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Coerced Mobilities

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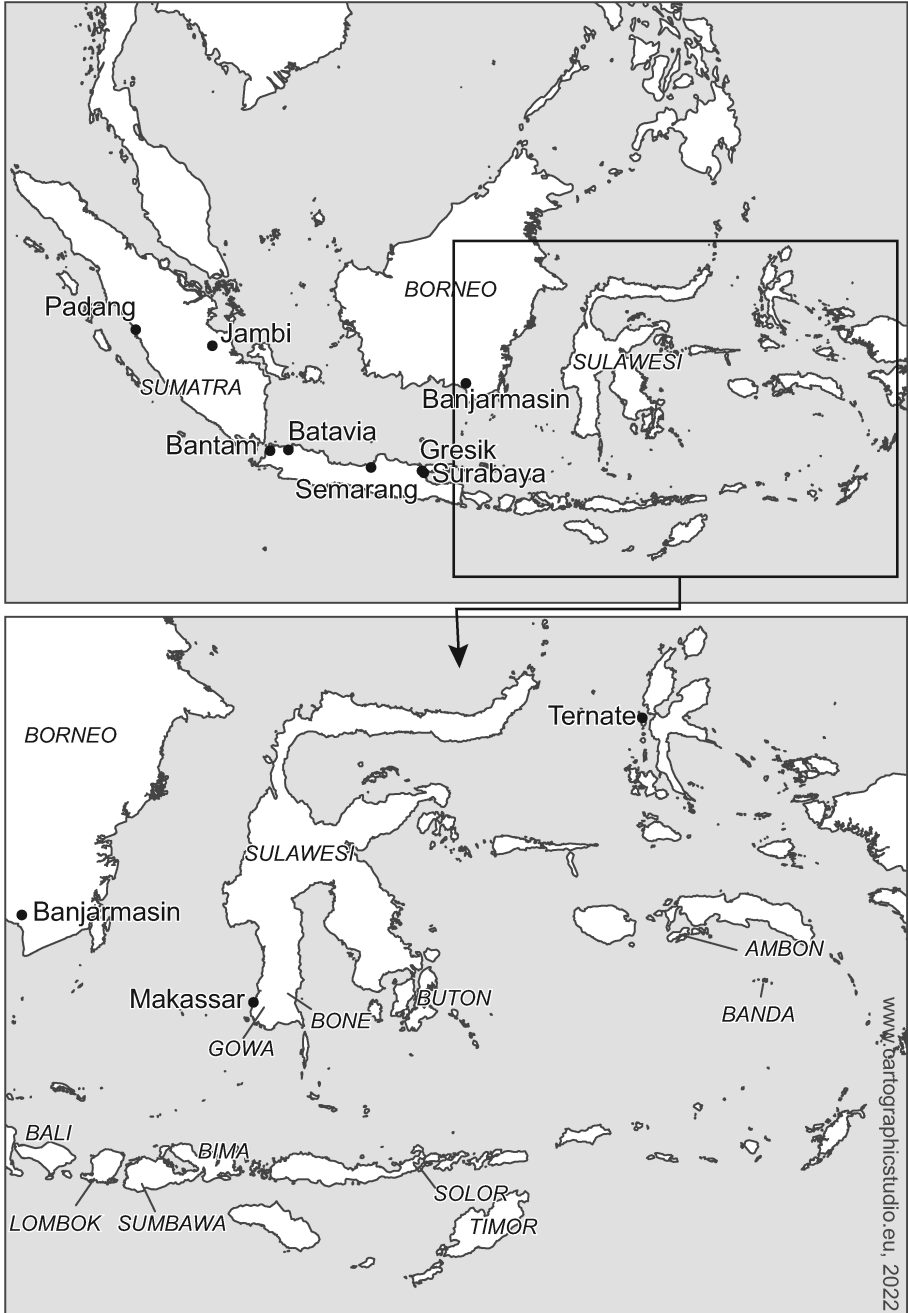
Maritime (Im)mobility: Reconstructing the Supply of Enslaved Labour to Batavia, 1624–1801

In 1619 the Dutch East India Company (VOC) conquered and demolished the port city of Jaccatra (present day Jakarta) on the island of Java. It was here in the colonial city, renamed Batavia by the colonisers, that the VOC built up what would become the core of its administrative power. Batavia expanded rapidly; so too did the population of enslaved inhabitants, which grew from roughly six thousand in 1623 to thirteen thousand within Batavia's city walls by 1673, and again from twenty-six thousand in 1689 to over forty thousand in 1779.¹ Batavia became an important centre for slave trade and ownership not only due to its prominent position as a political and administrative centre for the VOC, but also because of its economic importance. The areas surrounding the colonial city, known as the *Ommelanden*, were cultivated for the production of sugar, rice, coffee, cattle and wine. Crucial to the VOC's ability to supply Batavia with the necessary labour was the city's position within a long-distance and multidirectional slave trading system. In order to forcibly procure its workforce, the VOC drew heavily on its maritime links with India as well as the broader Indonesian archipelago, but also profited from established links with the Cape of Good Hope, Madagascar, and Ceylon (see Maps 1 and 2). Company and private ships alike exploited these networks to supply Batavia with slave labour, especially after the introduction of contracts to ensure the VOC quotas were met.

A growing body of research on slave trading in the Indian Ocean has revealed the characteristics of European involvement with the trade and reassessed the scale and geographical scope of these networks.² For some areas within the Indian Ocean

1 James Fox, "For Good and Sufficient Reasons": An Examination of Early Dutch East India Company Ordinances on Slaves and Slavery," in *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia*, ed. Anthony Reid (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press): 250; Marcus Vink, "The World's Oldest Trade": Dutch Slavery and Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean," *Journal of World History* 14, no. 2 (2003): 131–77.

2 Anthony Reid, ed., *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press); Martin Krieger, "Der europäische Sklavenhandel auf dem Indischen Ozean (1500–1800)," in *Erzwungene Exile: Umsiedlung und Vertreibung in der Vormoderne (500 bis 1850)*, ed. Thomas Ertl (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2017): 221–38; Pedro Machado, *Ocean of Trade: South Asian Merchants, Africa and the Indian Ocean, c.1750–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Bondan Kanumoyoso, "Beyond the City Wall: Society and Economic Development in the Ommelanden of Batavia 1684–1740" (PhD diss., Universiteit Leiden, 2011); Wim O. Dijk, "An End to the History of Silence? The Dutch Trade in Asian Slaves: Arakan and the Bay of Bengal, 1621–1665," *IIAS Newsletter* 46 (2008); Gerrit Knaap and Heather Sutherland, *Monsoon*



Map 1: The Indonesian Archipelago.

basin, such as the Western Indian Ocean, we have a solid understanding of the slave trading routes and connections that enabled and encouraged slave trading to develop.³ At present, however, little is known about many of the other, equally significant, routes that transported enslaved men and women throughout maritime Asia. The current use of ‘circuits’ to talk about the three main regions from which the VOC obtained enslaved workers has been crucial in indicating the geographical extent of slave trading in the region. At the same time it obscures some of the critical dissimilarities between the various slavery regimes and the proximity and vulnerability of different slave societies to European exploitation, as well as the transformative impact of integration into a global commercial slave trading system as revealed by recent scholarship.⁴ Expressing the relationship of different slave trading societies to each other in terms of their geographical similarities through the use of circuits suggests that these circuits were distinct from one another with little interaction between them. This chapter seeks to demonstrate that thinking about the slave trade in the Indian Ocean basin in terms of ‘connections’ over ‘circuits’ can clarify some of these remaining disparities. When we look at slave trading in the Indian Ocean beyond

