

BUREACRATIZATION OF PATRIMONIALISM:  
 COLONIAL TAXATION AND LAND TENURE ON  
 JAVA, 1830-1850.

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Patrimonialism, Colonialism and Underdevelopment in Java<sup>1</sup>

Various conflicting answers have been given to explain the current lack of "development"<sup>2</sup> in Indonesia.<sup>3</sup> In this discussion the influence of: (1) indigenous "patrimonial" institutions, and (2) colonial "bureaucratic" institutions is critically examined. It is argued that it is fruitful to consider *both* of these structural factors and that the situation in Java in the nineteenth century can be seen as a process of the "bureaucratization of patrimonialism."<sup>4</sup> In other words, one way to begin to examine the concrete historical events which took place in Java in the 1830-1870 period of the "cultivation system" (*kultuurstelsel*) is to postulate "ideal types"<sup>5</sup> which can provide a theoretical framework for further description. These "hypotheses" are: (1) underdevelopment in Java can be fruitfully studied in terms of patrimonial patterns of pre-colonial political, economic and cultural structure, and (2) it is worth examining the extent to which the colonial system "underdeveloped" Java through the imposition of a rational-legal bureaucracy.<sup>6</sup>

The *kultuurstelsel* did not "modernize" Java. Instead it strengthened the indigenous "patrimonial" structure of rulership while also instituting reforms in "administration". *The policy of "indirect rule" tended to ossify the existing structures and thereby distort them*, a process similar to the socio-cultural and political "involution" that Goldenweiser (1936) described. Only relatively superficial aspects of the administrative bureaucracy were modernized, while the basic structure remained the same, however, in "de-traditionalized" form (Roth [1968] 1971:577). The *stelsel* is therefore a good example of "reforms" which do not add up to qualitative change, (*i.e.*, political transformation).

When, after 1970 in particular, attempts were made to institute structural changes in Java's political system, the vestiges of the earlier *stelsel* hampered those attempts (Geertz 1963). Since the colonial bureaucracy had been built up on the basis of "indirect rule," (Van Niel 1975) attempts to create a more "liberal" legal-rational bureaucratic administrative structure, and curtail the *influence* of the regents, were largely ineffective. Since there was no question of creating a full-fledged modern state, in which all inhabitants could participate, reforms were slow and a cautious approach predominated.

Furthermore, reforms which took place in Java did not immediately spread to the other islands. This is true of the "passport system" for example. A series of acts, beginning in 1863, gradually eliminated the *passenstelsel* on Java and Madura, but "natives" and "other Asians" were still required to show identity papers in the other islands. (See the Ordinance of July 21, 1863, *Indisch Staatsblad* No. 83 and *Indisch Staatsblad* 1918 No. 694 & 696). There was a lag in the adoption of administrative reforms in the outer islands, so that changes in Java were not implemented elsewhere until much later, if at all. Hence, while historians do not generally speak of a "*kultuurstelsel*" for the other islands after 1870, the socio-economic and political aspects of Dutch rule in the other islands tended to reflect the earlier experience of the *stelsel* in Java.

### Clarifying the Level of Analysis

Weber's discussion of patrimonial domination (*Herrschaft*) ranges over several different levels of analysis (household, village, region and nation-state). In this paper we are concerned with the Javanese state structure, rather than the patrimonial domination that may also exist at the household, village or regional levels. However, in order to fully appreciate Weber's discussion of state patrimonialism, it is helpful to have some notion of his argument that patrimonialism at the "macro" level is a logical reflection of patrimonialism at the "meso" and "micro" levels. Discussions of patronage in a village or "patron-client bonds" in villages or regions represent attempts at understanding patrimonial domination which can be helpful as analogies in the discussion of patrimonialism at the nation-state level, or, in earlier times, the state level.

There is a logical connection between "patriarchal domination" in the *oikos* (Greek = "house"), "patronage" in the village or region, and patrimonialism in the state. The dependency relationship in each case is based on loyalty and fealty. The fidelity is not purely one-sided and is held together by norms of reciprocity. The "patron" cannot exploit his clients without risking the loss of his status and legitimacy. The ruler of a patrimonial state is not bound in any formal "rational-legal" way; but he is held in check to a certain extent nevertheless. While the ruler may be an absolute despot in some respects (*e.g.* "sultanism"), his power of life and death in particular decisions (*e.g.*, the punishment of theft) is not matched by an absolute power over the community as a whole. His dependents are too well aware of the thin line which separates him from them to allow acts which by tradition, are considered exploitative. In this respect the patrimonial state is not as "civilized" as historic bureaucratic empires (*e.g.* T'ang China, New Kingdom Egypt) where the ruler is much more distant from the community and much less like the patriarch of a household. (Eisenstadt 1963, 1971).

