

Title

Building Burma: Constructing Rangoon's Urban Influence on Citizenship and Nationhood

Abstract

While Burma has often been discussed at the margins of South and Southeast Asian historiography, contemporary scholarship has begun to construct Burma as central to wider regional and inter-Asian histories. This essay considers how notions of nationhood and citizenship relating to Rangoon's urban environment can begin to be understood in light of recent historical work on other Asian port cities. Looking at published work on Asian cities like Bombay, Hong Kong and Singapore, this article constructs a contextual framework from which Rangoon's role in building a Burmese identity can be analysed. Nikhil Rao's *House, But No Garden* on Bombay offers a productive means through which a middle-class and commercial Burmese identity could be constructed in Rangoon's pre-war 'suburbs', while Alan Smart's *The Shek Kip Mei Myth* on Hong Kong and Loh Kah Seng's *Squatters into Citizens* on Singapore provide a way of understanding the role that disaster and crisis play on forming identities of belonging and citizenship among the poorest sections of Rangoon's war torn post-war society. These cities, along with others across the Indian Ocean world – each with a long, continuous and often separate tradition of historical inquiry – can then help begin to build an understanding of citizenship and nationhood in Burma as it relates to the construction of Rangoon's urban environment.

Oceanic Identities and Urban Citizenship

Over the last decade, historians have increasingly turned towards oceans as a productive means to reconceptualise geographic regions and understand unconsidered connections.¹ Be it networks of migration, literary cultures or pilgrimage across the Bay of the Bengal and the Indian Ocean, or Zomia's contrasting lack of access to ports, ocean worlds are recasting previous research based on a separation of South and Southeast Asia.² While the rigidifying geography of nation-states has often influenced the production of scholarship around this demarcation of Asia, Burma (now Myanmar) has long presented a 'problem' in straddling this divide.³ As both historically a part of British India and Southeast Asia, Burma is increasingly seen in contemporary scholarship as integral to wider regional histories of Asia, particularly relating to histories of inter-Asian connections.⁴

Along the lines of this recent scholarship, this article constructs a way through which the influence of urban practices in Rangoon (now Yangon), both on conceptualising Burmese citizenship and nationhood in Burma, can begin to be understood. Given the relative scarcity of previous research on urban citizenship in Rangoon, this article will bring together recent literature on urban citizenship and nationhood in other Asian port cities as a means to analyse the case of Burma.⁵ Through these other port cities, this analysis hopes to eschew categorizing Rangoon as only an 'Indian city' reclaimed as a 'Burmese' city after the war and instead suggest an urban identity for the city based upon its rich and complex historical connections to port cities across South and Southeast Asia.⁶

The development of urban housing in other Asian port cities – like Bombay, Hong Kong and Singapore – provides the lens through which this article constructs notions of urban citizenship and through which this article analyses the influences of the urban environment

and urban practices on conceptions of nationhood. While published work on Rangoon has largely left these topics unaddressed, two recent works, by Nikhil Rao on Bombay and Loh Kah Seng on Singapore, have suggested linkages between housing environments, identity formation and notions of urban citizenship.⁷ Their work builds on an earlier set of literature on Bombay studying the implications of modernity on an urbanised public sphere, which analysed modernity's consequences for the city, its citizens, and citizenship.⁸ Examining the case of Hong Kong, Alan Smart argues that 'public housing came to be both a key and strategy for building a sense of citizenship and commitment by Hong Kong residents'.⁹ Seen in the context of the region's historical connections, the last decade of research on these three cities suggests a shared evolution of urbanism and citizenship – a history equally worth understanding in the case of Rangoon.

Burma, Citizenship, Nationalism and the City

Before considering recent scholarship on urban practice, citizenship and nationalism in Asian port cities, this section will examine the ways in which literature on Burma has contextualised debates about citizenship, nationalism and the city. While Andrew Selth points out in a recent survey of modern Burma studies that 'Burma has never been a popular subject for research and analysis among scholars outside the country', research on nationalism and citizenship, often discussed through the lens of Burma's civil war, has attracted sustained scholarly interest.¹⁰ Though this research tended to focus on politics and the political situation during the country's period of democratic governance, the military's 1962 coup d'état reshaped research on Burmese nationalism.¹¹ No longer able to study nationalism and citizenship in contemporary Burma through the practice of politics, subsequent scholars have tended to focus on the construction of a Burmese nationalism during and immediately after the colonial period as well as the emergence of ethnic nationalisms after the Second World War.

