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CORRUPTION IN RURAL JAVA DURING THE COLONIAL GOVERNMENT IN NETHERLANDS INDIA

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Abstract

Theoretically, the colonial government adheres to the principle of indirect rule. In this principle, the colonial bureaucracy was only at the district level. The Regent was the supreme authority in the indigenous administration. In every district, colonial government placed a resident assistant as regent partner. As the supreme authority in the indigenous community, the regents had a structured apparatus underneath which includes the district (kawedanan) and under district (kecamatan). The village (desa) was an autonomous institution that did not have a hierarchy of the institutions on it (kecamatan). This article aims to identify the corrupt behaviour in rural java during the colonial period. Data were collected using the main source of history like archive and newspaper. The findings indicated that many colonial government interventions in the village administration. The village headman was chosen by the villagers. Elected village headman appointed by the resident, not by regents. The colonial government did many interventions in every village election, mainly in order to win the village headmans who were loyal to the government. Since the period of Raffles, the village headman had the task of collecting taxes. In return, the village headman got 8% of the number of successful tax levied. In addition, the village headmans also earned income from appanages. For existing urban village, the village headman did not get appanages, but its revenue came from the salaries paid by the government. From the search of a newspaper published in the colonial period, many reported abuses or irregularities in the management of tax money. Many of village headmans failed to report honestly about the results of the tax collected. Much tax money was corrupted by the village headmans. Consequently, many of the village headman went to prison as a result of corrupt behavior.

Keywords : *corruption, rural java, colonial government, Netherlands India*

INTRODUCTION

The village is a legal entity in which there is a ruling society holding its own government.¹⁹ Maschab saw villagers from three aspects, namely sociological, economic, and political aspects. Sociologically village can be seen as a unity of people who know each other, who live and settle in an environment with a relatively homogeneous lifestyle. From an economic point of view, the village can be seen as a community of people who meet the necessities of life from the surrounding nature. While from the political aspect, the village can be seen as a government organization that can politically administer its own government.²⁰

From the political aspect, the village is the smallest administrative unit in Java. Each plot of land and water wherever it lies either a peak covered with wilderness with its crater and canyon, or forests and coastal swamps, belonging to the village. Village boundaries are carefully defined among the population and then established by government decree, and included in the government map. The village was not a mere administrative unit unilaterally formed by the colonial government or the old king's reign. The village emerges on its own because of the urgency of the ongoing conditions and developments, as an institution with its own government, its own wealth, its rights and obligations and a certain measure of autonomy.²¹ Therefore Clive Day believes that village government in Java was the only institution that represents the people, and was the only institution that can fight for the rights and interests of the people. Thus, village governance was a true representative of the people.²²

The village was headed by the village headman or Lurah. The village headman was elected by the people in his village based on the majority vote. This was actually a form of a true democratic system according to the Western perspective. However, in reality, the election of village headmans in Java during the colonial period was not done by democratic principles. The villagers did not choose qualified leaders, but sell their votes to the highest bidder. It was not uncommon for residents to choose their village headmans based on intimidation from prospective village headmans.

The ways in which such village headman elections led to the election of village headmans cost a fortune. The election of the village headman was always won by the candidate who has a large cost

¹⁹ Soetardjo Kartohadikoemo, *Desa (the Village)*. Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1984, hlm. 16

²⁰ Mashuri Maschab, *Politik Pemerintahan Desa di Indonesia (Political Village Government in Indonesia)*, Yogyakarta: Polgov, 2013, hlm. 1-2.

²¹ Beschouwingen over he binnenlandsch bestuur op Java, in *TNI*, 1877 (2), page. 421

²² Dessahoofd verkiezingen, in *Het Nieuws van den dag voor Nederlandsch-Indie*, October 4th 1905.