### Patron-Client Bonds and Patrimonialism

Patron-client bonds are similar to patrimonial bonds. However, as the subject of patron-client bonds is usually discussed in the literature on Southeast Asia, the bonds which are discussed are at the level of rural village politics. Thus, for example, Carl Lande

(1964), Manning Nash (1965) and Robert Jay (1963) have reported the significance of patron-client relationships in rural village politics in the Philippines, Upper Burma, and Central Java, respectively. These writers do not discuss patron-client bonds at the national level, however, except in passing. While it is certainly significant to examine politics at the local level, the argument being made here is based on a sociological examination of the character of the state as a whole. Patron-client bonds at the national level operate very similarly, of course, but involve much more.

James C. Scott (1972) has argued that the modernization process in Southeast Asian countries is in large part an "erosion" of patron-client relationships at all levels. Traditional patron-client relationships, both at the local and at the national levels, are gradually chipped away. Oligarchically organized personal networks are gradually replaced by a rational-legal bureaucratic system. The point made here, however, is that while ideally such a gradual erosion will take place, evidence from the colonial history of Java suggests that such patrimonial ties at the state-level may be very slow in disappearing.<sup>7</sup> In some respects the patron-client bond between the Governor-General and the district regents was just as strong in 1850 as it had been in 1830. That is because *the kultuurstelsel administrative system did not erode patrimonialism as the basis of legitimacy*. In fact, it rested on it. Without a patrimonial type of rulership, the political implementation of the *kultuurstelsel* is unthinkable.

#### Does Java in 1830 Fit the Definition of Patrimonialism?

The patrimonial state is characterized by several important features (Weber 1968:1006ff.): (1) One ruler retains political domination over all others; the ruler is the "master" of the patrimonial state and no one can effectively oppose him. (2) Subjects are required to render military service, *corvée* and customary labor services, honorary gifts, support in special circumstances, and so forth. (3) All land is nominally owned by the ruler and all lands are royal domains. Subjects are royal *coloni* and there are relatively few free, independent landowners, if there are any at all. (4) Heteronomous and heterocephalous associations are created by the ruler and these associations are held collectively liable for the individual inhabitant's political and economic liabilities. Villagers, for example, are collectively liable for labor obligations and percentages of crop yields, which often results in hereditary attachment to a village (*i.e.*, serfdom). The subject is viewed as existing for the ruler and compulsory associations for liturgical liabilities are guarantees of liability. (5) Patrimonial office holders retain their offices at the discretion of the ruler, and often are attached first and foremost to the ruler's court. There is no independent source of power for these *ministeriales*; the ruler can demand of them any services he wishes, unless they achieve independent status. (To the extent to which they become independent landed nobles, or *honoratiore*s in their own right, the administration is already less patrimonial). (6) The incumbent of an office remains easily replaceable and offices are always limited by the personal discretion of the ruler. The office is the personal

right of the ruler, not of the office holder. Hence, all decisions can be over-ruled and the ruler has the right to make *ad hoc* decisions on any matter, at any time. All regulations are purely discretionary and purely subjective; they are not regulated by a body of laws (*reglements*).

On the basis of these criteria it is obvious that the situation in Java in the 1830s was not a purely "patrimonial state" structure. However, the characteristics of patrimonialism were approximated in Java, especially for the early years of the *kultuurstelsel*. There was one ruler who held all power: the Governor-General. He had to seek the advice of the *Raad van Indie* (Council of the Indies, *i.e.*, Board of Governors), but that advice could often be ignored, especially since it was rarely united. No one in Java could oppose the rule of the Governor-General, who had the power of life or death over the people. (His powers over Europeans were limited by Dutch law, of course, but the relatively small number of Dutch citizens and "other Europeans" were almost all employed by the state). The inhabitants of Java were required to render compulsory service to the state, including corvée and labor services of various kinds (*e.g. herendiensten*). Almost all land was nominally owned by the Netherlands East Indies government, in the sense that no Javanese were able to claim exemption from compulsory services or taxes. (Of course there are many exceptions, particularly in the *Vorstenlanden* and in the areas which had previously been sold to private entrepreneurs, Dutch and Chinese. Fasseur, 1975.) Villagers were held liable as a community and a passport system made it difficult for the common people to leave their village, although many did. Liturgical liabilities were imposed in various forms. Office holders were not in independent positions of power, but were completely dependent on the government. The inhabitants of Java who become "regents" under the Dutch were not the true "nobility" of the island, but were former *ministeriales* of the earlier systems, or descendents of petty princes.<sup>8</sup> Sometimes they were merely usurpers. Even the *susuhunan* of Surakarta and the *sunan* of Jogjakarta only held office at the discretion of the Dutch. Finally, although there were many *reglementen*, the Governor-General had the power to arbitrarily change any decree, simply on his own initiative. The only major difference which characterizes nineteenth century Java is that it was a colonial state, and hence the Governor-General was ultimately responsible to the Minister of Colonies and the King.