In discussing the origins and spread of nationalism in Southeast Asia, Benedict Anderson emphasises the role of colonial knowledge making in constructing a notion of Burma.¹² Writing that the 'map and census thus shaped the grammar which would in due course make possible "Burma" and "Burmese"', Anderson traces Burmese nationalism back to what Nicholas Dirks has described in the case of India as the emergence of the colonial 'ethnographic state'.¹³ Focusing on public demonstrations, Michael Charney similarly locates the emergence of a Burmese nationalism during the colonial-era.¹⁴ Charney points to anti-imperial protests calling for home rule by Buddhist monks as some of the first of a series of demonstrations out of which 'nationalism slowly emerged over the first few decades of the twentieth century.'¹⁵ Arguing that student boycotts over English-medium teaching during the 1920s sparked political interest in self-rule, Charney emphasizes the importance of this interest in home-rule as driving politics and nationalism in late colonial Burma.¹⁶ Penny Edwards examines the place of Schwedagon pagoda in the histories of Burma, situating the pagoda at the heart of the Burmese national soul. In conceptualizing Schwedagon as a 'grounds for protest', Edwards traces shifting notions of Burmese nationalism through the pagoda during colonial times and through the post-colonial years.¹⁷

Recent scholarship on ethnic nationalism in Burma has moved beyond locating these nationalisms in only the post-war context of long running military conflict.¹⁸ Thant Myint-U, in pointing out that 'the most striking aspect of the Burma debate today is its absence of nuance and its singularly ahistorical nature', has argued that a modern Myanma identity emerged after the collapse of the Burmese court at Ava to the British in the nineteenth

century.¹⁹ Mikael Gravers similarly locates the emergence a Karen identity in the colonial period. In studying the emergence of Karen ethno-nationalism in Burma, he argues that the ‘violence is a continuation of a disorder since colonial intervention in the 19th century’.²⁰ Ashley South argues that ‘the Mon have not merely sought to protect their right and establish a Mon nation; they have been fighting to re-establish Monland and preserve a culture’.²¹ In placing the origins of Mon nationalism in Burma’s pre-war history, South similarly emphasises that the histories of ethnic nationalism extend beyond Burma’s post-war conflicts. South illustrates this point further, this time in the context of examining of Burma’s Karen community, discussing ‘dissenting or alternative voices’ and their importance in understanding a Karen identity outside of the ethno-nationalist insurgency.²²

Focusing on the formation of a Burmese identity amongst the country’s South Asian community, Amrith discusses migration and contestations of citizenship as ways through which a Burmese identity was reshaped and reformed during the 1940s.²³ In pointing out a constitutional distinction between citizenship ‘by decent’ and ‘by registration’, Amrith notes the high bar facing applicants for citizenship ‘by registration’, including the ways in which ‘personal rivalries’ and ‘feuds between neighbors’ could block citizenship applications.²⁴ Emphasising the subsequent application of The Land Nationalization Act of 1948, which removed rights for non-citizens to own land in Burma, Amrith argues that post-war debates over citizenship ended longstanding patterns of migration which had come to define lands around the Bay of Bengal.²⁵ Renaud Egreteau, in an examination of Indian repatriates from Burma, also locates a redefinition of Burmese identity as a result of changing post-war migration patterns. Through interviews Egreteau identifies Burma as a lost space and idea amongst Indian communities repatriated from Burma.²⁶ Amrith and Ergeteau then see the construction of a new and narrower Burmese identity and nationalism out of the collapse of existing circulations of people around South and Southeast Asia.