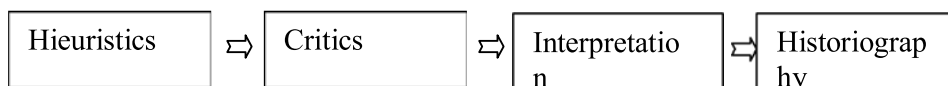
both from his own wealth and from the results of loan against others with quite high interest. The money was used to buy residents' votes or bribe top officials to smooth out their victories. It was not uncommon for elections to be won by civic thieves who have the power to intimidate voters. After being appointed as the leader of the village, in turn he raised money in corrupt ways to return the money that had been spent during the election process. If using Clive Day perspective, the village headman should protect his people. With his people, he has the obligation to build his village so that the people in his village will be prosperous. But why did they blackmail their people to gain personal benefits ? This article will highlight why many village headmans were corrupt and nepotism.

Alatas mentions three types of corruption phenomena: bribery, extortion, and nepotism. The phenomenon of bribery for example, when a civil servant or a State official received the gift (including a prize) from a private person with the intention to influence the civil servant in order to fulfill his request. Extortion shall be construed as a request for giving something, including a prize, made by a civil servant or a State official in exchange for a service which should have been his duty as a State official. Corruption in this type also includes State officials who use public funds for personal or group interests. The third form of corruption was the appointment of relatives, friends, or political associates to public offices regardless of competence, but solely for their own interests, or for their party.²³

Corruption in Indonesia is not only new in the decade of Indonesian independence, but also has been a tradition since the colonial administration. Corruption also occurs not only at the central level of bureaucracy, but also at the regional level, even at the lower levels of the bureaucracy, i.e the village. This article describes how corruption occurred in rural Java during the Netherlands India colonial government.

METHODS

This research is a historical research. Therefore, the method used in this study is the historical method which is based on four action steps, namely heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography (Goschalk, Notosusanto, 1982; Abdurahman, 2007). Heuristics is an art, technique, strategy, and skill in discovering and collecting historical sources. Historical sources may include bibliographic works, documents, archives, government officials' reports, memoirs, diaries, news reports, and interviews. Criticism is a technique to verify the sources found so as to determine the validity and authenticity of a historical source. Each source is tested authenticity through internal and external criticism, so it can be known whether a source of original history and sahih (credible). Interpretation of historical sources is often interpreted as a historical analysis. The main methods often used in interpretation are analysis and synthesis. The analysis of the historical source itself aims to synthesize a number of historical sources so that an authentic historical fact (Kuntowijoyo, 1995; Abdurahman, 2007) is prepared to be organized into historiography as the final stage.²⁴



Village in the Colonial Bureaucracy

Soetardjo disclosed that the village was the oldest autonomous region in Indonesia. He was born before the birth of the kingdom. Its power was not limited to government in a narrow sense (bestuur), but it contains a broader meaning (regeering). Villages have power over justice, legislation, policy, and even defense.²⁵ The village is the oldest form of decentralization model in Indonesia. From the place inhabited by some tax payers, the village grew into a legal entity with its own government and its own land which is allotted to the people who settled in it.²⁶ The highest ruler in the village is the village headman. Administratively and formally, the village headman is the ruler of the village in his village. They are mostly from landowners or rich farmers in their villages.²⁷ As the sole ruler, the village

²³ Syed Hussein Alatas, *Sosiologi Korupsi: sebuah penjelajahan dengan data kontemporer* (The Sociology of corruption: the Nature, function, causes, and prevention of corruption), Jakarta: LP3ES, 1986, hlm. 11-12

²⁴ Effendi Wahyono, Yuda Tangkilisan, Djoko Marihandono, *Pelayaran Printis dalam integrasi nasional dan perkembangan daerah perbatasan, terpencil, dan tertinggal, 1974-2012* (laporan Penelitian Fundamental dan Hibah Dikti- research report directorat general of higher education), 2014.

²⁵ Kartohadikoesoemo, *Op. Cit.* page 182-183.

²⁶ B.P. Paulus, *Garis besar hukum tata Negara di Hindia Belanda* (Outline of Indonesian Constitutional Law), Bandung: Alumni, 1979, hlm. 55

²⁷ Djoko Suryo, R.M. Soedarsono, dan Djoko Soekiman, *Gaya Hidup Masyarakat Jawa di Pedesaan: Pola Kehidupan Sosial-Ekonomi dan Budaya* (Lifestyle of Java Society in Rural Areas: Pattern of Socio-Economic and Cultural Life). Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Kebudayaan, Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, page. 24

headman has the inherent right to his position to be fulfilled by his people. These rights include paying taxes, clearing roads, patrolling, drainage, and compulsory work on the land owned by the village headman without any compensation.

