From Autonomous Village to 'Informal Slum'

*Kampong Development and State Control in Bandung (1930–1960)*¹

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Introduction

'In the colonial period, Taman Sari was so different. You wouldn't recognize the place'. Ibu Darsum throws me a meaningful look. She is not happy about the current condition of her kampong, Gang Bongkaran, located in *kelurahan* Taman Sari in the northern part of Bandung.² Like so many people her age, she is full of appreciation when she speaks nostalgically about the past, as if everything has been deteriorating ever since she was born.

We sit in front of her house over a cup of tea. Her house is impressive neither because of its size nor its quality, but it is by far the best in the neighbourhood. It even has a small flower garden in front. People in the kampong insisted that I should talk to her. She could assuage my curiosity about the history of Taman Sari. At eighty-four, she is one of the oldest residents in the neighbourhood. More importantly, no one has resided in Taman Sari as long as she has: Ibu Darsum was born, raised and has grown old here.

Indeed, Taman Sari must have been a very different place before the Second World War. Today it is a settlement of precarious substandard buildings, suffering from a lack of adequate infrastructure and proper access to public services, and tends to be rather informal in terms of land tenure and land use. Most residents live in one of the many small houses built alongside the

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 - 2 The concept 'kampong' has different meanings, depending on the area in Indonesia in which and by whom it is used (Krausse 1975:31–35). In West Java the word means low-income, urban or rural settlement (Silas 1983:214). A *kelurahan* is the lowest administrative unit in Bandung, usually consisting of several kampongs.

Cikapundung River. Their dwellings can be reached by alleys, some of which are so narrow that they are called '*gang cinta*', love alleys, because people have to get pretty intimate to pass one another.

My curiosity about the history of Taman Sari was triggered when I saw a map of Bandung dating from the 1930s. At the time the area was already covered by small kampongs, but it was primarily depicted as a city park. Informed of the contemporary conditions prevailing there, I was struck by this radical change in land use. Spurred on by this curiosity, I settled in Gang Bongkaran in Taman Sari for a period of participant observation. Later I conducted oral history research, in close collaboration with two students from Universitas Padjadjaran, among a number of the older, well-informed residents. Finally, I organized a survey in kampongs in Taman Sari and six other *kelurahan*.³ This chapter is the result of this oral history research, the survey, as well as literature research. Although this chapter draws on data mainly acquired from Taman Sari, the purpose is to reach some general conclusions about kampongs and their dwellers in Bandung.

This chapter is a discussion of the factors underlying the development of kampongs in Bandung in the twentieth century. It analyses the legal, spatial, and socio-economic characteristics and dynamics of these settlements from the colonial times, through the Japanese occupation and Indonesian Revolution to an independent Indonesia. Finally, it assesses the impact of the main policies on kampongs adopted by consecutive colonial and Indonesian governments. Consequently, the paper explains how and why kampongs in Taman Sari and other *kelurahan* in Bandung have developed into the settlements they are today.

The basic argument informing this chapter is that neither colonial nor Indonesian governments ever succeeded in exercising effective control over kampongs and therefore could not develop, standardize, and regulate these settlements to conform to their policies. During the colonial period, this lack of state control was a consequence of village or kampung autonomy (*desa autonomie*), which formed part of the official colonial policy of legal dualism. After Independence, kampongs actually retained their autonomy, despite the effort to decolonize. Taken in combination with various historical events

3 I settled and carried out participant observation in *kelurahan* Taman Sari from September 2004–February 2005 and in *kelurahan* Cibangkong from September–December 2005. Oral history research was conducted in *kelurahan* Taman Sari from September–December 2005. In total, about twenty residents were interviewed in five neighbourhoods. The survey was organized between September and December 2005 among 420 households in seven *kelurahan* in Bandung, including sixty households in Taman Sari.

since Independence, the lack of state control has resulted in kampongs developing into the kind of settlement the government itself qualifies as informal slums.

The structure of this chapter is mainly chronological and after a description of Taman Sari in colonial times, it is further subdivided into the three periods discussed: colonial times, the Japanese occupation and Indonesian Revolution, and Independence. It ends with some concluding remarks, in which reference is made to the contemporary characteristics of kampongs in Bandung.

Rural Villages in a Colonial City

The presence of the autonomous kampongs in Bandung has everything to do with the encroachment of the city on its rural environs. Rural villages were swallowed by the expanding town. Between the late nineteenth century and the end of colonial rule, Bandung developed from a small settlement of about 10,000 inhabitants into a modern European colonial city with 200,000 residents. Just as other cities in the colony the expansion of Bandung was largely the outcome of a new era in colonial policy, the liberal period, which introduced legal reforms and subsequently a radical increase in commercial activity stimulated by the new plantations in the hinterland of Bandung (Voskuil 1996:31). From 1854, private planters could lease land from the colonial government and from 1870 this actually was a commercially attractive proposition. The natural conditions of the Priangan region around Bandung proved ideal for the cultivation of tea, coffee, and quinine. Tea planters were the most commercially successful and they spent their money in Bandung, or '*het Parijs van Java*' (the Paris of Java) as it was also called on account of its sophisticated options for entertainment. More prosaically the city also functioned as a transshipment point for their plantation products.