Jayde Lin Roberts, in analysing the place making practices of Sino-Burmese communities in Rangoon, also sees a narrower Burmese identity emerge after the Second World War.²⁷ In examining the meanings of the Burmese term *Tayout*, or people ‘perceived as somehow Chinese’, Roberts argues that Rangoon’s urban space provided a means through which those of Chinese ancestry could ‘become a part of the city’ as ‘the city has become a part of them’.²⁸ While pointing out the ‘questionable legal status’ of descendants of Chinese immigrants, Roberts’ analysis demonstrates the integral nature of urban environments on Sino-Burmese conceptions of place making, citizenship and self.²⁹ The urban environment of the colonial port city also features as central to a recent study of Chinese communities in nineteenth century Burma. Contrary to J.S. Furnivall’s argument that the ‘marketplace’ was the primary site for interaction between the ‘segments’ of Burma’s ‘plural society’, Yi Li argues that the city provided a space for interaction outside of the marketplace.³⁰ Focusing on Moulmein, Burma’s second largest port city and the centre of British Burma from 1826 to 1862, she notes that the Cantonese and Hokkein communities ‘did not confine themselves to a Chinese enclave’.³¹ Roberts and Li then see the city as integral to the notions of Chinese citizenship in Burma from the nineteenth century onwards.

In addition to characterizing the urban environment as central to the construction of ethnic citizenships in Burma, recent scholarship has also begun to place Rangoon at the centre of colonial-era contestations over modernity and gendered citizenship. Writing about the emergence of the “modern women” in early twentieth-century Burma, Chie Ikeya argues that Burmese society was ‘shaped by its openness’ and offered an alternative modernity to ‘the either-or choice between Westernization and ethnonationalism’.³² In emphasizing the

role of cosmopolitanism in shaping new ideas and practices, Ikeya acknowledges the centrality of Rangoon and the urban environment in ‘refiguring’ women. Su Lin Lewis similarly sees the city as indispensable to the ‘rise of the modern girl’ in a recent study connecting Rangoon, Bangkok and Penang.³³

Lewis, in addition to seeing the city as important to colonial-era gender contestations, also argues that port cities across Asia littoral were culturally entwined.³⁴ Like Lewis, Sarah Maxim utilizes a connective framework for a comparative study of the colonial project in Kuala Lumpur and Rangoon. Arguing that few studies take seriously a ‘distinctly similar trajectory’ of the development of these cities as well as see these histories as ‘representational of any general experience of British colonial rule’, Maxim suggests city planning as a means through which to pursue a cultural history of British colonialism.³⁵ Tilman Frasch’s study of electric tramways in Rangoon and Singapore provides another point from which to view this convergent urbanism of Southeast Asian port cities. Pointing out the ‘transport revolution’ and its effects on the ‘everyday life of colonial cities’, Frasch’s discussions of electricity and transportation touch upon themes now familiar in the historiography of Rangoon – themes of modernity, development and quotidian cultural experience.³⁶

While citizenship, nationalism and the particularities of the city have recently attracted the attention of Burma studies scholars, an interest in and understanding of how housing has affected citizenship and identity has been largely passed over in these discussions. One exception to this is the work of Noriyuki Osada. Focusing on the implications of urban planning in Rangoon, Osada argues that the work of the Rangoon Development Trust, a colonial-era institution aimed at improving living conditions in Rangoon, helped inflame racial tensions between Indians and non-Indians in the lead up to riots that characterize 1930s Burma.³⁷ Illustrating the ways in which the trust’s work at improving conditions for Rangoon’s poor disproportionately benefited Indians over Burmese residents, Osada subsequently demonstrates the ways in which Burmese residents pushed out by development became increasingly uncomfortable with the Indian population of the city.³⁸ Osada’s analysis that housing and the urban environment were important to the emergence of a Burmese identity begins discussions on a way in which urban life in Rangoon affected the development of Burmese citizenship and nationalism. While his argument is not placed within a broader regional context, the next section of this article will demonstrate the ways in which housing and the urban environment have shaped the development of citizenship and nationalism in urban ports across the wider Indian Ocean world both before and after the Second World War.

Nation Building Through Urban Practices

While there is evidence that the quotidian practices of Rangoon’s urbanites were important for those seeking to build a post-war Burma, particularly during the Burmese military’s brief ascension to power from 1958-1960, little scholarship has focused on how urban life in Rangoon shaped notions of identity and nationhood before or after the Second World War.³⁹ In the absence of this academic literature, this section analyses the ways in which urban practices, particularly related to urban housing provisions, in other Asian port cities have shaped notions of belonging, citizenship and nationhood. By analysing Rangoon’s case in line with recent research on these cities and their built environments, the section constructs a historiographic means through which Rangoon’s role in building a Burmese identity can be better understood.