Traders: Ships, Skippers and Commodities in Eighteenth-Century Makassar (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2004); Sinnappah Arasaratnam, “Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean in the Seventeenth Century,” in *Mariners, Merchants and Oceans: Studies in Maritime History*, ed. Kuzhippalli Skaria Mathew (New Delhi: Manohar, 1995): 195–208; Robert Shell, *Children of Bondage: A Social History of the Slave Society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652–1838* (Hanover, NH and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1994); Michael Mann, *Sahibs, Sklaven und Soldaten: Geschichte des Menschenhandels rund um den Indischen Ozean* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2015); Richard B. Allen, *European Slave Trading in the Indian Ocean, 1500–1850* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2015); Matthias van Rossum, *Kleurrijke tragiek. De geschiedenis van slavernij in Azië onder de VOC* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2015); Matthias van Rossum, “‘Vervloekte goudzugt’. De VOC, slavenhandel en slavernij in Azië,” *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis* 12, no. 4 (2015): 29–58; Linda Mbeki and Matthias van Rossum, “Private Slave Trade in the Dutch Indian Ocean World: A Study into the Networks and Backgrounds of the Slavers and the Enslaved in South Asia and South Africa,” *Slavery & Abolition* 38, no. 1 (2017): 95–116; Ulbe Bosma, *The Making of a Periphery: How Island Southeast Asia Became a Mass Exporter of Labor* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019); Richard B. Allen, “Ending the History of Silence: Reconstructing European Slave Trading in the Indian Ocean,” *Tempo* 23, no. 2 (2017): 294–313; Richard B. Allen, “Satisfying the ‘Want for Labouring People’: European Slave Trading in the Indian Ocean, 1500–1850,” *Journal of World History* 21, no. 1 (2010): 45–73; Jane Hooper and David Eltis, “The Indian Ocean in Transatlantic Slavery,” *Slavery & Abolition* 34, no. 3 (2013): 353–75.

3 Hooper and Eltis, “The Indian Ocean in Transatlantic Slavery”; Pedro Machado, “A Forgotten Corner of the Indian Ocean: Gujarati Merchants, Portuguese India and the Mozambique Slave-Trade, c. 1730–1830,” *Slavery & Abolition* 24, no. 2 (2003): 17–32; Edward Alpers, “The French Slave Trade in East Africa (1721–1810),” *Cahier d’Études africaines* 37 (1970): 80–124; Greville Stewart Parker Freeman-Grenville, *The French at Kilwa Island* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965).

4 Matthias van Rossum, “Global Slavery, Local Bondage? Rethinking Slavery as (Im)Mobilizing Regimes from the Case of the Dutch Indian Ocean and Indonesian Archipelago Worlds,” *Journal of World History* 31, no. 4 (2020): 693–727.

geographic circuits, and instead in terms of connections between places, societies and regimes through multi-directional and multi-layered slave trading routes, the complex and constantly evolving dynamics of slave trading in this region become more apparent.

To achieve this, new data will need to be collected and curated that reveals the mechanisms behind the different slave trade routes and regimes that converged within colonial hubs. This chapter will focus on one example of newly gathered data on the slave trade supplying Batavia between 1624 and 1780. First it will contextualise the nature of enslaved labour that sustained VOC expansion in the Indian Ocean. Second, the richness and potential of the dataset will be discussed, before moving on to the main body of the chapter, which analyses the data at four key chronological points in order to understand the development of the way in which VOC expansion connected different slave trading systems and slavery regimes. The chapter will end with a discussion of the need for a more sophisticated understanding of slave trading routes in the region, before reflecting on some of the similarities and differences with other chapters in this volume.

1 The VOC and Slave Labour in Batavia

After conquering Jaccatra, Company administrators feared the potential risks of using Javanese workers, but at the same time noted the primacy of slave labour to the survival and growth of Batavia as early as 1645.⁵ Initially the Company encouraged the immigration of European and Chinese inhabitants and imported large numbers of enslaved labourers from outside Java to work on the expansion of the fort as well as in the shipyards on the nearby island *Onrust*.⁶ The company primarily relied on two sources of labour: ‘*kettinggangers*’ who were either prisoners of war or convict labourers; and slaves, most of whom were relatively skilled craftsmen, primarily brought from India. These supplied much of the VOC’s need for labour until the 1660s.⁷ The enslaved labourers were directly acquired and transported by the VOC itself and regularly redistributed between the different parts of the VOC empire.⁸

Though slavery was not a new phenomenon at the time of the arrival of the VOC in Asia, the VOC was the first formal slaveholding corporation of its kind there, and as such was the first entity to introduce slaveholding as an institutional,

5 Kanumoyoso, *Beyond the City Wall*: 112.

6 Susan Abeyasekera, “Slaves in Batavia: Insights from a Slave Register,” in *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia*, ed. Anthony Reid (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press): 286.

7 Fox, ““For Good and Sufficient Reasons””: 248–49.

8 Matthias van Rossum, “The Dutch East India Company and Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean and Indonesian Archipelago Worlds, 1602–1795,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History*, ed. David Ludden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

rather than personal, enterprise. The VOC itself owned between 4,000 and 7,000 Company slaves across its empire. The majority of enslaved persons in Batavia, however, were owned by members of the local populations; the VOC could hire these enslaved workers as and when it needed the manpower for its construction and transport projects.⁹ Because slave labour was considered crucial for expansion, the VOC played a key role in the stimulation and regulation of the slave trading networks that converged in Batavia.¹⁰ The establishment of Batavia in 1619 laid the foundations for the settlement's emergent position at the nexus of a slave trade system in the Indonesian archipelago (see Map 1). With the conquest of Ambon (1605) and Banda (1621), the VOC firmly established itself in the Indonesian archipelago, asserting its control over the production of cloves, mace, and nutmeg, while seeking to expand its control to the trade in pepper. Expansion in Malacca (1641) and Formosa (1622) followed, with the VOC gradually establishing its power in Ceylon (Galle, 1641; Colombo and Jafnapatnam, 1654–1658), in South Africa (1652), and along the Malabar Coast (Cochin, 1663). As the VOC expanded it created an empire of forts, trading posts, urban settlements and agricultural production areas.¹¹

Slavery and the slave trade supporting VOC expansion did not exist solely in territories governed by the VOC. VOC slavery and slave trading took place within, and was dependent upon, different regimes of slavery across Asia which functioned within and as part of 'a dynamic of a continuously adapting, globally connected and increasingly capitalist economic system'.¹² The slave trade was not the only form of coerced mobility: it existed alongside other forms of coerced relocation, including deportation, repopulation, tribute and kidnapping. As the VOC connected its various hubs of empire through the establishment of a multidirectional and long-distance trading and slave-trading regime, these various systems of coerced labour and coerced mobility interacted, connected and transformed, becoming increasingly commodified and global.¹³ Though recent scholarship laid an important foundation for understanding the existence and co-existence of multiple forms of slavery and coerced labour in the Indian Ocean basin, more research is