Later, the economic function of Bandung extended beyond being simply a hub of the plantation economy. The city began to attract people from outside the region, notably after railway connections opened it up in 1884 (Kunto 1984:161–162). Another reason for the development of Bandung was the 1916 decision of the colonial government to move a number of government agencies from Batavia to Bandung. In 1918 the colonial government began to amplify plans to make Bandung the capital of the Netherlands Indies but this never materialized, principally because finances proved a stumbling block. Nevertheless, however ephemeral, such plans contributed to the success of the city government in attracting new European residents. A last but no less important reason for Europeans – in the 1920s and 1930s the majority of them

pensioners – to settle in Bandung was its pleasant climate (Voskuil 1996:34–35).

Rural-urban migration of Indonesians also contributed to the expansion of the city. The status of land in the Priangan region around Bandung was rapidly undergoing a change from being an attribute of the community bound by genealogical or territorial ties to that of a private commodity. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the region already had a reputation for large-scale landownership. Over time, the size of the land holdings increased and more land was alienated to become the property of (absentee) landowners, including members of the *menak* (noble) families, well-to-do villagers, merchants, and hajji. The upshot of the concentration of land ownership was a growing group of landless peasants (Van Dijk 1981:363–373). In addition to the concentration of land in a few hands, the growing population pressure and a decline in employment opportunities in rural areas left many peasants with no option but to uproot themselves and go to the city (Jellinek 1991:4). With an expansion in its economic activities and concomitant growing labour demand, Bandung proved an attractive destination.

The city was ethnically divided, the railway forming a clear dividing line. The cooler part north of the railway was mostly reserved for well-to-do European citizens, who lived in old, 'Indies' houses surrounded by large yards. Although the Europeans formed only twelve per cent of the population, they occupied more than half of the urban land (Wertheim 1956:180). Consequently, the northern part was relatively spacious. In the many kampongs in the southern part of Bandung, conditions were very different. The majority of the Indonesian population was packed into these settlements and the area even declined as more land was allocated for urban infrastructure and European districts. Indonesians formed 77 per cent of the population of Bandung, but occupied only 40 per cent of the land (Voskuil 1996:39–40; Wertheim 1956:180).

The expanding city engulfed many indigenous *desa* (rural villages), which soon lost their rural character and developed into urban kampongs with an almost entirely residential function (Flieringa 1930:36). Kampongs at the urban fringe, for the time being retained a rural character, both in physical appearance and social-economic functions. The rural mode of life included primitive sanitation, which, in combination with the high population density constituted a public health risk (Wertheim 1956:175–176).

The urban kampongs were allowed a high degree of autonomy (*desa autonomie*), which meant that the population could apply its own customary or *adat* law, administration, and justice. This autonomy was justified by the supposedly divergent economic and social needs of the different ethnic groups in

the colony.⁴ In the early twentieth century, seventeen such autonomous villages existed within the perimeter of Bandung. After the boundaries of the Bandung Municipality were expanded, the number of these villages increased to forty-four in 1942.

Soekadjadi, a part of Taman Sari, the area where I conducted fieldwork, was one such village. Taman Sari lies in the more spacious, northern part of Bandung and at first sight this area appeared strictly European. It is located in the valley of the Cikapundung, the main river flowing through the city, and contained between two main roads, the Lembangweg and Van Houten Parkweg (currently the famous Cihampelas 'Jeans' Street and Taman Sari Street). A large part of the area was covered with the private back gardens, full of trees and fishponds, belonging to the predominantly European, middle class people living in houses on the two main roads. On the east bank of the River Cikapundung, alongside the Van Houten Parkweg, was a European cemetery. This land as well as the land alongside the Cikapundung River was municipal land.

Soekadjadi was hidden behind the façade of European property. The area around Gang Bongkaran, where I interviewed Ibu Darsum quoted in the vignette at the beginning of this chapter, was one of the village hamlets behind the main roads. One of the residents I interviewed remembers that in the early 1930s there was a handful of houses clustered along this alley. Most houses were owned by Dutch people, but there also lived some Indonesians who had bought the land from Dutch residents. These Indonesian residents of Taman Sari were relatively well-off compared to the majority of indigenous residents. Most of them were farmers and grew vegetables for the urban market, but some had made a fortune in trade.