The traditional right of the village headman was maintained by the colonial authorities to exploit the Indonesian people. Compulsory labor, for example, was used by the Dutch colonial government to work on mandatory crops (sugar cultivation) for sugar cane in Java and coffee in Priangan.²⁸ In the system of forced cultivation, the colonial government required land and labor to grow export crops that sell well in European markets, especially sugar and coffee.²⁹ The rights originally possessed by the indigenous authorities (especially the village headman) were diverted to meet the labor force for sugar cane and coffee plantations. Villagers were required to give up 1/5 of their land or work for 66 days in a year on government plantations. Such provisions were often violated. In practice they work more time. In addition to working on plantations, the people also had to work on the land belonging to the local authorities (village apparatus) and other village obligations such as cleaning roads, water ways, and patrol.³⁰

In the labor recruitment process, the colonial government handed it over to the village apparatus. The government then believed that the village was an autonomous institution that could take care of its own government. The power possessed by the village headman was used for various colonial government interests, especially to gain labor and estate lands.

On the basis of that logic, the Colonial Baud Minister on 7 March 1840 wrote to the Governor-General requesting that the governor-general order firmly to the resident not to interfere with all household affairs and unnecessary indigenous customs, including the village government institutions.

³¹

Baud's decision was subsequently stipulated in the Regeering Reglement or the Act. In the Law of 1854 (State Gazette No. 2 of 1855) chapter 71 it was stated that the native ruler chose his own chiefs and officers. The Governor-General had an obligation to protect those rights against any offense. The government let the indigenous community take care of its own household interests.

With the preservation of the authenticity of rural institutions, the village was not in the colonial bureaucracy. Domestic affairs within the Dutch colonial government were under the Department van Binnenlandsch Bestuur. At the local level, binnenlandsch bestuur officials are grouped into two groups, namely the European employee (Europeche bestuur) and the employee clan (Inlaandsche bestuur). The European employee's corps included resident and assistant resident in which there were controllers and positions for other Europeans who occupied the offices of heads of departments. While the bureaucracy of the earth's son consists of regents, wedono, and assistant wedono (now called Camat). District was the lowest government institution in the Netherlands India government bureaucracy. The position of the regent was parallel to the assistant resident. Governmental affairs relating to the indigenous people were handed over from the Bupati and the staff to the lowest, namely the Camat.³²

The village was an autonomous government agency located outside the colonial bureaucracy. Villagers were self-regulating communities. Nevertheless, villagers were charged with obligations that should be the responsibility of the government. These obligations included security guarding, tax collection, irrigation and eradication of communicable diseases, population censuses, and many more that were not really village affairs but general government affairs. Each villager had an obligation covering both permanent and incidental liabilities. Fixed obligations were liabilities performed at a certain time and within a certain period of time. Included in the fixed obligations include tax payment,

²⁸ Cultivation system has been discussed by Robert van Niel in his book, *Java under the cultivation system: collected writings*, was translated by Hardoyo under the title *Sistem tanam paksa di Jawa* published by EP3ES, 2003. For coffee culture see Jan Breman, *Profijt van onvrije arbeid: het Preanger stelsel van gedwongen koffieteelt op Java, 1720-1870* and has been translated in Indonesia with the title *Keuntungan kolonial dari kerja paksa: sistem Priangan dari tanam kompi di Jawa, 1720-1870* published by Obor tahun 2014. In 1975 Fasseur his dissertation by the title *Kultuurstelsel en koloniale baten: de Nederlandse exploitatie van Java 1840-1860*.

²⁹ Wahyono, [Reflection on Values of National Movement History as a Basis for Character Education](#), *Tawarikh: International journal for historical studies*, 7 (2)

³⁰ Effendi Wahyono, *Pemberontakan di Tegal tahun 1864: sebuah studi pendahuluan tentang konflik antar priyayi dan kemiskinan petani (Rebellion in Tegal in 1864: a preliminary study of conflicts between priyayi and farmer poverty)* -, Universitas Indonesia, 1984 (skripsi S1, unpublished).