#### The Javanese *Petani* in 1830-1970

The patrimonial state, with no intermediate links between court and peasant, is quite different from the feudal state, in which a relatively independent landed aristocracy exists as an intermediate link. Peasants probably do not always appreciate the difference: they were relatively powerless in both types of situations (Wolf 1969: 294-96). However, the long-term potential for a measure of autonomy is much greater in the less centralized feudal state. The existence of an independent barony makes it impossible for the emperor, Raja or Sultan to force everyone to submit to his personal edicts. The landed aristocrats protect themselves against the central ruler and in that way they may sometimes protect the peasants

from the harshest demands of imperial power. There is no "legal-rational" check whatsoever on the patrimonial ruler in a patrimonial state.<sup>9</sup>

The form of government which characterizes nineteenth century Java was "paternalistic" and "autocratic". As Van Niel (1975:1) states: ". . . civil administration and governance in the East Indies [before 1854] rested on a system of men rather than laws." Administrators shared in the "absolute rule" of the King of the Netherlands in varying degrees, according to Van Niel, and thus had "wide personal latitude . . . in interpreting and applying rules and regulations." Instructions given to European administrators (*residenten, controleurs, etc.*) in 1818, 1837, 1855 and 1872 varied little in this regard. The continuation of Javanese traditional patterns of authority was ameliorated somewhat by the liberal, middle-class backgrounds of many administrators prior to 1830 (Van Niel 1975:6), but the political structure of the colonial state was far from *laissez faire*. Hence Van Niel (1975:7) quotes J.C. van Leur's description of mid-nineteenth century Java as "a beautiful, uniform, closed patrimonial bureaucratic state," with approval. Van den Bosch used "the traditional attachments and patterns of authority long known in Java" (Van Niel 1975:10).

Where this analysis differs somewhat in emphasis from Van Niel's analysis is on the question of the "system" nature of the *stelssel*. Van Niel states: (1975:10):

Anything that seemed to move in the right direction was acceptable to him [van den Bosch]. In Java he was prepared to make whatever accommodation seemed necessary in order to put his schemes into operation. The result is a series of local, interlocking arrangements. It was called a 'System,' but it never was that.

However, by stressing the regional variations in the administration of the *stelssel*, Van Niel tends to underplay the essential unity of the system as a particular type of socio-economic policy. There was a conceptual and operational unity to the system at the broad, sociological level. Van Niel relegates this to "the vague, 'big picture' level" and says that ". . . the statements made by Van den Bosch for members of the government in Holland and for public consumption are best viewed as propaganda pieces or wisps of wishful thinking rather than serious plans of action." (Van Niel 1975:9). This is quite misleading.

Van den Bosch's use of a modification of the traditional authority structure of Java was a clear-cut rejection of the previous policy of *laissez faire*. Van den Bosch did not try to hide the fact that his policy would not lead to an exact duplication of the same administrative practices for all regions of Java, but for him it was not important. That is not because his ideas were "vague," but because it was well understood that any policy could only serve the purpose of providing a conceptual "big picture." Certainly the *laissez faire* theorists of his day did not attempt to specify administrative details any more precisely than van den Bosch. Van Niel is correct to point out that previous writers on the *kultuurstelssel* assumed incorrectly that there was a simplistic administrative unity

to the *stelsel* (e.g., Day 1904) and that the lack of uniform bureaucratic regulations does not reflect on van den Bosch's "honesty." But Van Niel unfortunately chooses to emphasize these regional divergences without giving due regard to the underlying sociological unity of the *kultuurstelsel* as a colonial policy.

#### Why Was There No Cadastral Survey Until the 1870s?

During the *kultuurstelsel*, the Dutch government was successful in promoting new export crops such as coffee and tea and, for the first time, began to influence the population in scattered rural areas considerably. The compulsory tribute that had formerly been paid by districts to the tax-gatherers of the central Javanese states was now translated into a "land rent" paid by village clusters (*desas*) to the village heads (*bekels*). The amount paid by *tani* (peasant farmers) in different areas varied considerably according to the type of crop grown, the suitability of the land, and the distance from warehouses. Nothing in the system, however, required the taking of a detailed cadastral survey.