Behind the façade of 'European' houses along the main roads, Taman Sari had a rural character. Plots were generally large. Every household owned at least a *sawah* (wet rice-field) or an orchard, often planted with cacao trees. There were fishponds too. This land was *garapan* land, of which rights of ownership had, in line with customary law, been determined by opening and cultivating it. The houses were constructed in a traditional manner, with a raised floor, walls made of wood and plaited bamboo, and a bamboo roof. Paths were dirt roads of sand or pebbles. Parts of the area were swampy and muddy. The Cikapundung River was so clean it was used for drinking water. Contemporary names of kampongs in Taman Sari still reveal the rural character of the area.

4 Article 71 of the 1854 Regeeringsreglement, which functioned as a Constitution, acknowledged the autonomy of indigenous villages and general principles of village administration were laid down in the Inlandse Gemeente Ordonnantie (Indigenous Village Ordinance) of 1906. The autonomy was confirmed by Article 128(3) of the subsequent 1925 Indische Staatsregeling, which served as the new Constitution.

For instance, the word *maung*, part of the settlement name Liang Maung or Cimaung, means 'wildcat' in Sundanese, the regional language. This animal was just one of the wild species which were said to live in the area. Several informants claimed that the area retained its rural character until the late 1930s. In the Explanatory Memorandum of the 1938 Town Planning Ordinance, the Cikapundung Valley was referred to as 'one of the few examples of natural scenery having been converted into scenes of natural beauty' (*Toelichting Stadsvormingsordonnantie* 1938).⁵

The municipal government of Bandung felt increasingly compelled to improve conditions in the kampongs, but village autonomy restricted its freedom to act. In 1919 it launched a social housing programme, in which hundreds of houses were built for low-income residents for a couple of years. People could either rent a house or buy it on the basis of a hire purchase system. Despite this building programme, the municipality could not provide houses for the entire population (*Bandoeng* 1929:42–48). In practice, only the lower middle-class groups benefited from it, since the dwellings built under the programme remained too expensive for the masses residing in kampongs (*Toelichting Stadsvormingsordonnantie* 1938:34–35). Private real estate firms never showed any interest in participating in such housing programmes, unless forced to do so (*Toelichting Stadsvormingsordonnantie* 1938:74). For most low-income people, particularly Indonesians, kampongs remained the only option to find a dwelling.

In 1926, the city government reserved the southern part of the city for the indigenous population (*Bandoeng* 1929:37–39). This ordinance was meant to protect the indigenous residents against further inroads on their land by the development of the urban infrastructure and European districts, but in fact this measure only sharpened ethnic divisions (Voskuil 1996:39–40).

In the meantime, the central colonial government still refused to grant permission to intervene in the kampongs to municipal administrations, as long as the kampung autonomy remained in force. However, the Bandung administration did not bother to wait for formal approval from the central government before taking action in the kampongs. In 1927 it launched on its own initiative a kampung improvement scheme (*kampongverbetering*), although this meant it legally infringed on the kampung autonomy. The municipality improved roads, constructed drainage and sewerage facilities, provided electricity, and built hydrants and public baths (*Bandoeng* 1929:36).

5 A translation of excerpts from the *Toelichting Stadsvormingsordonnantie* can be found in Wertheim (1958).

Kampung improvement became easier in 1929, when the colonial government officially abandoned the idea that the villages could only be improved if their autonomy were abolished (Van de Wetering 1939:3). At the same time, it also began to reserve a fixed amount of the state budget to subsidize municipal initiatives to carry out improvement projects in kampongs (Stadsgemeente Bandoeng 1938:1–28).⁶ The kampung improvement activities received further legal backing by the Kampung Verbeeteringsordonnantie (Kampung Improvement Ordinance) in 1934. Municipal governments had from now on the right to intervene in kampung matters of which the consequences extended beyond the kampongs, including housing and hygiene, especially in kampongs located in the crowded urban centre. Although this change of policy was based on considerations of hygiene and humanity, underlying political motives were not far from the surface. It was feared that bad living conditions would drive the urban poor into the hands of the nationalists, whose stated aim was to overthrow the colonial government (Van Roosmalen 2004:194).⁷

Despite these various state efforts, the effect on the improved kampongs remained limited. Only a few of the problems could be tackled, in particular drainage and the construction of pathways. Projects were limited in scope and progress was slow (*Toelichting Stadsvormingsordonnantie* 1938:32–33). In some cases, kampung improvement only led to gentrification: the lower income residents were forced out by incoming more well-to-do residents able to pay higher rents in an, after improvement, more attractive neighbourhood (Wertheim 1956:179). Another well-intended policy with negative consequences was the state attempt to limit the building of new, poorly constructed dwellings. The effect of this policy was a growing shortage of affordable kampung housing, with the result that several families could be forced to share one house. Consequently, living conditions deteriorated (*Toelichting Stadsvormingsordonnantie* 1938:33).

In short, despite these measures, the municipal administration never managed to take full control of the kampongs. As the Law on Village Autonomy restricted municipal intervention in the kampongs, the municipality could still not intervene in all matters within its territories. As late as 1938, the Government Commissioner for Decentralization admitted that it remained

6 Van de Wetering (1939:7) criticized the Bandung municipality for not fulfilling its moral obligation to spend as much on kampung improvement as it received from the national government for that purpose.