³¹ Dessa Verkiezingen, in *Het Nieuws van den dag voor Nederlandsch Indie*, April 10th 1902 page-2. See also *Het Zelsbestuur der dessa's in Java Boder*, Juli 30th 1890.

³² Effendi Wahyono, *Desentralisasi dan otonomi daerah di Jawa pada masa pemerintahan Hindia Belanda: perubahan pemerintah daerah berdasarkan Bestuurshervormingswet 1922 (Decentralization and regional autonomy in Java during the reign of the Dutch East Indies: local government changes based on Bestuurshervormingswet 1922)*. Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia, 2009 (FIB UI Dissertation, unpublished).

night watch, and pancen. Pancen was the duty of the villagers to work in the home or paddy fields of village headmans without any compensation. This obligation was only given to the people who fall into the category of *gogol kenceng*. *Gogol kenceng* (elsewhere called *kuli kenceng*) was a villager with land and houses. Within one year, *gogol kenceng* was obliged to work without wage (panceng) for 66 days. The obligation of *gogol kenceng* to pancen can be replaced by paying 8 to 12 gulden (f) in one year to the village government. In Malang regency, in 1928 every village headman was entitled to pancen two or three people *gogol kenceng* every day. Incidental liability was an obligation that was executed only if necessary. These incidental obligations included the maintenance of roads, bridges, culverts, ducts, dams, and grave cleansing.

In addition to pancen rights, the village headman still earns income from office or estate, collectibles in the form of a presentation of tax collection, incidental levies, wages for credit institutions, and side income such as gifts from sugar mills. The income of the village headman in Malang district in 1928 ranged from f600 to f1200 in one year.³³

Some people said enough for the amount of income but the other said not enough. The village chief's income issue had been the subject of talks since the mid-19th century in line with the poor work of the village headmans. The village headmans cheated and blackmailed the villagers because his salary was insufficient. If true income to the village was not sufficient to meet the needs of his life, why many people struggle and sacrifice a lot of money to become unpaid village headmans? Though not getting a salary how could a village chief have two or three horses, four to eight buffaloes, and 20-30 headbreaks or sheep, and had a nice, roofed house. Not infrequently the village headman lived luxuriously with two to four wives, golden kris, gamelan, and train with sandalwood. A clever village headman can pick up a lot of his people, including extortion.³⁴

He Nieuws van den dag dated December 18, 1905 reported that the income to the village per month reached f 200. By quoting *De Locomotief, Algemeen Handelsblad newspaper*, dated April 6, 1906 contained the story of the income of a Kembangan village chief whose population was 567 inhabitants. The "unpaid" village headman, who received 8% of the wage rate from the taxes they have withdrawn and "occupation", also earned another income. The list of earnings included:

1. In the work of the land of office, the village headman may ask for help from the villagers. The people who own the water buffalo have to plow the land and dig it for two days and those who did not have water buffaloes had to hoe for two days.
2. If at home or in the yard of the head of village there was something to be done, he gathered the villagers. For the job, they did not receive wages but the lurah must provide food throughout the day.
3. If the lurah celebrated a party at home, the villagers had to contribute something to the party.
4. If a marriage was celebrated in the village, the village headman should be given a portion of the snack.
5. If at the occasion of a wedding party a buffalo was cut, the lurah received the head of the buffalo and besides a quarter of its meat.
6. When a person buys or sells buffalo, the lurah of the buyer or seller received a quarter of the price.
7. If there was a house or yard bought or sold, the lurah again receives a quarter.
8. If it was notified of a marriage or divorce case, the headman received a tribute fee for his or her approval.
9. If a man from another village will marry a woman from Kembangan, the groom has to submit two ducks or f 0.50. What if the man took his wife to another village, then the man had to hand over the money to the village headman.
10. If a woman from another village gives birth in the village of kembangan then the woman must pay f 0.50.
11. When a resident of Kembangan moves to another village, he/she must give one ringgit to the village headman.³⁵

Villages that did not own land, such as villages in the municipalities, they do not accept the land of office, but they received a salary from the State. Villages under Vorstenlanden (in Yogyakarta and Surakarta) senior officials (village headmans), village clerks and village headmans receive salary.