Three books, Nikhil Rao's *House but No Garden* on Bombay, Alan Smart's *The Shek Kip Mei Myth* on Hong Kong and Loh Kah Seng's *Squatters into Citizens* on Singapore have all recently stressed the importance of housing and the built environment on identity formation and nationhood. While Rao focuses on the development of 'suburban' housing for Bombay's lower-middle and middle classes, Smart and Loh focus on the inhabitants of informal settlements in trying to understand the role of housing in nation building.⁴⁰ Though their analysis spans a wealth gap differentiating formal from informal quotidian practices, all three examine identity formation and the construction of community in the city. Rao demonstrates the emergence of a 'South Indian' identity with the construction of suburban Bombay in the early twentieth century; Smart deconstructs the 'myth' through which Hong Kong's public housing emerged as did the identity of post-war Hong Kong; and Loh argues that a Singaporean identity stemmed from contested urbanisation processes along the fringes of the city.⁴¹ In each case, Rao, Smart and Loh demonstrate the central role that housing and the built environment play in forging an urban identity.

All three authors also emphasize the political implications of their respective urban identities. Rao argues that a 'South Indian' identity was simultaneously constructed in Bombay's Matunga neighbourhood along with demands made to the municipality for a 'middle class' urban space complete with better roads and transportation.⁴² For Rao, the process of advocating not only contributed to a distinct suburban space in Matunga, but also a sense of political identity within the broader politics of the Bombay municipality and its affiliated institutions.⁴³ In Bombay's case then, the creation of a Matunga gave rise to a new identity as well as a new set of local practices relating to class politics. These new practices of 'middle class' life and politics, forged in the urban environment of Bombay and Matunga, went on to become important to the emergence of an urban identity in India.

In the case of Hong Kong and Singapore, Smart and Loh examine the emergence of a new political identity out of the destruction of fire – incidents including the Tung Tau, Shek Kip Mei, Tsuen Wan, Tai Hang Tun and Lei Cheng Uk fires in Hong Kong and the Kampong Bugis and Bukit Ho Swee fires in Singapore.⁴⁴ Similar to Rao's work on Bombay, Smart and Loh focus on the process of community building and identity formation as a result of a changing built environments.

Smart emphasizes a shift towards public housing during the post-war period as a result of 'the risk of destabilization of the diplomatic situation' in Hong Kong.⁴⁵ In placing the change in Hong Kong's urban environment in the context of 'the geopolitics of the early Cold War', Smart links local politics to political developments on the global stage.⁴⁶ His analysis suggests that new kinds of housing were developed to quell 'violent responses from displaced squatters' – responses which illustrate the emergence of a squatter identity and political community in the colony.⁴⁷ In pushing colonial authorities to redevelop the built environment of the city, Hong Kong's post-war squatters helped redefine the expectations of quotidian living in Hong Kong. Demonstrating for a more prominent government role in the housing market, Hong Kong's poor reconstructed the city's identity around a new set of post-war urban practices.

Loh views the construction of a Singaporean identity through the lens of fire victims' integration with Singapore's nascent post-war state.⁴⁸ Like Smart, he analyses the 'uneasy relationship between the state and kampong dwellers'.⁴⁹ Examining the expectations placed on the state by its poorest residents as well as the pressures on those accepting public housing to conform to a constructed Singaporean identity, Loh traces how 'planned

housing...mobilised squatters into model citizens'.⁵⁰ In doing so, Loh's work complements that of Rao and Smart in illustrating the ways in which urban practices, particularly related to housing, shaped urban identities as well as feelings of citizenship and nation.