7 See also the reference to the political consequences of the kampung conditions in the Explanatory Memorandum on Town Planning (*Toelichting Stadsvormingsordonnantie* 1938:32; Wertheim 1958:19).

hard to delineate the exact competences of the municipal authorities to intervene in the kampongs.⁸ Moreover, the municipal administration also experienced great difficulties in enforcing regulations that were legally applicable in the kampongs with village autonomy, such as the Building Code. The kampongs continued to develop at a more rapid pace than the municipal authorities could control with the said Building Code (*Bandoeng* 1929:41). On top of all other problems to gain control of the kampongs, during the Depression, enforcement of regulations was often limited by the financial constraints imposed on the municipal budget (Kampongverbeteringscommissie 1939:42).

By the end of the colonial period, experts acknowledged that the government had failed to improve the physical conditions in the kampongs. Kampong residents were still resisting compliance with government regulations (*Toelichting Stadsvormingsordonnantie* 1938:33). The unfortunate living conditions in the kampongs was one of the reasons to install a Town Planning Commission, to which the task was assigned to formulate central instructions for town planning. The objective of the Commission was to reach an integrated town planning approach. The Commission argued in the Explanatory Memorandum on Town Planning that kampongs would form

a complete unity with the rest of the municipality, however, just as other neighbourhoods, with their own identity, which requires that they be treated in a similar manner.

Toelichting Stadsvormingsordonnantie 1938:95, my translation

Neglected Settlements in an Occupied City

Between 1942–1949, Bandung was confronted with both an influx and an exodus of migrants. The influx of migrants could be mainly attributed to rural-urban migration. After the Japanese occupied Indonesia in 1942, the living conditions in the West Javanese countryside quickly deteriorated. Jobs on plantations disappeared, farmers were forced to deliver large quantities of rice, and rural people were recruited as forced labourers (*romusha*), and to these specific difficulties was added the general problem of a significant price inflation (Smail 1964:12). In three years the Indonesian population of Bandung

8 He made this statement in response to questions posed by a member of the Volksraad during a session on the abolition of the autonomy of a number of villages in the town of Malang (*Handelingen* 1937–1938:207–211).

almost doubled, from about 200,000 to 400,000 (Van Bruinessen 1989:3). The Japanese tried to force the Indonesian population back to the countryside, but this attempt was only partly successful (Wertheim 1956:185).

Detailed data are absent, but it is clear that a large proportion of the refugees settled in existing kampongs or created new settlements. The Japanese administration allowed and even encouraged people to squat on private land (Colombijn 2010:207). The 1940s was the first decade in which the population of Taman Sari grew considerably, although still not as rapidly as would be the case in later decades. New houses and a mosque were constructed.

A vast reversed flow of migration occurred during the Indonesian Revolution. As soon as Allied troops arrived in Bandung in 1946, the city was effectively divided into two parts, with the railway line again as boundary, the northern part being guarded by British troops and the southern part by the Indonesian Republican Army. In March 1946, following an ultimatum issued by the British who wanted to put an end to the division, the Republican Army evacuated the Indonesian population to the countryside south of Bandung and set fire to large parts of the city. This event is known as Bandung Lautan Api: Bandung a Sea of Fire. By the end of March, after four months of utter confusion, an estimated half a million people had moved out of the city. For a year and a half the southern part of Bandung remained a ghost city, with people only occasionally visiting the area. Only the northern part of Bandung remained populated, mostly by Europeans and Chinese (Smail 1964:148–152).

The migration history of Taman Sari was similar to that of the city as a whole during the Revolution. Most of the few Indonesian residents of Taman Sari also fled to the countryside, to nearby towns like Tasikmalaya and Sumedang. Their houses were occupied by the Dutch military. The Dutch, Indo-European, and Chinese population generally stayed put. Indonesian residents only returned in 1949–1950, after the Dutch had transferred sovereignty to the Indonesian Republic.

The subsequent changes of power of the 1940s had consequences for urban policy making. In the turbulent years of the Japanese occupation and the struggle for independence, state intervention in kampongs continued to be limited. The Japanese introduced the *tonarigumi* system in 1943. *Tonarigumi* were neighbourhood associations designed to control and, if deemed appropriate by the Japanese, mobilize the Indonesian population. These associations were the predecessor of the neighbourhood associations that still exist today in Indonesia under the name of Rumah Warga (RW) and Rumah Tetangga (RT). After the Dutch resumed the administration of the city, they made ending the unlawful occupation of government land by migrants top priority. In 1948, the returned colonial government promulgated an ordinance making any

such occupation a criminal offence.⁹ In the same year, the central government finally laid the foundations for future intervention in kampongs, by enacting the Town Planning Ordinance that had been drafted in 1938. By this ordinance, the municipalities were required to draw up the blueprint for a town plan, detail plans, and a municipal building code. The municipalities were given the right to determine plan elements down to the level of individual plots (Niessen 1999:223–226; Van Roosmalen, this volume).¹⁰