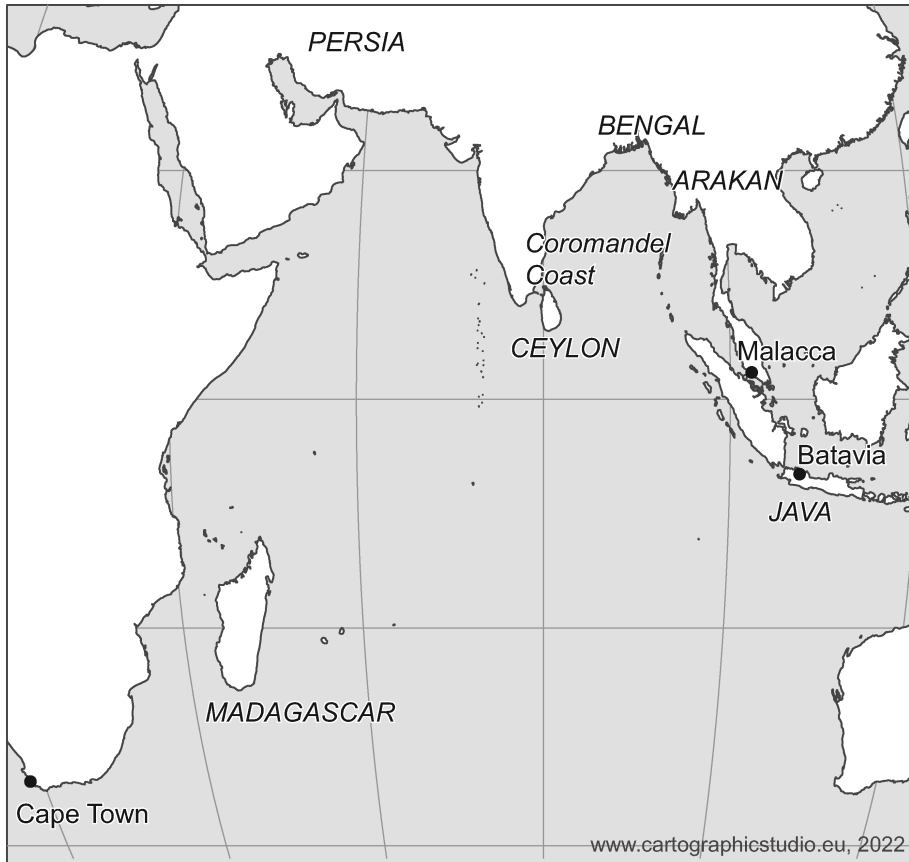
⁹ Van Rossum, "The Dutch East India Company and Slave Trade"; Kanumoyoso, *Beyond the City Wall*: 108.

¹⁰ Van Rossum, "Global Slavery, Local Bondage?".

¹¹ Van Rossum, "Global Slavery, Local Bondage?".

¹² Mann, *Sahibs, Sklaven und Soldaten*: 22. The idea of the Indian Ocean World as a justified historical region is set out in Gwyn Campbell, *Bondage and the Environment in the Indian Ocean World* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

¹³ Mbeki and Van Rossum, "Private Slave Trade in the Dutch Indian Ocean World": 4; Van Rossum, "Global Slavery, Local Bondage?"; Van Rossum, "The Dutch East India Company and Slave Trade."



Map 2: The Indian Ocean.

still needed to comprehensively understand the dynamics of and connections between local and global systems of coerced labour.¹⁴ This chapter seeks to challenge the analytical angle of existing studies on VOC expansion in maritime Asia; rather than studying the specific mechanisms of VOC imperial expansion, it uses the administrative sources of VOC imperial expansion to cast new light on the function and interaction of these coercive maritime links. Layered beneath the evidence of VOC expansion are hints and indications of the nature of the slave trade regimes and routes with which the VOC became increasingly entangled. As Batavia was a

¹⁴ For an overview of the literature and future directions for research see: Van Rossum, “Global Slavery, Local Bondage?”; Van Rossum, “The Dutch East India Company and Slave Trade”; Samantha Sint Nicolaas, Matthias van Rossum and Ulbe Bosma, “Towards an Indian Ocean and Maritime Asia Slave Trade Database: An Exploration of Concepts, Lessons and Models,” *Esclavages & Post-Esclavages* 3 (2020).

VOC stronghold in Asia concerned with the sourcing of labour from the outset, the colonial records that tracked and measured the flows of enslaved people into the city offer a lens through which we can explore the functioning of these various systems of slavery and coerced labour within a global slave trading system. Reorienting away from the development of the VOC towards what its development can reveal about the different labour regimes that became increasingly connected will simultaneously provide new insights into the flows and exchanges of coerced labour across the Indian Ocean basin, as well as the transformative and accelerative effects of European imperial presence in the region.

2 Reconstructing the Supply of Labour to Batavia, 1624–1801

As part of the collaborative initiative *Exploring Slave Trade in Asia* aimed at creating an Indian Ocean and Maritime Asia Slave Trade Database, new source material is being identified in order to further the creation of accurate estimates on the nature of slave trading within the Indian Ocean basin.¹⁵ This chapter will draw on data from one such new dataset, created by Matthias van Rossum and Mike de Windt at the International Institute of Social History.¹⁶ The dataset contains 1169 entries recording observations about incoming slaves on ships entering Batavia between 1624 and 1801. In total this dataset records the arrival of at least 40,061 enslaved people in Batavia, with many entries using quantifying indications of ‘some’ or ‘many’ enslaved individuals aboard, and other entries perhaps rounded up or down based on estimates.

The majority of the observations concerning slaves arriving in Batavia were recorded in three main sources: the *Generale Missiven*, the *Dagregisters Batavia* and the *Generaal journal gehouden door de boekhouder-generaal te Batavia*. These sources provide a detailed insight into the arrivals of groups of slaves at the port city of Batavia. These observations go beyond the tallying of numbers of enslaved bodies, also noting details of concern to Company officials such as the ethnic make-up of

¹⁵ Exploring Slave Trade in Asia (International Institute of Social History), <https://iish.amsterdam/en/research/projects/slave-trade-asia>.

¹⁶ Matthias van Rossum and Mike de Windt, *References to Slave Trade in VOC Digital Sources, 1600–1800*, International Institute of Social History (Amsterdam 2018) v1, <https://hdl.handle.net/10622/YXEN6R>. Part of the *Indian Ocean and Maritime Asia Slave Trade Databases*, IISH Dataverse, UNF:6:asGGWT0x0ev6osDx+eCoeg== [fileUNF]. This dataset was made as part of the project *Between local debts and global markets: Explaining slavery in South and Southeast Asia 1600–1800* (Matthias van Rossum, NWO Veni Grant, 2016–2019) funded by the Dutch Council of Scientific Research (NWO).

groups of incoming slaves, the violation of Company ordinances, occasional mortality rates, and sometimes even comments on Company relations with neighbouring potentates and sultans, which often had a direct impact on the availability of enslaved labour. What at first might appear as relatively straightforward data on the origin of ships arriving at a particular port actually holds a wealth of information about the underlying structures of slavery and the slave trade in the Indian Ocean basin. We might ask the question of what added value a dataset such as the one used in this chapter has when compared to the wide-ranging studies on the slave trade in the Indian Ocean. The data available in this source has implications beyond its original purpose for the governing elites of Batavia. As birds-eye observations – albeit from a fixed vantage point – on flows of the enslaved in and out of Batavia, the source reveals pieces of the jigsaw puzzle of slave trade routes and systems that connected or diverged at the hub of the port city of Batavia.

An important caveat to this chapter is that the observations recorded in this dataset do not cover the full body of observations made in Batavia during this period. This initial dataset has been constructed on the basis of digitised sources; it is expected that additional data will supplement and enrich the initial analysis of the data presented here. The information contained in the data will be analysed with the intent of shedding light on systematic characteristics of the slave trade routes that supplied the colonial city of Batavia with labourers from the early seventeenth to the late eighteenth centuries. This chapter will not, however, be able to provide a comprehensive outline of ethnicities and places of origin of the enslaved entering Batavia since the observations recorded at Batavia concern predominantly the origins of *ships* arriving. As such, indications of ethnicity are often ambiguous. Ships carrying enslaved workers from one departure point to their destination in Batavia were not necessarily carrying enslaved persons from that same point of departure; some may have arrived at the departure point as a midway stop in a longer journey, other ships may have picked up additional enslaved individuals along the journey to make up for being able to get fewer than expected prior to departure, or at a designated stop for purchasing more.¹⁷

These important sources cover the entire period of the presence of the VOC in Batavia and not only allow researchers to zoom in on the individual slave trading movements into the city, but also provide a significant amount of illuminating qualitative information on the functioning and regulation of the slave trade. Analysing this main body of data at this stage in the data collection process enables us to uncover important patterns and developments across the entire period, which can

¹⁷ For a more in-depth overview of the challenges of reconstructing the slave trade in the Indian Ocean region see Sint Nicolaas, Van Rossum, Bosma, “Towards an Indian Ocean Maritime Asia Slave Trade Database.”

later be further expanded and tested through the addition of more fragmented data from shipping logs, import taxes and individual licenses and passes.