Rao, Smart and Loh build upon a well established literature focusing on the city as a site of identity formation and power contestation.⁵¹ Working to understand the urban condition of South Asia, Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, examined the formation of an Indian identity through urban practices in Bombay during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁵² Arguing that political conflicts in Bombay were a way through which 'the form and meaning of social relations' was constituted, Chandavarkar points to urban strikes, riots and protests as sites where social relations were formed and expressed.⁵³ Chandavarkar's portrayal of the city as a centre of identity formation and national building has been sustained by others, notably Prashant Kidambi who has argued that 'nationalist political practice certainly strove to reorder and reclaim' the Indian city.⁵⁴ Noting Partha Chatterjee's work in which he states that 'colonial cities of British India were largely creations of British colonial rulers to which Indians had adapted', Kidambi's argument examines the importance of these 'adaptations' and comes to the conclusion that the city 'nonetheless occupied a central place in nationalist political practice'.⁵⁵ For Kidambi then, urban practice plays a key role in facilitating identity formation and the development of a nation. Discussing the case of Hong Kong, Iam-Chong Ip describes 'the grand project of resettlement housing' after the Second World War as a representation of a 'social citizenship'.⁵⁶ By pointing to the importance of quotidian urban practices, particularly those relating to housing, on identity formation, Ip's analysis reinforces the recent work of Rao, Smart and Loh.

Considered together, the cases of Asian port cities like Bombay, Hong Kong and Singapore demonstrate the inextricable link between the formation of local and national identities and urban practice. While urban housing shaped middle-class political identities in Matunga and Bombay, it was also a means through which a re-emerging post-war state could reform squatters and squatter settlements in the cases of Hong Kong and Singapore. In constructing housing then, municipal and planning authorities not only built neighbourhoods, but also helped to shape the identities of community, class and belonging around which a national identity is constructed. In this way, the historical literature on other Asian port cities can help inform historians on the ways in which Rangoon's housing provisions and built environment likely influenced the formation of and subsequent reconceptualisations of a Burmese identity.

Reconnecting Rangoon

In discussing globalisation over a decade ago, Frederick Cooper criticised those uninterested 'in the limits of interconnection' and suggested that those limits reveal 'the lumpiness of cross-border connections'.⁵⁷ Though this article has utilized a paradigm of Asian port cities and of an Indian Ocean world to demonstrate the ways in which identity, citizenship and nation are constructed in an urban context similarly across borders, it also critiques these paradigms by pointing to a 'lumpiness' in the way that scholarly attention has so far understood port cities and oceanic connections. Despite the fact that Rangoon was one of the largest ports along the Bay of Bengal and the wider Indian Ocean, even recent research often precludes the study of the city and of Burma for the study of places that are wealthier and better connected in the present.

Given that Rangoon is rapidly transforming into a twenty-first century metropolis after opening up again to the wider world over the last decade, it is particularly important to address the 'lumpiness' in understanding while it can, to a certain extent, still be resolved.⁵⁸ While recent research on Burma has begun to address this inequity and connect Burma back into the wider Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean worlds in which it was deeply enmeshed, this article has constructed a way through which urban influences on citizenship and nationhood can be understood in a Burmese context.⁵⁹ Though the construction of identity and citizenship through urban housing and neighbourhood have been central to constructing citizens and nations in the context of other Asian port cities, it is ultimately up to a new generation of historians of Burma and Rangoon to identify precisely the ways and the extent to which these processes built a Burmese nation-state.

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¹ Bose, *A Hundred Horizons*; Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*; Echenberg, *Plague Ports*; Armitage and Bashford, "Introduction".

² Amrith, *Crossing the Bay of Bengal*; Lewis, "Print and Colonial Port Cultures of the Indian Ocean Littoral: Penang and Rangoon"; Green, *Bombay Islam*; Slight, *The British Empire and the Hajj, 1865-1956*; van Schendel, "Geographies of Knowing, Geographies of Ignorance: Jumping Scale in Southeast Asia"; Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*.

³ Saha, "Is It India? Colonial Burma as a 'Problem' in South Asian History".

⁴ Green, "Buddhism, Islam and the Religious Economy of Colonial Burma,"; Saha, "Madness and the Making of a Colonial Order in Burma"; Amrith and Harper, "Introduction".