Informal Slums in an Independent City

The first years after transfer of sovereignty to the Indonesian Republic in 1949 were as tumultuous as the period of the Indonesian Revolution. It was a time of struggle, uncertainty, and quick transformations, particularly for the population of West Java, where an armed rebellion against the central government took place. In this period Bandung experienced the most significant population growth in its history fed by various incoming flows of migrants. At least until the national census of 1961, Bandung was growing fastest of all major Indonesian cities (Hugo 1981:81). During the first decade after the transfer of sovereignty, the population grew from about 200,000 to over 1,000,000 inhabitants.

The first group of migrants to arrive in the city after the Dutch had transferred sovereignty to the Indonesian Republic were the civil evacuees and soldiers who had left Bandung in 1946 (Hugo 1981:84). Informants offered testimonies of the difficulties they faced when returning to their homes in Taman Sari. Some learned that other Indonesians had occupied their houses and land. Others found their houses partially demolished by the residents who had remained in Taman Sari. The cacao trees in the orchards had been chopped down and the fishponds were empty.

Arguably the most visible consequence of the political and the economic decolonization in cities like Bandung was the exodus of the European population. It seems that the first affected Europeans still managed to sell their

9 Ondonnantie Onrechtmatige Occupatie van Gronden. The ordinance was probably in force throughout West Java.

10 Formally, the Town Planning Ordinance was not effective in Bandung, as the city was not included in the list of municipalities to which the ordinance was declared to apply (Aanwijzing van steden, welke voldoen aan het bepaalde in het eerste lid van artikel 51 van de Stadsvormingsordonnantie, Decision 3 of the Lieutenant Governor General of Indonesia of 3-10-1948, cited by Niessen 1999:225).

property, although at prices below the market value. The nationalization of Dutch enterprises in 1957–1958 forced the Dutch to leave the country. They had no option than to simply vacate their houses, which were occupied by government officials and the military. Often these houses were later sold to well-to-do Chinese.

The movement known as the Darul Islam Rebellion which raged in the countryside of West Java had a great impact on the development of Bandung. From 1949 to 1962, in what the local people call the '*zaman gerombolan*' (gangster period), many people fled from the countryside to the city. Caught between the two fires of the Darul Islam and the Republican Army, the principal concern of ordinary villagers was to escape the violence. The uprising was particularly violent in East Priangan, around Tasikmalaya and Garut. Each year hundreds of innocent people were killed and thousands of houses were burned down. As early as in 1951, more than 100,000 people were evacuated. An average of 250,000 people annually fled their homes between 1955 and 1962 (Van Dijk 1981:104–106). Since the towns and cities were relatively safe, most evacuees sought refuge there, not least in Bandung. The atrocities only ended in 1962, when the last prominent leaders of the Darul Islam movement were arrested.

In the same period Bandung also began to feel the effects of labour migration. The city became the seat of the provincial government and it resumed its role as a centre of education. The industrial sector focused on processing agricultural products and making textiles, and service industries were also developed. The international Asia-Africa Conference in 1955 created new job opportunities, including many jobs suited for low-skilled people. Not surprisingly, however, the new demands for labour lagged behind the growing number of people moving into Bandung (Hugo 1981:84–85).

By the late 1950s, net migration into Bandung became negligible and in the early 1960s it was even negative (Van Bruinessen 1989:4). The number of migrants moving to Bandung dropped considerably and many people moved back to their home villages after safety had been restored in the West Javanese countryside. However, many others stayed, even when initially they had planned returning to their village of origin after peace was restored, because the employment prospects in the countryside were poor.

Many of the migrants to Bandung, notably those who had sought refuge, settled in kampongs. The vast flow of evacuees was disorganized and many of them were unable to find a formal job and were therefore forced to seek their livelihood in the informal sector.¹¹ There was a growing shortage of

11 According to a survey conducted by the National Labour Agency, only 62.7 per cent of males of twelve years and older were formally employed (Hugo 1981:85).

housing. In 1959 there were twelve persons for every house in Bandung (Hugo 1981:85). Hence, the refugees had no other choice but to build their own houses, often without municipal permission. In 1964 an estimated minimum of 11,000 houses were '*rumah liar*', houses built without a legal permit (Hugo 1981:85).¹² This is a very cautious estimation. By that year hundreds of thousands of people had migrated to Bandung and the city had reached a population of over a million, a figure which gives an impression of the vast scale of the developments discussed.

Some of the migrants moved to one of the many existing kampongs, others created new kampongs by squatting on vacant land. The departure of the European population offered an opportunity; the vacant plots gave migrants the space to build their own houses. Consequently, the ethnic and socio-economic division between the northern and southern parts of Bandung steadily faded away. Other migrants occupied municipal land alongside railway lines and riversides, and did not even shun graveyards.

The Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI, Indonesian Communist Party), which was becoming increasingly influential as an opposition party, supported unlawful occupation of vacant land. This strategy tallied with the party's political objective of organizing a strong power base among lower-income groups.¹³ The closest I get to evidence of direct support of the PKI for illegal occupation of land is a general reference in a book by Siregar, stating: 'In the city, the illegal occupation of land continued and, to a limited extent, it was even encouraged by left-wing political factions' (Siregar 1990:113). Despite the paucity of written accounts, several informants confirmed that the practice did occur in Bandung, but after half a century of anti-communist state propaganda (since 1965), people are reluctant to talk about the role of the PKI, afraid they might be deemed accomplices. It is certain that the PKI forged alliances with specific workers' groups, for instance with the strategically important Serikat Buruh Kereta Api (SBKA, (state) Railway Workers' Union). This union was particularly strong in Bandung, where the company's main office was

12 Unfortunately Hugo gives no reference for this figure. Considering the cautiousness of this estimation, it would not be surprising if it were derived from documents of the municipal government.

13 In terms of political support, the strategy proved successful. By the end of the 1950s the party had built up a strong, organized base among urban workers and other non-peasant groups. In later years, the party tried to gain support from the peasant population, among other means by organizing a campaign for land reform in the countryside, as well as drafting and backing bills on this matter, and later by initiating the unilateral action (*aksi sepihak*) to occupy land in an unlawful manner (Mortimer 1972).

located.¹⁴ The actions of the Railway Workers' Union included the occupation of railway company land, and once the unionists began to occupy their employer's land, other workers followed.

The process of land occupation was incremental, which is typical of countries in Asia and Africa and unlike the large-scale invasions of vacant land common in South America. First a small number of squatters occupied the land to test whether the owner or caretaker of the land, which could be either a government agency or a private party, intervened. If they were left alone, other people would follow their example. Often they needed approval from an (informal) community leader before they could do so. This form of social screening meant that the growth of these settlements was incremental, a prerequisite for the survival of the community (Wibowo 1983:4–5). Too many people moving in at the same time would probably have led to disputes about the scarce means of livelihood.

Taman Sari was one of the kampongs that were a target of squatters in the first years after independence. The area also proved an attractive destination for refugees fleeing from the violence of the Darul Islam rebellion. According to various informants, many of the current residents settled in this period, coming from places in West Java like Cipendeuy, Malangbong, Garut, Tasikmalaya, and Sumbang. Initially they would organize as separate communities. Liang Maung, for instance, consisted of three separate areas, Kidul, Sisi Gawir, and Mesjid, each populated by refugees from three different places of origin. Many of these refugees stayed, even after the countryside had become safe again. With the inflow of new migrants in later years, the three communities became mixed and unified.

Taman Sari attracted many migrants because there was plenty of land available there. Here too the Dutch residents were leaving. Their houses were usually occupied by the military in the late 1950s. A single Indo-European family stayed. Few of the original landowners – regardless of ethnicity – had actual control over their land, and newcomers encountered few obstacles when illegally occupying it. Many newcomers would first rent a house or room and then occupy land, subdivide it, and build their own house. It seems that some bought the land from the Dutch and some had it given to them, for instance because they had been employees of the former owners. Most former orchards and rice-fields that had been left uncultivated for some time, and also plots

14 The SBKA was not the only railway union, though. The other union was the *Persatuan Buruh Kereta Api* (PBKA, Railway Workers Association), which was backed by the *Partai Sosialis Indonesia* (Indonesian Socialist Party) and General Nasution's *Ikatan Pendukung Kemerdekaan Indonesia* (IPKI, Alliance of Supporters for Freedom of Indonesia).

owned by absentee landowners, were simply occupied without permission from the owner. It did not matter in such cases whether the owner was European or Indonesian. If someone later claimed a right to the land, the occupants sometimes agreed to formally buy or rent it. As it so happened, these claimants were not always the rightful owners and could be swindlers. One informant recalls that a European owner guarded his land strictly and threatened potential squatters at gunpoint when they showed signs of wanting to occupy the land. Other private owners had more consideration for the exhausted refugees.

Newcomers also occupied public land. Some people took land alongside the Cikapundung River. The municipality, which was responsible for the riverbanks, was not as strict as some private landowners and consequently some migrants preferred this land. In later years, when population density in the city further increased, newcomers reclaimed land by narrowing the course of the Cikapundung River. The European graveyard, which had been cleared in the 1950s and was used as orchard land and playing field, was not a target of squatters. It is likely that potential squatters had not dared to settle on this land, where spirits of the deceased were believed to roam around (Van Bruinessen 1988:40).