3 Reconstructing the Catchment Area of Slave Labour Exported to Batavia

The VOC-sponsored slave trade took place in tandem with a widespread European presence in the Indian Ocean basin. The networks of slave trading established by Europeans played a crucial role in establishing, reinforcing and even transforming connections between slave societies in the Indian Ocean basin.¹⁸ As the European presence in early modern Asia expanded, the demand for the forced labour necessary to maintain expansion increased. In some cases, as in the *corvée* labour systems on Ceylon, colonial expansion encountered and adapted local forms of bondage and slavery to meet its own commercial needs; in other cases, such as in the mass deportation of people from along the Coromandel coast, the need to either directly supply slave labour to other colonies, or the opportunities to make a profit in supplying the colony with its labour needs, intensified the connections between early modern Asian slave societies, bringing regions long associated with debt-, war- or status-based servitude into direct contact with commodified forms of slavery and global expansion.¹⁹

Markus Vink identified three overlapping and interlocking circuits of subregions from which the VOC drew the captive labour needed across all its territories, namely: the African circuit (East Africa, Madagascar, Mascarene Islands), the South Asian circuit (the Indian subcontinent, especially the Malabar, Coromandel, Bengal/Arakan coasts); and the Southeast Asian circuit (Malaysia, Indonesia, New Guinea, and the southern Philippines). As well as being key regions for the sourcing of forced labour, many of these regions also had themselves a demand for forced labour. In Southeast Asia these markets included Malacca, Sumatra, Bantam, Batavia, Makassar, Ambon, Banda and the Moluccas; in South Asia forced labourers were needed in Surat, Malabar, Ceylon, Coromandel and Bengal, as well as at the Cape of Good Hope. For many of these areas it has been demonstrated how VOC actors made use of local events such as war and famine that were favourable to the mass exportation and relocation of cheap labour, thus integrating various forms of

¹⁸ Van Rossum, “Global Slavery, Local Bondage?”.

¹⁹ Van Rossum, “Global Slavery, Local Bondage?”.

slave systems and societies in early modern Asia into a globally connected European slave trade system.²⁰

If we map these three circuits or subregions identified by Vink directly onto the recorded observations of cargoes of enslaved people entering Batavia in the database, we see the following patterns emerge:

The South Asian circuit (the Indian subcontinent, especially the Malabar, Coromandel, Bengal/Arakan coasts): at least 12,863 arrivals in Batavia 1624–1760, with 10,661 of these slaves arriving in the seventeenth century.

The African circuit (East Africa, Madagascar, Mascarene Islands): 1,585 arrivals between 1657 and 1733.

The Southeast Asian circuit (Malaysia, Indonesia, New Guinea, and the southern Philippines): 22,811 between 1624 and 1800, with 21,996 of these slaves arriving after 1660.

While Vink's three circuits illustrate the VOC's far-reaching entanglement with regions where enslaved labour could be obtained, either through markets or through exploitation, such an overarching picture does not of itself illuminate the mechanisms and factors that kept these regions and systems connected. In order to understand more precisely the interconnections between these regions, we need to map how VOC reliance on and interaction with these different sources of enslaved labour changed through time, as the VOC established itself as an imperial power and key global player in slave trading in the region. There is a need to further unpack these circuits; what do they tell us about the flows of enslaved people between connected slave regimes, and how were already existing routes transformed and diverted by the introduction and expansion of European slave trading regimes in the area?

4 Maritime (Im)mobility: VOC Expansion and the Transformation of Coercive Connections

What a general analysis of circuits of forced relocations omits is a sensitivity to changes in the patterns of the sourcing and relocation of forced labour into specific imperial outposts with their own contexts, such as Batavia. The first record in the database is from as early as 1624 and the last as late as 1801. The VOC was not a stagnant entity in this period. The expansion of both the commercial and military weight

²⁰ Vink, “‘The World’s Oldest Trade’”; Anthony Reid, “Introduction: Slavery and Bondage in Southeast Asian History,” in *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia*, ed. Anthony Reid (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press): 1–43.

of VOC authority followed a chronological timeline, peaking in 1684, as the VOC increasingly took on the dual roles of both merchant and sovereign in its various spheres of influence. It follows, therefore, that as the VOC expanded territorially as well as in authority, the nature of its procurement of labour adapted to follow suit. When we compare these patterns of forced mobility with the expansion of the VOC empire, we gain insights into the dynamics of supplying a commercial empire with the labour force necessary to sustain this expansion. Beyond the impact of expansion on the VOC's ability to procure labour, these changing dynamics also reveal more about the processes of transformation as commercial slave trading regimes increasingly became entangled with non-commodified or localised slave trading regimes, drawing them into the web of connections accelerated by long-distance European commodified slave trading. The following section will take figures from three key phases in the expansion of the VOC empire across the seventeenth century, as well as an overall analysis of figures from the eighteenth century, as rough data points for identifying and understanding patterns in the slave trade supplying Batavia in relation to the broader expansion of the VOC and its increasing entanglement in a global web of connected slave trading routes and regimes.

5 Long Distance Slave Trade: Trading with the Kingdom of Arakan and Profiting from Conditions in the Indian Subcontinent, 1624–1640

Following the establishment of Batavia, VOC expansion centred on the subjugation of the Banda islands through genocidal measures in 1621, as well as the annexation of Formosa (1622). The early years of VOC expansion from Batavia were by no means straightforward; the VOC faced competition from the Chinese and the English in the pepper markets of Bantam (Java), as well as regular clashes with Bantenese soldiers.²¹ Mason Hoadley, in a chapter on pre-colonial systems of bondage in Java, stressed the transformative impact of the VOC's presence in Java: labour systems in the pre-colonial Cirebon-Priangan region of Java revolved around self-sufficient agricultural production and service to the Javanese potentates; slavery and bondage appear to have only affected 'an extremely small percentage of the population'.²² Early VOC mercantilism however developed a colonial economic structure that required large amounts of manpower for its construction projects and

²¹ Femme S. Gaastra, *Geschiedenis van de VOC* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2007): 40.

²² Mason C. Hoadley, "Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Pre-Colonial Java: the Cirebon-Priangan Region," in *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia*, ed. Anthony Reid (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press): 108.

supply of agricultural goods including indigo, coffee and cotton.²³ From the early years of development then, VOC elites in Batavia faced the simultaneous challenge of procuring the labour necessary for the expansion of the colonial city and ensuring the security of the city from external threats.

During this period, the majority of enslaved people in Batavia were imported from Bengal, Malabar and other South Asian regions; they were often captured from the Portuguese and transported to Batavia since the VOC did not have control of the slave trade in the Archipelago, which was largely under the influence of private Asian and European traders.²⁴ Because of the high cost of ‘free’ labour (hiring available enslaved persons from their local masters), as well as the fragmented nature of Batavian society, enslaved workers were initially brought from as far away as possible, so as to prevent them from potentially fleeing the city.²⁵ These anxieties about the potential risks posed by negative reactions of the enslaved can also be seen in the early ordinances of the VOC, which in 1625 sought to regulate the treatment of slaves within Batavia’s walls, decreeing that no slave owner could impose more than ‘civil or domestic’ punishment on their slaves.²⁶

Of the twenty-five entries in the dataset for the period 1624–1640, the vast majority of forced relocations originated on the Indian subcontinent and were carried out directly by the VOC. Arakan and the Coromandel coast dominate these entries as places of departure for the VOC ships recorded as coming into Batavia (see Map 2). These twenty-five entries record the forced relocation of at least 2,276 people; the total number of enslaved persons aboard is unknown in three cases, while in one case VOC officials estimated the arrival of ‘some’ slaves. The data in the entries can be summarised as seen in Tab. 1.