⁵ For more about urban citizenship in Rangoon see Osada, "Housing the Rangoon Poor: Indians, Burmese, and Town Planning in Colonial Burma,". For more about Asian port cities see Tan, "Port Cities and Hinterlands: A Comparative Study of Singapore and Calcutta"; Frost, "Asia's Maritime Networks and the Colonial Public Sphere, 1840-1920"; Harper, "Globalism and the Pursuit of Authenticity: The Making of a Diasporic Public Sphere in Singapore". While the author is aware that there is a large body of recent work on citizenship, particularly in Asia, this article means to focus on citizenship in the context of social histories. For further reading on citizenship in Asia see Chatterji, "South Asian Histories of Citizenship, 1946-70"; Ku and Pan, *Remaking Citizenship in Hong Kong*; Jayal, *Citizenship and Its Discontent*; Roy, *Gendered Citizenship*, 1-43.

⁶ For a discussion on conceptions of Rangoon as an 'Indian city' see Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Wars*, 373-4; Huff and Huff, "Urban Growth and Change in 1940s Southeast Asia", 524-5; Bayly, "Occasional Paper No. 3, Rangoon (Yangon) 1939-49: The Death of a Colonial Metropolis".

⁷ Rao, *House, but No Garden*; Loh, *Squatters into Citizens*.

⁸ Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis*; Hazareesingh, *The Colonial City and the Challenge of Modernity*.

⁹ Smart, *The Shek Kip Mei Myth*, 2.

¹⁰ Selth, "Modern Burma Studies: A Survey of the Field", 402.

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- ¹¹ For an example of research on politics in Burma conducted before the 1962 coup, see Pye, *Politics, Personality, and Nation Building*.
- ¹² Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 185.
- ¹³ Dirks, *Castes of Mind*.
- ¹⁴ Charney, *A History of Modern Burma*, 32-8.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 34-8.
- ¹⁷ Edwards, "Grounds for Protest: Placing Shwedagon Pagoda in Colonial and Postcolonial History".
- ¹⁸ For a description of Burma's long running military conflicts, often described a civil war, see Thant Myint-U, *The River of Lost Footsteps*, 323-32.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 41; Thant Myint-U, *The Making of Modern Burma*, 254. The Myanma people, also known as Bamar people, are the largest and dominant ethnic group in Burma. The name Myanmar is derived from Myanma whereas Burma comes from Bamar.
- ²⁰ Gravers, "Disorder as Order: The Ethno-Nationalist Struggle of the Karen in Burma/Myanmar—a Discussion of the Dynamics of an Ethnicized Civil War and Its Historical Roots".
- ²¹ South, *Mon Nationalism and Civil War in Burma*, 6.
- ²² South, "Karen Nationalist Communities: The "Problem" of Diversity".
- ²³ Amrith, "Migration and Diaspora in Modern Asia", 212-50.
- ²⁴ Amrith, *Crossing the Bay of Bengal*, 228.
- ²⁵ For a discussion of The Land Nationalization Act of 1948 see *ibid.*, 228-9. For a discussion of patterns of migration around the Bay of Bengal see Amrith, "Reconstructing the 'Plural Society': Asian Migration between Empire and Nation, 1940-1948".
- ²⁶ Egreteau, "The Idealization of a Lost Paradise: Narratives of Nostalgia and Traumatic Return Migration among Indian Repatriates from Burma since the 1960s".
- ²⁷ Roberts, *Mapping Chinese Rangoon*, 7-8.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 6-9.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 8. For more about the legal status of people of Chinese ancestry in Burma see Mya Than, "Ethnic Chinese in Myanmar and Their Identity", 133-8.
- ³⁰ Li, "Revisiting the Nineteenth-Century Marketplace, and the Chinese Community in Moulmein"; Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice*.
- ³¹ Li, "Revisiting the Nineteenth-Century Marketplace, and the Chinese Community in Moulmein".
- ³² Chie Ikeya, *Refiguring Women, Colonialism, and Modernity in Burma*, 2.
- ³³ Lewis, "Asian Urbanites and Cosmopolitan Cultures in Bangkok, Penang and Rangoon, 1910-1940", 204-39. For more on the 'modern girl' see Lewis, "Cosmopolitanism and the Modern Girl: A Cross-Cultural Discourse in 1930s Penang".
- ³⁴ Lewis, *Cities in Motion: Urban Life and Cosmopolitanism in Southeast Asia, 1920–1940*; Lewis, "Print and Colonial Port Cultures of the Indian Ocean Littoral: Penang and Rangoon."; Lewis, "Rotary International's 'Acid Test': Multi-Ethnic Associational Life in 1930s Southeast Asia".
- ³⁵ Maxim, "The Resemblance in External Appearance: The Colonial Project in Kuala Lumpur and Rangoon", 1-2.
- ³⁶ Frasch, "Tracks in the City: Technology, Mobility and Society in Colonial Rangoon and Singapore".
- ³⁷ Osada, "Housing the Rangoon Poor: Indians, Burmese, and Town Planning in Colonial Burma."
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 11-3.
- ³⁹ For more about quotidian practices of Rangoon's residents during the 1958-1960 period see *Is Trust Vindicated? A Chronicle of the Various Accomplishments of the Government Headed by General Ne Win During the Period of Tenure from November, 1958 to February 6, 1960*.
- ⁴⁰ Rao, *House, but No Garden*, 4; Smart, *The Shek Kip Mei Myth*, 3; Loh, *Squatters into Citizens*, 17-8.
- ⁴¹ Rao, *House, but No Garden*, 8; Smart, *The Shek Kip Mei Myth*, 181-3; Loh, *Squatters into Citizens*, 262-4.
- ⁴² Rao, *House, but No Garden*, 70.
- ⁴³ The Bombay Improvement Trust, founded in 1898, which was not technically under the purview of the Bombay Municipal Corporation nonetheless comprised of trustees often involved in the corporation.
- ⁴⁴ Smart, *The Shek Kip Mei Myth*, 17-9; Loh, *Squatters into Citizens*, 106-8, 27-54.
- ⁴⁵ Smart, *The Shek Kip Mei Myth*, 15. Smart's argument revises earlier work on the Shek Kip Mei fire which located the emergence of Hong Kong's public housing to the event of the fire, see Castells, Goh, and Kwok, *The Shek Kip Mei Syndrome*.
- ⁴⁶ Smart, *The Shek Kip Mei Myth*, 15.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁸ Loh, *Squatters into Citizens*, 21.