I have not heard stories of the involvement of the PKI in the occupation of land in Taman Sari. Communist involvement is indeed an unlikely scenario, since a small number of newcomers managed to take control over large plots of land and they had absolutely no interest in a free distribution of land in small parcels.

Apparently, the people occupying the land had good connections with the municipal government and the army. The occupants enclosed these plots, subdivided them, and let or sold them to later newcomers. One such entrepreneur who played a central role in the allocation of former European land to newcomers was the kampong head of Liang Maung. His real name was Pak Karta, but one of the informants remembers that he was usually called Pak Apung, a contraction of *kepala kampung* (kampong head). Pak Apung remained in charge of the area until around 1960.

Taman Sari did not only attract migrants because of the available land, but also because it was located quite strategically in relation to employment opportunities. Most migrants found work in the informal sector; becoming a petty trader was particularly popular. Migrants from each region developed their own specialization in trade. Their modest incomes and dependence on customers forced them to settle near markets.

With the first influx of migrants, Taman Sari finally began to develop from a rural into an urban residential area. Rice-fields and orchards steadily gave way

to housing. The first buildings were constructed of temporary or semi-permanent building material. Vacant plots were scattered around these first dwellings and later filled in. A new layout of the area took shape: a labyrinth of small alleys giving access to more or less permanent constructions.

Despite the enactment of the Town Planning Ordinance in 1948 and legislation against unlawful occupation, which remained in force after the transfer of sovereignty in 1949, the government failed to exercise effective control over the kampongs. In the first years after Independence, the government was too occupied with other more pressing matters and besides it did not have the wherewithal to intervene. Although there was a social housing programme, kampung improvement activities continued only on a very limited scale (Colombijn 2010:203–206).

The government could not curb rural-urban migration, which, as discussed earlier, was the major cause of the expansion of kampongs and concomitant deterioration in the living conditions. Land reforms in agricultural areas to keep peasants on the countryside also enjoyed little success. On 1 March 1954, the municipal government declared Bandung a 'closed city'. Each newcomer had to obtain a VB (Vestigingsbewijs, residential permit).¹⁵ The regulation remained in force until 1964, although it was a vain measure. Its only effect was that migrants were deflected from registering as permanent residents (Hugo 1981:85).

The formal autonomy of the kampongs, which hampered the municipal government exercising effective control, gradually became untenable. In the 1950s there were increasingly strong calls to abolish kampung autonomy. The object of these calls to abolish kampung autonomy was the 1906 Indigenous Village Ordinance, together with the 1907 Regulation on the Election of Village Heads.¹⁶ The latter ordinance stipulated that only the original residents of the villages were allowed to cast their vote during an election of a village head. Since the villages which were included in the cities had attracted many migrants who did not have active voting rights, this stipulation was considered unfair. The ordinances were only rescinded in the 1960s and village autonomy finally came to an end in 1964.¹⁷

15 The municipal government also had a political rationale for introducing this policy. It could check that no Darul Islam members were among the newcomers (personal communication with retired senior official, 20 July 2006).

16 Inlandse Gemeenteordonnantie and Reglement op de Verkiezing, de Schorsing en het Ontslag van Hoofden van Inlandsche Gemeenten op Java en Madoera.

17 Personal communication retired senior official, 20 July 2006; see also Otto (1991:214).

The abolition of village autonomy was an important symbolic step, but because this measure had not been bolstered by a consistent set of policies affecting kampongs, in practice its consequences were negligible if not completely ineffectual. The enactment of two pieces of agrarian legislation exerted potentially more affect on the legal position of kampung dwellers. The best known piece was the Law 5/1960, Undang-Undang Pokok Agraria (UUPA, Basic Agrarian Law), which was passed in 1960 with the purpose to unify land law. Land rights based on *adat* (customary) law, which were still widely applied in the kampongs, would now have to be integrated into a unified system of land titles. Integration of kampung land held under *adat* law into the unified system required the surveying and certification of all plots of land by the administration. For various reasons, however, few kampung dwellers troubled themselves with the registration of their plots.

The other piece of agrarian legislation relevant to the kampongs was a government law enacted in 1961. It stated that every person residing on either privately or state-owned land without permission of the owner would be considered an unlawful occupant, who could be evicted at the discretion of the Regional Head.¹⁸ Unlike the 1948 ordinance on the illegal occupation of land, the 1961 law covered a prohibition on the occupancy of state as well as private land. Before the 1961 law, private legal owners could base a legal attempt to evict squatters on civil law, but this new law made eviction easier, because the authorities carrying out an eviction order could be called in by land owners without having obtained a court order first. The 1961 law could better prevent unlawful occupation of private land, because to do so was henceforth a criminal offence. The Elucidation to the 1961 law stated that the government was sympathetic to unlawful occupation, given the shortage of land for people, and yet, in the interests of the orderly development of the state, the use of land had to be regulated in an organized manner.