It was only after the Revolutions of 1848 in Europe, when the *haute bourgeoisie* began to predominate in the Netherlands, over the King and the small political élite, with the former gaining absolute control in the first years of the formation of the new Kingdom (1815-1848), that an entirely new period dawned. The ideas that van Hogendorp and Raffles had largely only been able to construe on paper began to be put into practice. Land began to be a saleable commodity and some so-called "wastelands" (*i.e.*, lands not in immediate use as *sawah* for rice growing, but which might have been used by the local *tani* for *swidden*-type agriculture) were sold to European planters. The Netherlands Indies government remained very circumscribed, however. (Meyer Ranneft 1929:71-84).

In the first decades of this century, although the balance of trade was continuously in favor of exports of staple products, investment capital began to trickle and then stream into Java, Sumatra and the Celebes, and the government began to change in character. Notable attempts were made at improving such infra-structure as roads, railroads, schools, hygiene, basic education, to support the new commercial policy. It was during this time that the detailed cadastres for Java and parts of the other islands were worked out. The best maps in existence remain the cadastral surveys done in the 1920s.

The important general principle is that the existence of good cadastral surveys is an intrinsic part of a system whereby land is regarded as a commodity. The basic absence of adequate cadastres in the 1810-1820s was a significant factor in the retardation of *ryotwari*-type individual land settlement systems. On the other hand, the system chosen by a colonial government can be of such a kind as to preclude the necessity for cadastres. Such was the case in the 1830s in Java, with the *kultuurstelsel*. It was only when the economic necessity of cadastres was sufficiently strong that good surveys of land holding were made. The continued existence of a system of land rents based on village liability was both a cause and a result of the lack of basic knowledge about land systems.

The system which existed before the nineteenth century was based on *pajak*. *Pajak* is used in modern Bahasa Indonesia to mean a tax or

a monopoly, and *pempajakan* is the word for taxation, (Echols 1974: 263). However, in the old Malaysian meaning of the term, it referred to a "tribute" rather than a "tax." The tribute was rendered by the client (*anak buah*) to his patron (*bapak*), on an individualistic and not a village basis. Each administrative unit required a tribute from the next lower administrative unit in the Javanese Kingdom of Mataram, but the state was autonomous and the *petani* (peasant farmers) and *sikeps* (renters, tenant farmers) paid the tribute (*pajak*) only to their local patrons. This kind of a tribute system is described by Norman Jacobs for Thailand in his study of Thai patrimonialism (1971) and there are obvious parallels in Java, both during the Kingdom of Mataram (*circa* 1500) and during the Dutch colonial *kultuurstelsel* (1830-1870). During the nineteenth century there were only gradual reforms in the land tenure and land taxation system. The earlier lack of a concept of taxation based on territoriality was a big factor in the difficulty of conducting a cadastre.

### The Mataram Tribute System

Details of the tribute system varied considerably from one region to another, however the tribute generally rested on corporate groups, and not on individuals. Usually the village had to pay the tribute; the *desa* was what Weber calls a "liturgical" unit. However, different forms of tribute were paid in different ways. Sometimes tribute was paid by individuals.

One type of tribute system is that which traditionally existed in Madiun (east of Jogjakarta). Well-to-do peasant farmers may have paid as much as the equivalent of f50 in goods in 1830, although most *petani* paid far less. At the time Madiun became a Dutch residency, there were sixty-five different forms of tribute (*pajak*) imposed by the heads of village districts and five forms of tribute imposed by the *Sunan* (emperor) and his *bupatis* (ministeriales). None of these tributes, however, was applied to all of the peasants. The *pajeg* (also called *pertelu*) was a tribute of half of the yearly yield of one rice crop. It was given to the chief of a district or the 'noble' who held the land in appanage (the *lungguh*). This *pajeg* was largely paid by peasants who owned their own *sawah*. (Ong 1975: 171-73).

The Madiun tribute system is not representative for areas of Java which eventually came under the *kultuurstelsel*. Resolutions number 1 and 3 of December 10, 1832 and number 4 of February 3, 1833, created a special status for Madiun and Kediri. Madiun was not subject to the money payment of land rent the way most other residencies in Java (other than the Preanger) were. Nevertheless, the *pajak* paid by *petani* at the time of the Dutch take-over of Madiun is somewhat representative of the tribute system of Mataram previous to Dutch colonial administration. Peasants in outlying districts probably paid similar kinds of *pajak* even under the fourteenth century kingdom of Majapahit. A possible difference with the Dutch system is that wealthy peasants tended to have to pay the brunt of the *pajeg*, rather than the village as a whole. Of course, wealthy peasants passed on the real burden to those who worked for them (*e.g.* *numpangs*).