⁴⁹ Kampong, or kampung, is the word for village in Malay and Indonesian. In the case of Singapore, a kampong refers to a peri-urban space constructed of largely attap structures inhabited largely by the city's poorest residents. *Ibid.*, 18.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁵¹ For some examples see Chandavarkar, *Imperial Power and Popular Politics*; Chattopadhyay, *Representing Calcutta*; Kidambi, "Nationalism and the City in Colonial India: Bombay, C. 1890-1940"; Masselos, *The City in Action*; Mathews, *Ghetto at the Center of the World*; Yeoh, *Contesting Space*; Yeoh and Kong, "Place Making: Collective Representations of Social Life and the Built Environment in Tiong Bahru".

⁵² Chandavarkar, *Imperial Power and Popular Politics*; Chandavarkar, *History, Culture and the Indian City*.

⁵³ Chandavarkar, *Imperial Power and Popular Politics*, 2.

⁵⁴ Kidambi, "Nationalism and the City in Colonial India: Bombay, C. 1890-1940", 2.

⁵⁵ Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed*, 140; Kidambi, "Nationalism and the City in Colonial India: Bombay, C. 1890-1940", 14.

⁵⁶ Ip, "Welfare Good or Colonial Citizenship? A Case Study of Early Resettlement Housing", 50.

⁵⁷ Cooper, "What Is the Concept of Globalization Good For? An African Historian's Perspective"; Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 91-2.

⁵⁸ For some recent articles on the recent physical transformation of Rangoon see "Developers in Tearing Hurry to Level Yangon Heritage Buildings", 05 February, 2016; Rigby, "Burma: The Fight to Save Yangon's Crumbling Colonial Buildings", 6 October 2015.

⁵⁹ Amrith, *Crossing the Bay of Bengal*; Amrith and Harper, "Introduction."; Green, "Buddhism, Islam and the Religious Economy of Colonial Burma."; Lewis, "Print and Colonial Port Cultures of the Indian Ocean Littoral: Penang and Rangoon."; Saha, "Madness and the Making of a Colonial Order in Burma."