

Tribal Consolidation of Formosan Austronesians under Dutch East India Company

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ABSTRACT

The paper explores the issue of tribal consolidation of Formosan Austronesians under the Dutch East India Company or VOC, with emphasis on the idea behind the consolidation policy, its implementation and its effects. Taking Tavocol and Dovoha as two cases, the paper discusses how the Dutch supervised the post-consolidation tribal power structure and size of settlement in the context of territorial control of the burgeoning colony. Evangelization and secular governance were the two main factors contributing to tribal consolidation in the lowland areas; hence, the Dutch were more concerned about the manageable settlement size and the appointed headmen of consolidated villages. In praxis, the Dutch either followed the inter-village social networks or consulted the opinions of tribal principals on the consolidation project, but its outcomes greatly varied. Moreover, the policy could not be carried out consistently and some tribes even allegedly joined the camp against the VOC towards the end of Dutch colonization.

Keywords: Dutch East India Company or VOC, Tribal Consolidation, Formosan Austronesians