The Mataram tribute system was not quite as heavy a burden on

the landless *petani* as the Dutch "land rent" taxation system, largely because the tribute system tended to tax wealthy farmers (called *sikep* in some regions) while the land rent system that evolved under the *kulturstelsel* tended to tax villagers (*desas*) as a whole. The Dutch system tended to have a levelling effect because taxation was by village rather than by individual. The *sikep* (large land holding peasant farmers) could not as easily impose heavy burdens on the *numpang*s (peasants who did not hold land except as usufruct). *Numpang* could leave and migrate to new *desas* under the tribute system, but the laborious job of developing new *sawah* is not comparable to the right to cultivate an equitable share of village lands. The Dutch system, therefore, may have contributed somewhat to a greater equalization of the tax burden at the same time as the taxation was increased. However, it is incorrect to conclude, as Ong does (1975: 176) that "Thus in the Mataram system village peasants had greater freedom." It is incorrect because: (1) only the *sikep* had greater "freedom" under the Mataram system, (2) *numpang* may have had a greater share of common land under the *stelsel*, and (3) Ong's information concerns a part of Java which was never under the *kulturstelsel*'s most characteristic features. Also, the land rent system introduced by Raffles formed the basis for assessments in the *kulturstelsel* taxation system, but the *stelsel* retained the "evils" of the mercantilistic practices, and therefore cannot be said to have been "progressive" from a *laissez faire* perspective.

In areas other than Madiun, Kediri, Pacitan and Priangan, the *kulturstelsel* not only involved major modifications of the land rent system, introduced on paper by Raffles, but it also involved a gradual set of administrative reforms of the old tribute system. However, the *kulturstelsel* still remained essentially a socio-economic and political system based on the re-affirmation of old practices. The traditional taxation system was modified by a more "bureaucratic, rational-legal" administration, but the traditional burdens and obligations were retained and intensified, though perhaps somewhat more equitably shared by land-holding and landless peasants.

#### Japanese Feudalism versus Javanese Patrimonialism

A comparison with Japan is particularly interesting. Geertz compares Java and Japan (1963: 130-143) but fails to point out the relevance of the patrimonial system in Java. What occurred in Japan that did not occur in Java was the emergence of "feudalism". In the seventh through the tenth centuries Japan went through an "Aristocratic" period during which the socio-economic system was basically a "historic bureaucratic empire." The priest-chief of the Sun Line became an emperor reigning through a traditional court-centred bureaucracy centred in Nara. The institutions of the *Taiho* Code were adopted (*circa* 702) and localized independence that had existed was stopped. The *kubuden* agricultural system was very similar in some respects to the *kulturstelsel*; joint liability of the members of a village community characterized the seventh century *kubuden* system in somewhat the same manner as it characterized the nineteenth century *kulturstelsel*.

However, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries a new feudal structure began to emerge. The *Kamakura* period of Japanese history



(1185-1333) represents a gradual weakening of patrimonialism due to the rise of a military aristocracy. The civil nobility centred around the court gave way to the *bushi* (or *samurai*). These *bushi* were originally officials, but they began to form new ties based on kinship or ritual kinship. *Bushi* bands were similar to clans in their form of organization. Thus, family-based organization was combined with military organization to provide the basis for powerful resistance to imperial rule, and a rejection of certain aspects of the *Taiho* Code. In particular, a lord-vassal type of relationship (*tono-kenin*) emerged in which *bushi* rewarded loyal "housemen" for their support, most often in the form of a fief (*chigyochi*). No such development occurred in Java, at least not to any significant extent. Japan is described by J.W. Hall (1970:48-134) as having benefited from a feudal history not unlike that which occurred in parts of Europe. Geertz's failure to point this out indicates that his analysis does not take into account the significance of patrimonialism in Java.