The sample from this period highlights the overwhelming reliance of the VOC on the Coromandel coast as well as Arakan to obtain forced labour for Batavia. This appears to have been a systematic characteristic of early VOC trade in the Indian Ocean; Vink has calculated that in the period 1626–1662 the exportation of 150–400 slaves from the Arakan-Bengal coast annually was a regular occurrence.²⁷ Accounts of slave trading on the Indian subcontinent have drawn attention to the prolonged drought and famine conditions that resulted in the readily available exportation of at least 1,900 slaves from the Coromandel coast between 1622 and 1623 alone.²⁸ In

²³ Hoadley, “Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Pre-Colonial Java”: 109.

²⁴ Kanumoyoso, *Beyond the City Wall*: 117; Reid, “Introduction”: 29; Heather Sutherland, “Slavery and the Slave Trade in South Sulawesi, 1660s–1800s,” in *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia*, ed. Anthony Reid (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press): 263–85.

²⁵ Reid, “Introduction”: 15.

²⁶ See Fox, ““For Good and Sufficient Reasons””: 256.

²⁷ Vink, ““The World’s Oldest Trade’.”

²⁸ Vink, ““The World’s Oldest Trade’.”

Tab. 1: Enslaved arrivals in Batavia, 1624–1640.

Place of departure	Total number of people relocated
Coromandel	1,254 (+ ‘some’)
Arakan	922
Solor	49
Borneo	25
Malacca	22
Masulipatnam	2
Bima	2
Buton	unknown

Vink’s original analytical circuits, Arakan and the Coromandel coast form the same geographic region. What this obscures, however, is the co-existence of two separate slavery regimes in the same area. Whereas the availability of cheap enslaved labour along the Coromandel coast was largely driven by the famine conditions mentioned above, those labelled as coming from ‘Arakan’ could in fact have originated from anywhere along the Bay of Bengal, as Arakan was a powerful kingdom with its own systems of slavery.²⁹ What we see here is the merging of two separate sources of enslaved labour, originally under two different regimes, and the transformation of these original slavery regimes as the VOC connected them into a web of long-distance slave trading routes that carried the enslaved across the Indian Ocean to Batavia.

Beyond these two main sources of labour, however, other markets where we know slave labour to have been available are not represented in the data. Slave trade in Southeast Asia was not unknown prior to the dominance of the VOC; ports like Malacca, Aceh, Banten and Makassar already functioned as hubs in connecting slave trading routes from Papua New Guinea to the Coromandel coast, as well as from Sumbawa to the Philippines.³⁰ It is unknown who carried out the transaction resulting in 25 enslaved persons arriving in Batavia from Borneo on the 14th of April 1636, but from the information available on slaves arriving from other parts of the Indonesian archipelago, it appears that the VOC had little direct access to these markets in this early phase of expansion. The two arriving from Bima on the 20th of November 1636 were brought in by ‘Maleijers’ (slave traders from Sulawesi), whereas the unknown number of enslaved persons entering Batavia from Buton in 1634 were brought and sold by Marten Jansen Vogel, a free burgher of Batavia, to various private persons in the city.

²⁹ S.E.A. van Galen, “Arakan and Bengal: The Rise and Decline of the Mrauk U Kingdom (Burma) From the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth Century AD” (PhD diss., Leiden University, 2008); Jaques P. Leider, “Le Royaume d’Arakan, Birmanie. Son histoire politique entre le début du XVe et la fin du XVIIe siècle” (PhD diss., Ecole française d’Extrême-Orient, 1998).

³⁰ Kanumoyoso, *Beyond the City Wall*: 117.

Here we see the differences in access to enslaved labour for the VOC directly, which focussed largely on the slave labour available from Arakan and the Coromandel Coast, and the smaller numbers of enslaved labour arriving from closer to Batavia, but indirectly, through other slave trade intermediaries. Though the 22 persons arriving from Malacca were purchased directly by the VOC, it is important to note the role of the Portuguese in forcing these slaves out of the besieged city in 1640 – an incident found worth noting down in the *Dagh-register*.

6 Increasing Involvement: Trading within the Indonesian Archipelago, 1641–1660

In 1641 the VOC took over the port of Malacca, shortly followed by expansion into coastal Ceylon (Galle, 1641; Colombo and Jaffnapatnam 1654–1658). The VOC also extended its authority to the Cape of Good Hope in 1652. For this period the dataset holds a larger sample of 85 entries, recording the relocation of at least 5,172 individuals, again with some unknown numbers and vague descriptions of ‘some’ enslaved people onboard. These details are shown in Tab. 2.

Tab. 2: Enslaved arrivals in Batavia, 1641–1660.

Place of departure	Total number of people relocated
Arakan	3,309
Coromandel	638
Banjarmassin (via Makassar)	200
Solor	175
Bali	136
Java (Japara, Grissee, Lassem, Tegal)	100
Bantam	92
Borneo	61 (+ ‘some’)
Timor	54
Bengala	28
Persia	13
Makassar	10 (‘Ceramse’) (+ ‘some’)
The Cape	3
Cambodia	unknown
Diange	unknown
Unknown or unclear	353

In the sample from this period, Arakan still clearly dominated as the main source of slave labour; similarly, the Coromandel coast, though less prominent in this sample than in the initial phase of VOC expansion, still provided a large share of the slaves arriving at Batavia. The presence of the Cape and Persia are notable in this sample,

although both entries refer to single-voyage transportations of Company slaves. These slaves were likely already enslaved under the VOC; the place of origin of the ships transporting them does perhaps not have a direct link to their ethnicity.

Noticeably, despite the VOC's conquest of Malacca in 1641, slaves arriving from this city are absent from this sample. Malacca had been one of the largest importers of slaves under Portuguese rule in the sixteenth century and had been a dominant slave market, especially for Javanese slaves.³¹ Though the conquest of Malacca represented a significant step for the VOC in terms of its position on the European spice market, it is striking that it appears not to have appropriated the city as a source of enslaved labour for Batavia, despite its previous prominent role under Portuguese colonial rule.³² Instead, in this period, VOC Malacca was supplied with slave labour from the much closer markets of the Malabar and Coromandel coasts. Some of these slaves might have been taken to Batavia in the later slave transports from Malacca in the early eighteenth century, but these transports account for less than 100 enslaved individuals in this dataset.

Though nowhere near the numbers arriving from Arakan and the Coromandel coast, the sample from this period clearly reflects the growing involvement of the VOC with indigenous chiefs and headmen on the Indonesian archipelago, forming a striking difference with the previous sample. The growing presence of these indigenous leaders in this sample was possibly a result of the slave-clause agreements the Dutch started to conclude in the eastern archipelago and Sulawesi from 1650 on.³³ The sample also records the arrival of 353 enslaved individuals in Batavia between 1648 and 1659 on '*inlandse*' (inland) vessels. The numbers recorded as arriving in Batavia were never above 50 and actually refer to total numbers brought on board these *inlandse* vessels organised according to months. Where these vessels were coming from, and which groups of people they were bringing into Batavia, remains unclear, but the data points to a steady, if small, trickle of enslaved persons entering Batavia from surrounding areas.