The passing of the two pieces of agrarian legislation of 1960 and 1961 actually affected the legal position of kampung dwellers more than the abolition of the village autonomy had done. From that moment many kampongs were classified as informal settlements, whose inhabitants had at best weak claims to the land if not no legal claim at all.

Nevertheless, these legal initiatives formed no reason for residents to fear the intervention of the municipal government. Only one of my informants

18 Law no. 51/1960, Undang-Undang Larangan Pemakaian Tanah Tanpa Izin yang Berhak atau Kuasanya (Law on the Prohibition to Use Land without Permission from the Rightful Owner or the State). The Military Commander had enacted similar regulations as early as 1957.

could give an account of an eviction case in Taman Sari on the basis of unlawful occupation or the lack of a building permit in that period, so apparently this eviction order seems to have been a rare, ad hoc affair. Throughout Bandung, the political power of the PKI influenced the relatively strong position of illegal occupants. By the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s, two out of six aldermen in Bandung were member of the PKI. If legal owners went to court to have squatters evicted, they usually lost the case. The PKI received support from at least one member of the District Court (Pengadilan Negeri). Efforts by officials to evict people generally led to protests.¹⁹ By their actions the officials were giving their own interpretation of President Sukarno's '*hukum revolusi*' (revolutionary law).

The common practice was not eviction therefore, but a process in which newcomers to Taman Sari actually received permission to settle in the area, not only from the informal kampong leader, but even from local state officials. Obviously, the granting of this permission did not mean that the settlement of the newcomers in Taman Sari complied with state regulations. As an official of the *kelurahan* explained, the sheer number of migrants into Bandung forced the municipal government to allow them to settle in the area, even though the land did not belong to the settlers and even though the bulk of it was not destined for residential purposes in the town plan.

Conclusion

Kampongs in Bandung have by and large developed without too much state intervention. Urban kampongs came into being toward the end of the nineteenth century as Bandung began to grow significantly, engulfing many rural villages. Due to legal dualism between town and village administration, the kampongs retained a high degree of autonomy, even when they were fully located within the municipal boundaries. The arrival of more Europeans in Bandung led to the allocation of kampong land to the development of middle class housing meant for Europeans, and, as a consequence, the densification of settlement on the remaining kampong land. The primitive sanitation in the dense kampongs constituted a risk to public health.

This sort of development worried the government of Bandung, which from 1919 took measures to try controlling the growing density and increasing dilapidation of kampongs. In that year the administration initiated a social housing programme. In 1927 it began a kampong improvement programme. However,

19 Personal communication retired senior official of the Bandung municipality, 20 July 2006.

as its hands were tied by the law on village autonomy, the municipal government had little room for intervening in the kampongs. The measures it did implement bore little effect. By the end of the colonial period, it was widely acknowledged that the colonial government had failed to control the growing density and appalling living conditions of the kampongs.

The Japanese occupation and to an even greater degree the struggle for independence led to the destruction of houses and infrastructure, especially in South Bandung. Indonesians fled the city and for years the southern part remained a ghost town. Neither the Japanese nor the returned colonial government nor the Republican government paid much attention to the development of kampongs in that period.

The loose administrative control of kampongs from the Japanese invasion into the first decade of Independence coincided with a vast migration flow of people from the West Javanese countryside who were fleeing rural living conditions during the Second World War and later ran before the Darul Islam rebellion. The PKI supported the formation of new kampongs on squatted land alongside riversides and railway lines, and on graveyards. The kampongs became informal slums.

The municipal government again proved incapable of preventing or curbing developments it did not wish to take place. It lacked funds for kampung improvement programmes or a social housing programme. When it announced a 'closed-city' policy in 1954, the measure was utterly ineffectual. In 1960, only after these social and demographic developments were done and dusted did the national government try to put an end to legal dualism and integrate the kampongs into the municipal administrative apparatus. In practice, however, the measures had no effect largely because of the prevailing political conditions. The municipal government simply lost its grip on the kampongs.

Comparing colonial and postcolonial attempts of the municipal governments to administer the kampongs, we can conclude that both administrations had very little control. But the reasons for this lack of control during these periods differ significantly. In colonial times the municipal administration was reined in by the principle of kampung autonomy. After Independence, the municipal administration was overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of migrants settling in kampongs, often with support from the PKI.

After 1960 the conditions in the kampongs would further deteriorate. The kampongs absorbed vast numbers of labour migrants. From the 1970s, the government initiated new measures to exercise control over kampongs, such as the Kampung Improvement Project (KIP) and various land titling programmes. Certainly, as a result, infrastructure has improved, as did people's access to public services. Nevertheless, most contemporary kampongs are settlements

with precarious substandard buildings, a lack of adequate infrastructure, poor access to public services, and informal arrangements for land tenure and land use. Even the Indonesian government implicitly admits that it has failed to control kampong development in Bandung, classifying these settlements as 'informal slums' (Departemen Pekerjaan Umum, 1999:32–44).

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