Geertz's failure to examine the pre-seventeenth century development of Japan leads him into an incomplete analysis of the basis of the differences between Japan and Java. His view that the *kulturstelsel* represents a "lost opportunity" for Java is partially correct, but it needs to be supplemented with an analysis of why that is so. In a fundamental sense, Java had lost that opportunity long before the first Europeans came to trade in the sixteenth century. Java and Japan were similar only in terms of somewhat superficial criteria, such as per hectare rice yields and average size of plots. The economic, political and cultural histories of the two regions were different in one fundamental respect: Java never experienced full-scale "feudalism". The failure of Javanese society to emerge from a predominantly "patrimonial" form of socio-economic and political organization is far more important for explaining Java's lack of development than colonial administrative practices *per se*. Dutch colonial policy, particularly the *kulturstelsel*, exacerbated the lack of structural change, but probably no colonial system could possibly have transformed the socio-economic and political structure of Java in the nineteenth century. Raffles' *laissez faire* policies would most certainly not have done the trick. *A fundamental transformation of Javanese society could only have occurred from within, through the power of an indigenous élite comparable to the entrepreneurs and innovators in Japan* (Compare Portes 1976). Such an élite never emerged in Java because Java never had a feudal background. In the Tokugawa (or Edo) period (1600-1868) the *bushi* in Japan were able to enrich themselves through a high rate of taxation on agriculture. With the Meiji restoration the warrior class in Japan did not lose control completely and the Meiji government was basically able to finance investment from domestic sources--mainly agriculture. The bulk of total revenues came from land taxes. The warrior class in Japan, like the landed aristocracy in England, used its wealth to invest in entrepreneurial enterprises and the Japanese agricultural system was complemented by an expanding manufacturing system, in indigenous hands.

## Patrimonialism and Imperialism

There is also a similarity between the structure of domination in the simple patriarchal form of patrimonialism and the complex imperialistic form of patrimonialism. Imperialism can be viewed analytically as, in some ways, merely a large-scale extension of the patrimonial principle of domination over a larger territory. That is, imperial domination by one group over another is basically a form of patrimonial domination, albeit a much more complex form than the simple patrimonialism of a patriarchal household. In essence, the form of domination remains the same; it is not domination based on legal norms of legitimacy but domination based on tradition and norms of fealty. The imperial centre replaces the patriarchal *oikos*. The political sub-units in the periphery are treated by the centre in much the same way as subordinate households are treated by the patrimonial centre. Patrimonial rule within one relatively homogeneous territory is simply extended to patrimonial rule over a diversity of groups. Loyalty is forced upon the master's subjects by conquest and maintained by the force of tradition. Rulership remains highly centralized and personalized. The personal empire of Alexander the Great, for example, is an extension of patrimonialism over a very wide geographic area, but does not represent the evolution of a qualitatively new form of domination. Thus, in history, patrimonialism has frequently been extended over larger and larger geographical units, from the territory surrounding the *oikos* to a vast territory stretching across a third of Asia. In essence, however, the form of domination, patrimonialism, has remained very similar. The colony becomes the patrimony of the colonizer, and the ruler of the colonizing group becomes the "patriarch" of the whole imperial system. Without the development of legal rational forms of domination, the emperor remains a grand patriarch whose authority is based on tradition and whose rule is strictly personalistic, not tempered by the existence of a legislative assembly or judiciary.

Thus, whenever we discuss "imperialism" we need to consider the level of analysis and historic context of the discussion. There is the imperialism of the central Javanese court of Majapahit over the various princedoms and groups on Java in the sixteenth century as well as the imperialism of the Netherlands over the various kingdoms and princedoms of Java in the nineteenth century. Seen analytically, in terms of the fundamental basis for domination, there is not a great deal of difference between the two forms of imperialism. Both share certain basic features of patrimonial rulership. Neither imperialism by the Javanese over the Sundanese nor imperialism by the Dutch over the Sundanese is based on the rational, legal form of domination. For the average Sundanese *tani* there is not any qualitative difference between the two imperial powers. The Javanese tax-collector is just as foreign as the Dutch inspector as far as the average Sundanese is concerned. The same can be said for the people of Madura, Bali, or South Sumatra.

Now, of course, a distinction can be made between a colonial motherland separated by five thousand miles of ocean and a colonial motherland which is geographically very near. However, the average *tani* would not be likely to be greatly concerned with this differ-

ence, since for him anything outside his own village is "far away". The ways in which various legends and folk tales from the island of Java depict the Dutch as related to the great hero Askandar (Alexander the Great), who was also depicted in folk legends as an ancestor of the Javanese sultans, indicates that people did not make a great distinction between their old colonial masters from across the river and their new colonial masters from across the ocean. The periphery is treated in fundamentally the same way by the centre, regardless of whether or not the colonizer is ethnically, racially or otherwise very closely related to the colonized. Distinctions that do occur are not fundamental to the form of rulership and domination, but are secondary. The essential fact is the patrimonial nature of the tie between centre and periphery.

