and was – and still is – considered one of the Netherlands' architectural masterpieces.[32] Outside the metropole, economic wellbeing was exhibited through new luxury motor ships such as SMN's MS *Johan van Oldenbarnevelt* and MS *Marnix van Sint Aldegonde* both launched in 1930 and RL's MS *Baloeran* and MS *Dempo* launched in 1930 and 1931 respectively.[33] NSMO purchased the MS *Tantalus* in 1923 and both the MS *Alcinous* and MS *Phrontis* in 1926.[34] JCJL added two newly built ships to its service in 1931, the MS *Tjinegara* and MS *Tjisadane*.[35] However, these material signs of prosperity were tempered by economic fluctuations felt at various times throughout this period, when Dutch shipping companies were impacted by larger volatilities facing the Dutch empire during the 1920s and 1930s.

In order to protect their operations, all five companies, SMN, RL, KPM, JCJL, and NSMO, shared a common goal of eliminating competitors by forming conferences, or cartel-like agreements, with each other. These oligarchic shipping pools set rates for cargo and passengers and functioned as collective monopolies by binding the companies together through loyalties and rebates guaranteeing exclusive use of conference ships, discouraging internal competition between conference members through price fixing, and eliminating outside competition through rate wars and other influences.[36] Interlocking

SMN, 2.20.23, inv.nr. 1033. SMN saw their capital expansion increase from ƒ3.5 million to ƒ7 million between 1870 and 1900, but from 1900 to 1930 this mushroomed from ƒ7 million to ƒ35 million, enough to compensate for the stagnant years between 1930 and 1940 when capital remained at ƒ35 million. From 1940 to 1950 the company again saw a drastic rise from ƒ35 million to ƒ45 million. NL-HaNA, SMN, 2.20.23, inv.nr. 291.

32 Designed by Amsterdam School architects J. M. van der Mey, Michel de Klerk, and P. L. Kramer and was constructed by A. D. N. van Gendt between 1913 and 1928 in two phases. The Scheepvaarthuis also housed the Head Offices of the Koninklijke Nederlandse Stoomboot-Maatschappij (Royal Dutch Steamboat Company), Nieuwe Rijnvaart Maatschappij (New Rhine Shipping Company) and Koninklijke West-Indische Maildienst (Royal West-Indian Mailservice). J. J. Friend, *The Amsterdam School* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1970).

33 SS *Johan van Oldenbarnevelt* and SS *Marnix van Sint Aldegonde*, both introduced in 1930, each accommodated 338 first-, 281 second-, and 64 third-class passengers and RL's SS *Baloeran* and SS *Dempo* each accommodated 236 first-, 253 second-, 70 third-, and 68 fourth-class passengers. To help increase numbers of passengers, both companies introduced a *Boottrein* (Boat Train) – RL's running from the Netherlands to Marseille and SMN's to and from Genua – cutting down travel time by a few days before heading through the Suez Canal. NL-HaNA, SMN, 2.20.23, inv.nr. 397, 1928.

34 By 1931, their Netherlands East Indies fleet had five ships all, on average, three years old. G. J. de Boer, *De Nederlandse Blauwpijpers* (Alkmaar: De Alk, 1997), 51–52.

35 NewspaperSG, National Library Board Singapore, http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers, *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 30 March 1931, p. 17, reel NL1748.

36 W. G. Huff, "Shipping Monopoly, Monopsony and Business Group Organization in Pre-World War Two Singapore," *Asia Pacific Business Review*, 7, no. 2 (2000): 63.

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the transoceanic routes of SMN and RL together with the more localized routes of KPM and JCJL created a national oligarchy over shipping to and from colonial Indonesia by diverting sea traffic away from Singapore to the Indonesian ports of Padang, Tanjung Priok, Surabaya, and Makassar.[37] SMN, RL, NSMO, JCJL, and KPM wanted to ensure that the "defense of our interests in the Netherlands East Indies [remains] in our own hands."[38] Conference members formed additional organizations to establish extra protections against outside competitors. For example, in 1908 SMN, RL, and KPM formed the Netherlands Shipping Union (Nederlandsche Scheepvaart Unie) to ensure KPM retained a virtual monopoly over local shipping across colonial Indonesia and allowing RL and SMN to focus their resources on expanding other routes. These protective organizations were also formed during difficult economic times, for example in 1920 when the SMN, RL, KPM, and JCJL formed the United Netherlands Navigation Company (Vereenigde Nederlandsche Scheepvaartmaatschappij) to protect themselves against the post-World War I economic downturn.[39] Other protective measures included the establishment of private booking offices in place of independent agencies, since the latter could potentially book cargo and passengers on rival liners.[40]

Widespread mutual cooperation was also apparent between shipping companies and the Dutch colonial government, whose relationship Joep à Campo terms a "bilateral monopoly."[41] While the colonial administration's liberal economic policies helped stimulate colonial Indonesia's shipping industry – including a mandate requiring all SMN and RL ships be built within the Netherlands – in exchange for this support the government expected shipping companies to form powerful, nationalistic monopolies cooperative with the

[37] The first overseas manager of KPM, L. P. D. op ten Noort, devised a strategy of consolidating both long-distance and local transportation into Dutch hands.

[38] Effective 1 January 1921, the offices of the shipping agencies in Batavia, Tanjung Priok, Semerang, Surabaya, Macassar, Manado, Padang, Emma Harbour, Sabang and Calcutta were run exclusively as booking agencies for SMN, RL, and KPM. NL-HaNA, SMN, 2.20.23, inv. nr. 396,1919.

[39] The VNS was also founded together by Koninklijke Nederlandsche Stoomboot Maatschappij, Holland Amerika Lijn, Van Nievelt, Goudriaan en Co's. Stoomvaart Maatschappij (Nigoco) and Stoomvaart Maatschappij "De Maas" NV (Van Ommeren), with routes between the Netherlands and colonial India, Australia, East Asia, and East Africa. Shortly after, VNS also added routes to West Africa together with Hollandsche Stoomboot Maatschappij and Koninklijke Hollandsche Lloyd.

[40] These efforts helped the companies earn record profits on passenger fares in 1921 and 1922. For example, SMN and RL, which between 1900 and 1914 earned an annual average of ƒ2,767,561 from passenger fares, earned ƒ16,348,569 in 1921 and ƒ15,907,473 in 1922. NL-HaNA, SMN, 2.20.23, inv.nr. 1033.

[41] During the early years of their mail contracts, SMN and RL were paid ƒ6,000 per journey before 1895 and ƒ8,000 afterwards. Campo, *Engines of Empire*, 88. See also Joseph Norbert Frans Marie à Campo, "Steam Navigation and State Formation," in *The Late Colonial State in Indonesia: Political and Economic Foundations of the Netherlands Indies 1880–1942*, edited by Robert Cribb (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1994), 11–29.

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