At the same time, the security of Batavia in relation to the surrounding Javanese polities remained of prime concern. Until peace contracts were signed with Mataram in 1677 and Bantam in 1683, Batavia's *Ommelanden* remained relatively precarious and vulnerable to Bantenese raids. The first census of 1673 recorded that only 9,311 people lived beyond the city walls, with slaves and *Mardijkers* (descendants of free slaves) making up over two-thirds of this group.³⁴ The anxieties around Batavia's precarity in relation to Java's sultans make a striking appearance in the observations on incoming slaves; in 1659, control over 36 slaves from Bantam was transferred from the Sultan of Bantam to VOC envoys. The record does not make

³¹ Reid, "Introduction": 31.

³² Gaastra, *Geschiedenis van de VOC*: 52.

³³ Vink, "The World's Oldest Trade'."

³⁴ Kanumoyoso, *Beyond the City Wall*: 111.

clear whether these slaves were a gift, had been bought by the Company or run away. What the observation does record however is that once in Batavia, all 36 were put on an old sampan which was set on fire – a drastic method of preventing ‘problematic’ slaves from entering the city.

What this sample suggests, in contrast to the previous one, is that as the VOC stabilised its position in Batavia, it increasingly sought access to the smaller circuit of intra-Asian slave trade transportations across the Indonesian archipelago. Whether this increase was due to a relaxation around allowing slaves from neighbouring territories to enter the slave systems of Batavia and its surrounding *Ommelanden*, or whether indigenous chiefs and slave traders became increasingly aware of Batavia as a potential market, remains an interesting question. What is clear from the execution of the slaves from Bantam, however, is that security remained a prime factor in the regulation of the admittance of slaves from the perspective of the VOC.

7 Establishment and Experimentation: Dominance in the Indonesian Archipelago and New Long-Distance Connections, 1661–1688

The 1660s saw the VOC empire extend its power to Cochin (1663), with settlements on the Malabar and Coromandel coasts (1663), and further within the Indonesian archipelago. 1684 is often cited as the height of the VOC’s military authority across its various spheres of influence.³⁵ Both Markus Vink and Robert Shell have accordingly used it as a sample year from which to calculate slave trade populations and the flows necessary to sustain the related growth rates. Shell calculated that the slave population of Batavia consisted of 22,570 adults in 1689. Vink argued that on the basis of the 4,000 Company slaves (who included 1,400 slaves in Batavia) in 1668, as well as the 66,000 total Dutch slaves in the various settlements across the Indian Ocean basin (26,000 slaves in Batavia), a total of between 3,730 and 6,430 slaves had to be imported across the Indian Ocean basin each year.³⁶ Vink assigns Batavia and Ceylon the status of ‘the two most important VOC settlements’ at this moment.

As a result of the VOC’s rapid expansion, the period from the 1660s onwards witnessed the introduction of a new category of slave to Batavia; whereas the Company’s work slaves up till now had mainly consisted of skilled labourers, ‘*kulis*’ increasingly took on the unskilled labour in Batavia such as unskilled building, loading and unloading in warehouses, or agricultural labour in the *Ommelanden*.³⁷

³⁵ Gaastra, *Geschiedenis van de VOC*: 37.

³⁶ Vink, “‘The World’s Oldest Trade’”: 167.

³⁷ Fox, “‘For Good and Sufficient Reasons’”: 250.

These '*kulis*' were mainly recruited from within the Indonesian archipelago – especially from places like Bali, the Celebes (Sulawesi), Banda and Timor.

The sample for this period is made up of 552 entries, recording a total of 19,437 slaves arriving in Batavia. Tab. 3 summarises the details.

Tab. 3: Enslaved arrivals in Batavia, 1661–1688.

Place of departure	Total number of people relocated
Makassar	4,940
Bali	2,637
Ceylon	2,635
Arakan	1,453
Timor	1,383
Buton	1,345
Madagascar/Mauritius (via Mozambique)	984
Ambon	472
Sumbawa	257
Celebes	250
Coromandel	216
Ternate	212
Manggarai	190
The Cape	178
Bima	167
Banda	153
Surabaya	137
Solor	129
Selayar	125
Borneo	101
Alita	100
Bantam	85
Gresik	71
Bone	51
Tegal	51
Jambi	44
Semarang	39
Lombok	28
New Guinea	11
Banjarmasin	10
Bengalen	unknown
Unknown or unclear	983

VOC military expansion in the Indonesian archipelago brought it into interaction with the existing systems of slave trade, vastly accelerating the steady trickle of labour represented by the *inlandse* vessels in the previous sample. We clearly see that in the space of just forty years, slaves from within the Indonesian archipelago formed

the bulk of enslaved labour arriving in Batavia, far outstripping the previously preferred markets of supply of Araccan and the Coromandel coast. The marked upsurge in the numbers arriving in Batavia from Timor can be directly attributed to the military expeditions staged by the VOC in the area; a quarter of all slaves arriving in Batavia from Timor in this period (367) were captured in one go and arrived as part of one flotilla following one such expedition in 1674.

The collapse of the kingdom of Makassar in 1669 and its subsequent impact on the slave trade supplying Batavia is also immediately obvious. The influx of enslaved people from Sulawesi following the redistribution of the land among chiefs favourable to the VOC which accounted for just under 25% of the total supply of slave labour to Batavia during this 27-year period, represents a peak in the slave trade flows entering Batavia. In the mid-seventeenth century, Makassar was a hub for the slave trade in the Indonesian archipelago; enslaved people from northern Sulawesi and eastern Borneo were exported there, as well as from eastern Indonesia including Manggarai, Timor, Alor and New Guinea, sometimes via eastern markets such as Buton or Tidore.³⁸ Makassarese slave traders engaged in large-scale raiding, such as the 200 armed vessels which sailed to the Sula islands (an archipelago in the Moluccas) in 1665 and brought back 1000–1500 enslaved people.³⁹ The dominance of Makassar in this period would remain a systematic characteristic of the slave trade supplying Batavia throughout the eighteenth century.

Enslaved people exported from the markets in Bali also make up a significant proportion of the slave labour entering Batavia. Studies like that of Van der Kraan have illuminated the social structures in Bali that, due to limited opportunities for the integration of slave labour within Balinese society itself, led to the availability of an ‘exportable surplus’ of slaves.⁴⁰ In the exportation of labour from Bali, both local hierarchies and the particular characteristics of demand for labour in Batavia appear to have played a significant role in shaping the patterns that exerted influence on this particular labour flow. Van der Kraan has emphasised the significance of gender in the risk of enslavement for Balinese people; the Balinese family system was strongly patrilinear as individual land rights could only be vested in men, and as a result women occupied a very low status in Balinese society. The enslavement of Balinese women could occur in a number of ways, including being sold into slavery by their husbands as a result of adultery, poverty or gambling debts.⁴¹ At the same time, ethnic prejudices in Batavia also influenced the demand for Balinese slaves; an ordinance of 25th September 1665 forbade the sale of enslaved males

³⁸ Reid, “Introduction”: 31.

³⁹ Sutherland, “Slavery and the Slave Trade in South Sulawesi”: 267–69.

⁴⁰ Alfons van der Kraan, “Bali: Slavery and Slave trade,” in *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia*, ed. Anthony Reid (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press): 328.

⁴¹ Van der Kraan, “Bali”: 323.

from Bali to all subjects of the company due to their ‘malevolent nature’.⁴² This interaction of factors affecting both the likelihood of who was to be enslaved in Bali as well as who could be purchased in Batavia is clearly reflected in the data: of the 3,167 enslaved persons arriving in Batavia from Bali between 1648 and 1719, at least 828 were female, exported as part of female-only cargoes aboard *inlandse* vessels, over 90% of whom arrived between 1666 and 1681, perhaps as a direct result of the ordinance against the importation of male Balinese slaves.