³³ Arsi Nasional, Laporan penelitian desa dikabupaten Malang tahun 1928, (Village research report in Malang district in 1928), (historical sources series Number 10), Indonesian National Archive, Jakarta: 1978

³⁴ Onbezoldigd desabestuur, in *de Locomotief*, Mart 14th 1870.

³⁵ De inkomsten van een Javaansch dorpsburgemeester in *Algemeen Handelsblad*, April 6th 1906.

The village headman receives a minimum wage of f 60 per month, while f 40 for a clerk and f 25 for the leader of the village. The salary is actually paid by the taxpayer. If a village has a population of 500 tax payers, and each tax payer paid an average of 30 cents per month, it will accumulate f 150.³⁶

Rural Cases of Corruption

Colonialism anywhere in the world was exploitative. Similarly in the Indies. They exploited the village and its inhabitants to get the most profit. Therefore they were very concerned about the income collected from the villagers, such as taxes. If tax revenues were reduced, they will conduct an investigation to find the cause of reduced village revenues. After doing research, it was known that the decrease of village income because some of tax result was not paid to the State treasury but goes to the village headman. The village headman who commits an act of corruption was reported to the police and subsequently proceeded in court. For the village headman or other village apparatus or even the institutions above him who were found guilty of corruption, they were dismissed from office and put in jail. Conversely, if the allegations of corruption by the court stated as not true, then his name rehabilitated and he returned to head of the village.

Cases of corruption in the countryside were rife with reports in various newspapers in the Indies. Newspaper *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* March 23, 1925 issue reported, for example, Marsono, the village headman of Pengampon village was sentenced to two years in prison by a district court for proving tax evasion until the number around f 1000. Brahim alias Singojoyo, village headman of Somalawang village was detained. He allegedly committed tax evasion as much as f 1,026.80. Kertasari alias Rawi, the village headman of Kapasan Kidul village was detained. He allegedly committed tax evasion of f 502.06. All of it concerned the villages in the city whose lurahs get paid from the state. With the incident, *Nieuw Soerabajasch Courant* criticized the government for not being careful enough in the village headman elections.

Similar news was delivered by *De Sumatra Post* on December 30, 1932. Quoting *Java Bode*, this newspaper delivered the news that four village chiefs were discharged from their positions and detained for committing acts that were detrimental to the state. They were the head of the village of Rahayu, Margahayu, Sunyaraja, and Leuwiliang. They were alleged to have embezzled their respective taxes worth f 2000, f 1400, f 1300 and f 400.

Another newspaper, *Het nieuws van den dag voor Nederlandsch Indie*, published May 5, 1932, reported that the head of Haur Kuning, Cimalaka District, Sumedang district, had found fraud of 226.50 done by his newly resigned predecessor, Lastani. After a new lurah discloses the case, several members of his family take revenge. At night after he revealed tax evasion by his predecessor, his horse and cow were poisoned. Lastani, as the suspect behind the poisoning escaped when he was about to be arrested. The Central Priangan Resident promised a reward for his arrest. Shortly afterwards Lastani surrendered to assistant wedana Situraja. Under the news entitled "Dessa gelden verduisterd door loerah", this newspaper conveyed chronologically the modus operandi of tax evasion. The embezzlement was done as if the taxpayer made a mistake in the form of tax arrears. For fear of being found guilty, he resigned in the hope that his son could be elected to succeed him so that his mistake could be covered. But unexpectedly, the chosen was his nephew, not his child. Vengeance against the new lurah was not only poisoning livestock, but also vilifying new lurah jobs and using public opinion against them. When this news was revealed, the investigation of this case was still ongoing. Lastani remained in custody, but he continued to deny involvement in the case even if all evidence had been directed against him.