### Patrimonial Empires and Capitalist Empires

However, there is a more fundamental distinction between Majapahit and the Netherlands East Indies. Both are empires, but one is an inland empire in which the exchange of goods played no regular or decisive part and the other is an overseas empire in which import and export trade played a decisive role. For the Dutch empire of the nineteenth century, the fundamental economic concern was commercial profit, especially after 1870. For the Javanese empire of Majapahit in the sixteenth century, the fundamental economic concern was not capitalist but patrimonial. What is therefore extremely interesting is the way in which the policy and administration of the Dutch East Indies changed in the short period of time from 1870 to 1920 from a primarily patrimonial merchant-based system of "indirect rule" to a primarily industrial capitalistic system of "direct rule," skipping even the possibility of any form of feudalism comparable to 12th century France or Japan.<sup>10</sup>

The colonial policy of the Dutch in 1830 was much more closely aligned with the administrative policy of the ancient Javanese empires than it was with the emerging capitalist forms of empire, such as those in Bengal and the Philippines. It was not until the 1870s, with the passage of the Agrarian Law in Parliament (the States-General) that Dutch colonial policy began to resemble the capitalistic form of imperial administration, based on commercial profit, that had been pioneered by England in India and by Germany east of the Elbe. The difference is expressed succinctly by Weber (1949: 163):

In the age of modern capitalism the interest in exporting to foreign territories is dominant, but in the ancient states the interest was rather in the possession of territories from which goods (raw materials) could be imported.

In other words, while the Dutch were still running their colony in the archipelago as a territory for the export of raw materials to Europe, Dutch imperialism more closely resembled the ancient form of empire than the emerging "modern capitalist" form of the British. The Dutch empire was run, in many ways, much like any "ancient" empire, that is, it was run as a system ultimately based on patrimonial domination.

## Industrial versus Merchant Capitalism

The gradual erosion of patrimonialism in Java during the late nineteenth century was aided by a process of bureaucratization but was also based on the transformation of Dutch capitalism from a basically merchant form of capitalism to industrial capitalism. During and after the *kultuurstelsel* period (1830-1870) the Netherlands' economy gradually became transformed, so that new bourgeois groups became powerful enough to begin to demand a greater share in colonial profits. These new groups were capitalists who had become wealthy through merchant forms of capitalism, but were seeking to develop Holland industrially. This process, which was just beginning to take place in the Netherlands in the 1860s, became central to the Dutch economy after the 1870s. Thus, the *kultuurstelsel* period can be seen as a period during which older forms of capitalism continued to dominate but were gradually eroded, and therefore as a period during which rational-legal bureaucracy gradually began to take form.

However, the odd fact in Java's nineteenth century history is that merchant capital (particularly the export of natural products from Java) continued to be so significant for so long. That is because the Netherlands was somewhat unique. It industrialized much later than England, for example, and hence relied for a much longer time on staple imports from the colonies. English industrial capital profited mainly, after the 1800s, from the export of manufactured goods, especially textiles. The Dutch did not begin to export manufactured goods to Java until late in the nineteenth century. Hence, the old interests in the Netherlands continued to support a policy similar to the monopolistic control of Java that had existed in the days of the V.O.C. (1620-1789). Eventually the transition from merchant to industrial forms of capitalism did take place in the Netherlands, but the remnants of the earlier order were not easily shattered. Patrimonial forms of rule continued to influence the social, political and economic system in Java to a great extent (Roth 1968). The interests of *rentiers* continued to shape the structure of the situation, (Fasseur, 1975).

Thus, while it may be true that the colonial administration of the Dutch during the *kultuurstelsel* period reinforced the patrimonial system of rulership that had previously existed in Java, it may nevertheless also be true that the colonial administration provided that "crack in the door", which eventually opened up the possibility of conceptions of private rights for individuals and a rational-legal state that protects these individual rights. In other words, the Dutch system can be described as gradually eroding the basis of patrimonialism. This "bureaucratization of patrimonialism" began during the 1830s and 1840s, despite the *kultuurstelsel*. One reason is that the Netherlands East Indies governmental bureaucracy always attempted to provide "rational legal" justifications for decisions. Unlike the *Rajas*, the Governor-General could not easily make decrees which did not in some way consider the rights of the individual citizen. The Dutch were steeped in conceptions of political structure and rulership prevalent in Europe and could only promote the existing form of state power to a limited degree. The letters of

Governor-General Jean Chretien Baud, for example, abound with statements that attempt to find a balance between the need to extract obligations from the inhabitants and the need to protect citizens in their rights (Westendorp Boerma 1956).