The systematic exportation of slaves from Arakan diminished rapidly in this period, after the depopulation of the coastal area led to war between the Mogul ruler and the Portuguese. As a result, other markets for enslaved workers were explored, with Madagascar and the African circuit largely replacing Arakan and Bengal.⁴³ The African circuit did not contribute significantly to the numbers of enslaved workers in Batavia as the distance and inhumane conditions had disastrous consequences for the lives of those on-board. In 1661, 350 slaves were delivered from Madagascar to Batavia as the result of one voyage. Yet the longer distance also resulted in higher mortality; after one voyage from Madagascar to Batavia on 7th February 1682, 139 slaves had died on board along the way. This was no one-off occurrence; a 1733 record on the arrival of a ship in Batavia noted that of the 334 enslaved persons on-board, the majority had died.

In this sample, we see the height of VOC military power also coincide with the height of VOC involvement with the indigenous slave trading regimes of the Indonesian archipelago. Contrary to the predominance of indigenous slave traders in the previous sample, in this sample we see the impact of direct VOC expansion in the area resulting in larger numbers of slaves entering Batavia from Timor. The impact of political association with chiefs in Sulawesi on flows of slaves to Batavia is also noticeable, enabling the VOC to access a slave market previously dominated by the kingdom of Makassar. The VOC cemented its access to the slave trading regimes of the Indonesian archipelago through both military expansion and political treaties. At the same time, the VOC benefitted from being an external presence in the region, as the numbers of ‘exportable surplus slaves’ entering Batavia from the usually separate slavery circuit of Bali demonstrate. VOC connections with local slavery regimes in this period appear not to have satisfied its need for slave labour. The reduction of Arakan as a reliable source of forced labour drew slavery regimes further afield in Africa into the web of routes connecting Batavia to the rest of the Indian Ocean basin, despite the disastrous results of such long-distance transportation of slaves.

⁴² Fox, “‘For Good and Sufficient Reasons’”: 258.

⁴³ Sutherland, “Slavery and the Slave Trade in South Sulawesi”: 266.

8 Regulating the Slave Trade to Batavia: Balancing Security and Labour Needs in the Eighteenth Century

In the immediate aftermath of the peaking number of slaves entering Batavia in the previous sample, the VOC increasingly sought to regulate the influx of slaves into the city. Concerns over security led the Company to tighten its control over the slave trade into Batavia; in October 1688 it became prohibited to import enslaved people from both the Eastern Archipelago and Bali without obtaining permission from the authorities, and the import of slaves by Indonesian traders was also outlawed.⁴⁴ In this way the Company attempted to bring the import of enslaved labour under its own control, closely guarding it through the issuing of private traders with exclusive licenses. By 1720 however the demand for slave labour dramatically increased, resulting in the relaxation of many of these restrictions.⁴⁵

The regulations appear to at least have been effective in reducing the flow of enslaved people into Batavia; prior to the relaxation of prohibitions in 1720, the dataset records only 2,771 slaves arriving in Batavia over a twenty-year period. The wider sample records the arrival of 12,580 persons throughout the eighteenth century, making up 479 entries – a marked decrease from the 19,437 in the period 1661–1688. This sample is reported in Tab. 4.

In this sample the most notable reflection of the effect of the prohibitions against the import of slaves can be seen in the data for Bali. The dominance of Chinese and non-Dutch slave traders in the Balinese trade to Batavia has been noted by Bondan Kanumoyoso, who states that the Company was not the ‘main player’ in the displacement of Balinese slaves.⁴⁶ The sharp decline in the number of slaves arriving from the Balinese markets in this period, when compared to the numbers in the previous sample, suggest that the VOC was at least partly successful in asserting its authority over the import of slaves to Batavia. Similarly, the *inlandse* vessels who had provided much of Batavia’s early labour supply from within the Indonesian archipelago are noticeably absent in the sample from this period. Interestingly, all 450 enslaved individuals arriving in Batavia from Bali in this period arrived prior to the relaxation of the prohibitions in 1720, but the impact of the regulations comes across clearly in the observations. 328 of these Balinese slaves were brought into Batavia by two key traders in the private slave trade supplying Batavia: Bappa Dien and Nachoda Daeoe. The remaining 122 Balinese slaves arrived in Batavia accompanied by transport licenses issued by Dewa Anom, king of Sukawati, and King Gusti Pamecutan of Badung.

⁴⁴ Kanumoyoso, *Beyond the City Wall*: 111.

⁴⁵ Kanumoyoso, *Beyond the City Wall*: 111.

⁴⁶ Kanumoyoso, *Beyond the City Wall*: 119.

Tab. 4: Enslaved arrivals in Batavia, 1700–1800.

Departure Place	Total number of people relocated
Makassar	4,844 (138 entries)
Timor	2,225 (106 entries)
Malabar (incl. Cochin)	1,425
Ceylon	514
Bali	450
Coromandel	407
Ternate	400 (66 entries)
Madagascar/Mauritius	382
Sumatra/Padang	299
Buton	230
Alas (Sumbawa)	200
Ambon	79
Banda	74
Bima	56
Bantam	51
Jambi	51
Malacca	45
Bone	36
Goa	36
Banjarmassin	13
Japan	5
Solor	4
Angola	'some'
Unknown or unclear	754

Traders with licences could thus profit enormously in this period. The dataset also records the fate of two VOC officials who attempted to trade slaves without the necessary permits: on the 21st of April 1719 Jacob Torant and Barend Block were dismissed from office for the illegal sale of an unrecorded number of Balinese slaves.

At the same time, however, work done by James Fox on the early Dutch East India Company ordinances reveals the need for the repeated reaffirmation of these prohibitions on the import of enslaved persons from Bali and the eastern Indonesian archipelago; reaffirmations were passed on 6th February 1714, 22nd January 1715 and 1st December 1719.⁴⁷ The ordinance was frequently overstepped, with Balinese slaves often taken to Batavia indirectly via Banten. The prelude to the renewal of the decree in January 1715 appears to have been the thirty Balinese slaves who ‘ran amok’ on the island of Edam.⁴⁸ Besides the infringement of the ordinances and the interconnected slave trade markets of the Indonesian archipelago that enabled the slaves of ‘problematic’ ethnicity to be exported to Batavia indirectly, a number of exceptions

⁴⁷ Fox, ““For Good and Sufficient Reasons””: 260–61.

⁴⁸ Fox, ““For Good and Sufficient Reasons””: 260–61.

granted by the Company itself further undermined the general restrictions on the import of slaves. In December 1700, enslaved people arriving from Banda were exempted from any restrictions, in February 1701 the Sultan of Buton was granted permission to bring 50–60 slaves annually to Batavia, and by October 1704, voyages to Timor and Makassar with the express intention of purchasing slaves were licensed by the Governor General.⁴⁹ As a result, these destinations account for the bulk of labourers arriving in Batavia in the eighteenth century, and so represented a stable and consistent source of workers.

The sample from this period is particularly interesting since it shows most clearly how the VOC attempted to influence and control the flow of slaves into the port city. In particular the monopoly granted to certain private traders for supplying Batavia's slave markets hints at this attempt to monitor and regulate the incoming slave trade, whilst at the same time perhaps revealing the VOC's dependence on private traders with their access to slave trade circuits in the eastern archipelago. The significance, and perhaps the separation, of indigenous slave trading circuits from VOC ones becomes even more apparent when we look at Balinese slaves, who nonetheless were taken to Batavia indirectly through the slave trade markets of Banten. More data would enable us to reconstruct a more precise picture of the ethnicities of slaves arriving in Batavia from across the Eastern Archipelago, paying particular attention to the slippages in categorising and regulating ethnicity that perhaps enabled private traders to still sell those enslaved labourers labelled 'problematic' by Batavia's governing elites.