On December 22, 1932, the same newspaper presented the news of four violation cases in Bandung Regency. The defendants were the village chief. Under the heading "Verduisterende dessa hoofden" this newspaper on May 5, 1934 also reported that in Malang, the village headmans of Pulung Dowo, Jeru, and Argosuko (Tumpang district) were arrested for embezzling f 2000 from the land tax collected. Despite repaying the fraudulent money of f 400, they are still being arrested and the investigation continues.

Citing, *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, *Het nieuws van den dag voor Nederlandsch Indie*, published on May 7, 1934, conveyed the existence of 156 cases of abuse in Jombang and Mojokerto districts. Beyond that, there were still embezzlement by the village headmans in Malang and Pasuruan regencies that reach 100, 250 and 350 guilders.

³⁶Bezoldiging van dessahoofden, in *Het nieuws van den dag voor Nederlandsch Indie*, August 22th 1905

Soerabajasch Handelsblad on October 1, 1940 reported that the headman of Tambakmanukan village and Gedong Tambak sub-district of Krebangan were thrown into the cage because it was proven to have embezzled the tax funds. In a proven investigation the village headman of Tambakmanukan has committed the crime since 1936. While the villagers' evil acts of Gedong Tambak only took place in three months. This incident was revealed because the concerned in no time had pocketed no less f 400 within three months. As in many cases of embezzlement, here too the cause lies in the fact that the defendant lives above his status. Both cases were now handled by the district court.

Tax evasion was not just happening at the village level. De Sumatra Post issue November 21, 1932 reported on the detention of assistant wedono Ciputat. The case was revealed after his transfer, his successor found that the cash offices of the assistant wedono deficit. He was also found guilty of extortion against the village chiefs. Another letter of Het Nieuws van den dag issue of 7 August 1933 reported that Lumajang's assistant wedana was revealed to be a scribe after an investigation into a violation with a land tax fund. The assistant wedana Onderdistrik Rembang in Bangil was dismissed for extortion by forced loan borrowing from village headmans and other village officials.

The above case was only a small part of the cases of irregularities perpetrated by the bureaucratic apparatus in the colonial period. In the Memorie van Overgave of Central Java governor A. H. Neijs July 1930-November 1933, it was reported that almost all districts and municipalities during that period committed financial irregularities.³⁷ Meanwhile, in the Memory of the handover of Resident Kerawan, Polivier, stated that in 1928 there were 16 village headmans dismissed, six of them for fraud and extortion against the villagers.³⁸

In addition to being a means of corruption, depositing tax money becomes a measure of the success of a village headman. Taxes were one means of the colonial government to increase the source of income. Therefore the colonial government pressured the village chiefs to collect the maximum taxes. Large tax returns will provide a great gift to the village officials. The village headman will get a share of 6% of the tax money collected. To be able to collect large taxes, not infrequently the village headmans do terror against its citizens. This was for example done by the head of Kanigaran village in afdeeling Probolinggo. If there were people who do not pay taxes may be because they are not able, he will come to the person and scolded him. If this does not work, the taxpayer will be physically disarmed. In bare condition, the person was expelled from his home and informed that he will get back his clothes what if he has paid taxes. This is also done against women. This was done to embarrass taxpayers who do not want to pay taxes. And the way it's done for years. Conversely for taxpayers treated like that was an insult. For the Javanese, rather than being humiliated in public, it was better to go to jail. Therefore, before being stripped naked, he first attacks the village headman with the kelewang until he was seriously injured. After that he surrendered himself to the police. This act was indeed violating the law, but it brings a positive impact because the bad tradition in tax collection can be terminated.³⁹

Village headman election system

Theoretically, the village headman election system has a democratic style of government. But in reality, what happened was the opposite. Village headman elections are often a source of corruption, bribery, intimidation, and inheritance. Pseudo-election results give rise to bad government. According to van der Putte, member of the Dutch Parliament, the Village Government System became the worst in colonial rule, an extension of the growing extortion with oppression and deception, exploitative and conquest of the villagers.⁴⁰

In the May 24, 1905 edition, Het Nieuws van den dag made a report on the election of the village chief. Neyam, a village headman feels that he was a village headman enough to step down. He wanted to enjoy the results as the village headman. He already had three beautiful stone houses. It also had a casket of teak wood grown in the house with four sacks of ringgit that clatter. Beyond that, he also had 15 smells of paddy fields and 10 fields of moor, as well as a pair of famous cows in his village. With his vast rice fields, he thought he could still provide for his wives without being head of a village. He

³⁷ Effendi Wahyono, *Desentralisasi dan otonomi daerah di Jawa pada masa pemerintahan Hindia Belanda: perubahan pemerintah daerah berdasarkan Bestuursvormingswet 1922* (Decentralization and regional autonomy in Java during the reign of the Dutch East Indies: local government changes based on Bestuursvormingswet 1922). Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia, 2009 (FIB UI Dissertation, unpublsh).