The accounts of Javanese kingdoms do not suggest that such a political framework existed there at all; the Javanese *Sunans* justified their rule on the basis of a "divine right" and had no notion of "social contract" at all. Expediency and even necessity however required that the colonial government not attempt radical changes in the existing system of rulership in Java in the 1830s. Governor-General van den Bosch chose to give the native regents back many of the privileges that Daendels had taken away in an earlier modernizing *laissez faire* period (1808-1811), but only because the reforms Daendels had attempted to make were not really feasible, given the economic situation in the Netherlands and the political situation in Java. Moreover, much of Daendels' administrative reform had merely consisted of official rhetoric, combined with a strengthening of coffee quotas.

In general, the following arguments can be made: (1) Java can be described as having had a basically patrimonial socio-cultural and political system before the coming of the Europeans, (2) the patrimonial system was reinforced by the Dutch colonial system, both under the V.O.C. (1620-1789) and under the Netherlands East Indies (1830-1870 especially.) (3) The Dutch policy and administration reinforced patrimonialism, but nevertheless also created the "seeds of its own destruction" by introducing the beginnings of rational-legal forms of bureaucratic administration and justice. Attempts were made to break away from the system of "indirect rule" that reinforced patrimonial rulership both before and after the *kultuurstelsel*. (4) The "bureaucratization of patrimonialism" had both negative and positive long-term effects on the development potential of Java. The negative aspect of Dutch rule was that "liberal" or "laissez faire" forms of industrial capitalism were slow to develop, and merchant capitalism remained at the core of the Dutch colonial strategy, even into the 1920s, especially for certain staple products. The positive aspect of Dutch colonial policy, however, was that traditional institutions were eroded gradually rather than changed quickly. This meant that the inequities suffered by the average *tani* were not as great as was the case in India, for example, where a system of direct rule, especially before 1857, drove many farmers off the land. Finally, (5) theoretical understanding of the processes in Java in ancient, historic and contemporary times is aided by use of patrimonialism theory and Weber's historic sociology. This is illustrated by the manner in which the Weber-Eisenstadt theory of patrimonialism clarifies some of the points of contention among the theories which attempt to explain underdevelopment, development and modernization (Roth 1968).

#### FOOTNOTES

1. This paper has been revised on the basis of comments by P. Creutzberg, C. Fasseur, D. Feeny, M. Godelier, G. Means, Shuichi Nagata, N. Owen, D. Roman, C. Schrenk, C. Tilly, R. Van Niel, W.F. Wertheim and I. Zeitlin. It is a key aspect of my dissertation

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2. See Portes (1976) on three views of "development". Development is viewed here as an economic, social, cultural and political transformation of society, in which values, differentiation and liberation from dependency all play a role.

3. Four views are those presented by Boeke (1951), Frank (1967), Geertz (1963) and Sievers (1974). Frank's analysis can be extended to the Indonesian case; the other theorists are principally concerned with Indonesia.

4. Norman Jacobs' work on Thailand (1971) is similar in approach and arrives at similar types of conclusions. Also see Riggs (1966).

5. See the discussion in Marianne Weber (1975:674-682). Weber presents his mature views of "patrimonialism" in 1968:1006ff.

6. See Merton *et al.* on "bureaucracy". Eisenstadt has used this same basic approach in a more global analysis (1973) *b.*

7. G. Roth (1968) in Eisenstadt (1971):580.

8. The various titles used by Javanese regents, such as *kyai*, *tumenggung*, *ngabehi*, *rangga*, and *kentol*, are titles used by "ministeriales" before the coming of the Dutch and the extension of Dutch power. The noble titles of *panggeran* and *raden* were reserved for members of the royal family and the autochthonous aristocracy of Madura. Use of the word *regent* is an ethnocentric anachronism which does not truly reflect the power and status positions of such ministeriales.

9. It is not possible to discuss the patrimonial character of the fourteenth and fifteenth century Hinduized states of Java and Sumatra in this paper. A more complete discussion of the question to what extent Majapahit was a patrimonial, feudal or segmental state structure, on the basis of discussions by Coedes, Bosch, Moens, Berg, Kern, Schrieke, Harrison, Heine-Geldren, and others can be found in my dissertation "Patrimonialism, Imperialism and Underdevelopment in Java: A Comparative Study of Nineteenth Century Indonesia, with an Emphasis on the Cultivation System, 1830-1870," University of Toronto, Department of Sociology, 1978.

10. This does not imply that development must follow a rigid unilinear pattern from patrimonialism to feudalism to capitalism. However, it does emphasize the significance for both Northwestern Europe and Japan of the *long-term* existence of "feudal" political structure in the nation as a whole. Such feudalism may be "a necessary condition" for the indigenous development of merchant capitalism. That does not imply that developing states today necessarily must experience feudalism. See the discussions by Roth (1968) and Eisenstadt (1973)<sup>a</sup> on this point.

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