9 Coercive Connections: Circuits Reconsidered

Let us return to Vink's three circuits of VOC slave trading and sourcing of forced labour. When we consider slave trading connections from this data, it becomes clear that the circuits do not adequately illustrate the changing connections and transformations that occurred as imperial expansion coincided and encountered existing slavery regimes. While Vink's circuits are helpful in understanding the geographic scope and grouping of the regions from which Dutch slave traders procured slave labour, their vastness belies the complexities and sub-circuits in constant interaction at their centres.

Rather than thinking of three distinct circuits, it may be helpful to reimagine the map of the Indian Ocean basin as dotted with slave societies, or 'nodes'. Prior to the European presence in the Indian Ocean, many of these nodes had already been connected. Examples would be the regions from which the Arakan kingdom obtained workers, as well as the territories connected by existing practices of slave

⁴⁹ Fox, "For Good and Sufficient Reasons": 259.

raiding and trading in the Indonesian archipelago. Here, Vink's circuits are useful in noticing the connection of these regions by the presence and growth of European slave trading. However, as this chapter has demonstrated, the various, increasingly interconnected nodes within this commodified global slave trade system cannot be grouped into three 'circuits' of similar nodes. The three circuits of 'African', 'South Asian' and 'Southeast Asian' confer only geographic similarity. Other defining characteristics of these slave societies dotted throughout all three regions differed not only as to culture, language and political structure, but also in terms of their relationship with the slave trade; whether they exported or imported slaves, or a combination of both; and whether they had their own slavery regimes or instead stood in relation to an external slave regime.

When we reorient away from empires and realms, vital as it has been in emphasising connection across the Indian Ocean basin, looking instead for nodes and connections, we can read the data in a new light. By focussing on the connections between various individual slave societies, we can better probe the underlying mechanisms and structures that allowed these slave trading routes to connect various slave societies into an increasingly global and commodified slave trade system. We thus gain more insights into the diversity of people connected by commodified slavery, and can analyse which connections were the thickest and made up the most significant flows. Accordingly, our understanding of the impact of diversity in these colonial nodes changes. By understanding better where people came from in terms of their previous relation to slavery and the slave trade, we can compare the impact of these differences on co-existence within colonies in contrast to differences only in terms of ethnicity, language or culture.

Clearly, the slave trade patterns operating in relation to Batavia, let alone the wider VOC empire, or even the European slave trading system as a whole, were complex. To propose a new model of circuits and sub-circuits would be to attempt to impose a (static) order on connections that were continually changing, the weights of which increased or decreased as the local contexts of both European demand for forced labour, and local capitalisation on this demand, co-operated or competed. For Batavia, thanks to the richness of the data, we can point to the importance of its connections with Arakan and the Coromandel coast in the initial stages of expansion, the gradual thickening of the arcs of connection between Batavia and the rest of the Indonesian archipelago, and the limited significance of its connections with West Africa and the Western Indian Ocean islands in obtaining a reliable, steady flow of forced labour. However, the precise weight of the connections between societies would likely shift significantly if we switched to another imperial outpost or port as the focal node. The value of such an approach is the ability to eventually be able to layer these varying maps of connections so as to compare the implications of a European slave trading presence in the Indian Ocean basin on the connections, and more importantly the weight of the connecting arcs, between different slave societies in the region.

Accordingly, the value of moving from larger static geographical circuits to the dynamic sub-circuits underlying the slave trade in smaller regions, allows us to return to the larger picture of the European colonial presence in maritime Asia with renewed awareness of the dynamic and transformational connections in the region that underpinned the increasing involvement of European commodified slave trade systems with the pluriform slave societies in the region. The European presence in the Indian Ocean world connected previously unconnected regions, slave trade regimes, slavery societies and actors that carried out the forced relocation of enslaved people within an increasingly global and interconnected system; by analysing the nature of these connections more closely, we can more clearly understand the dynamic development of slavery and the slave trade in this important region.

10 Reflection

How do the patterns illuminated by the data on slave trading to Batavia compare to patterns of slavery and bondage in the rest of the Indian Ocean world? Firstly, the data reveals the importance of pre-existing slavery regimes to European colonial expansion, as well as the ways in which the functioning of these regimes changed in response to European involvement. The chapters in this volume by James Fujitani and Vinil Paul clearly demonstrate the distinct and embedded systems of slavery already present in Melaka and the Indian subcontinent prior to European exploitation. Indeed, the intervention of European officials in existing systems of slavery and slave trading appears to have obscured more about slavery in these regions than the sources that were generated by European intervention have revealed. Fujitani and Paul both show that the Portuguese and the Dutch condensed the various hierarchies within indigenous systems of slavery in their regulation of exportable bonded labour. The integration of existing slave societies into a commodified global slave trade system is therefore not just about the connecting of disparate geographic locations, but also about the flattening and reshaping of social structures in the places of origin of the enslaved.

Secondly, the increasingly connected nature of slavery in the region not only reshaped social structures in the places of origin of the enslaved, but also directly shaped the social structures of the colonial societies that emerged as a result of European expansion. The chapters in this volume by Hans Hägerdal, Kate Ekama and Rômulo da Silva Ehalt demonstrate the impact of increasing connection and diversity on some of these distinct slave societies that were integrated within the wider commodified global slave trade system, while at the same time they continued to be shaped by their own direct contexts. The chapter by Hans Hägerdal on the seaborne transportation of slaves to the Banda Islands clearly demonstrates the entanglement of Western and local experiences of slaving, as well as the impact the development of

a slave-driven plantation economy had on pre-existing commercial networks. The chapter demonstrates the significance of maritime slave trading routes in supplying this previously unknown slave labour plantation system with enslaved men and women from the Indian subcontinent, the Indonesian archipelago and Timor-Leste and the ways in which these varying forms of 'slavery' met, and transformed each other. Ekama's chapter on VOC-governed Ceylon reveals the tensions between the different forms of coerced mobility that supplied Ceylon with slave labour, demonstrating that connection into a global system did not necessarily entail conformity across the connected slave societies, even where European involvement accelerated the presence of slavery and slave labour in that society. The tension speaks clearly from the ways in which entry into slavery was strictly regulated within Ceylon, even as the status of individuals who entered slavery through those very same mechanisms outside of Ceylon was not questioned upon their arrival on the island. Finally, the chapter by Da Silva Ehalt highlights the resistance to European slave trading in East Asia, even as human trafficking was an endemic method of survival that gave rise to smuggling networks that had connected the coastlines of the East China Sea prior to the arrival of Europeans in the region. This chapter has demonstrated the ability of each of the societies connected by the commodified global slave trade to alter the web of connections; in this case, the response of Japanese and Chinese officials was decisive in determining the extent of European access to this indigenous system of slavery.

When held against the three moments of coercion of the framework proposed in the first chapter of this volume, slave trading routes do not appear to neatly fit within one of these categories. As this chapter has demonstrated, slave trading routes functioned as coercive connections between the slave societies dotted around the Indian Ocean basin, often accelerating processes of enslavement and transportation. As connections and routes they can lie anywhere between 'entrance', 'relation' or 'exit'. What could be considered an 'exit' from a localised slavery regime was often an 'entry' into a globalised one. Similarly, where an existing slavery regime might have depended on particular methods of binding the enslaved for particular labour functions, entrance into a global system of commodified slavery could fundamentally alter these realities for the enslaved. As the chapter on the Banda Islands clearly illustrates, these connections played a decisive role in transforming the ways in which slave labour was organised and understood. The experiences of connection and long-distance coerced mobility should also be considered in relation to the organisation of labour beyond the 'abolitions' of slavery: The chapter by Amal Shahid reveals a certain preoccupation with binding people to the land, perhaps even as a result of the mass displacement of labour in the previous century.

