

The Long-run Effects of Private Rule in the Colonial Era: Evidence from Java*

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Abstract Despite a growing literature on the effect of historical institutions on long-run economic development, the role of *private* rule during that era remains largely unexplored. This paper exploits spatial variation in the extent to which certain areas (plantation estates) in Java were controlled by private, foreign enterprises during the Dutch colonial period, to investigate long run effects on economic outcomes and institutions. Preliminary results suggest that development indicators are worse in places that belonged to private estates. Further, we find that the legacies of the private rulers - in particular, the institutional features historically imposed by them - persist to this day.

JEL Classification: I30, N35, O10, O43

Keywords: Colonial institutions, private rule, long run development

*We are grateful to the History Project (INET/Harvard), CAGE (Warwick), Cornell University, and William & Mary for funding this research. Caroline Davis, Shishir Garg, and Carey Glenn provided excellent research assistance.