³⁸ Arsip Nasional RI, *Memori Serah Terima Jabatan* (memory of transfer position) 1921-1930 (historical sources series number. 8, 1976).

³⁹ Dessa Terreure, in *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, December 14th 1935.

⁴⁰ Dessa Verkiezingen, in *Het Nieuws van den dag voor Nederlandsch Indie*, April 10th 1902 page 2.

wants to leave the village chief to his son-in-law, who was Soe. His wealth he got from the tax allowance paid by a village secretary named Simin. Any tax money paid by Simin partly to his own pocket was not deposited into the state coffers. He did not care how much Simin had taken to put in his pocket.

When one day a wedono comes to his house, he told his mexus to resign, but he wanted his son-in-law to follow the election of the village chief to replace him. When that wedono did not agree because wanting that will replace was Simin. Neyam was shocked to hear the statement of the wedono. He tried to calm down with a sip of coffee. Slowly the lurah talked about how much a wedono would spend and what a pleasure he would be able to help him on this occasion. He then issued 50 ringgit. Wedono laughed, understood and told him that he would support Soe's candidacy. For that he will gather the influential villagers to win Soe and ensure the appointment of Soe will happen. Nevertheless, the wedono revealed that he did not have time to arrange the winner because he was in trouble and needed the money of 500 guildens. Do not think long, Neyam understand wedono intent and promised to give money of 500 guildens. After quite satisfied, wedono went on horseback.

Not long after that, the assistant wedono appeared. Feeling it had received approval from the wedono, Neyam then told of his desire to raise his son-in-law to replace him. Apparently this assistant wedono disagree. According to the assistant wedono, the best fit to be the village headman was Simin. As the village secretary, he had more influence than Soe. Moreover, many villagers were indebted to Simin because they have ever owed him. Neyam urban village promised f 100 guilders so that this assistant wedana was willing to support her son-in-law's nomination to become the village headman to replace him. The assistant wedana agreed. The next day the Neyam urban village delivered the agreed money to the wedono and his assistant.

Finally, election day arrived. It turns out that the villagers chose Simin with an absolute victory. An angry Soe proponent Simin had deposited money to the wedono and his assistants each 1000 guilders. The disappointed Neyam and Soe can not do much. But after becoming a village chief for a year, Simin began to get sick and vomited blood.⁴¹

The newspaper *Het Nieuws van den dag* during this period highlights the depravity of the village headman electoral system in Java. In the May 25, 1905 edition, it was reported that many villagers chose villains as village chiefs for fear. By reviewing the writings of van den Broek, a controller published in *de Locomotive* on November 11, 1903, the editors pointed out that village headman elections cost a great deal to be paid by the village headman candidate. Based on his experience working in six residencies and eight afdeeling, van den Broek writes that a native who wants to become a village headman (to get votes) borrows f 300 to a Chinese who must make a debt of f450 guildens. If he was not elected, then He will be poor within a few months. In other newspapers it was reported that in order to win the election of the village headman, it would have to spend at least 2000. The money was intended for the winning agent, to buy the votes of the inhabitants, for the slametan, as well as to "open the table" for two months. At this open table the voters can eat, drink coffee, and enjoy the cake for days in two months.⁴²

The village election system does not produce good governance because the people did not vote for leaders, but sell their votes to the highest bidder or to the person he fears. Bribery and fear were factors that dominate village headman elections. Not infrequently the elected village chief was from the elite thieves of animals.⁴³ The colonial experts as well as the *Binnenlandsch bestuur* officials in the area suggested that the existing electoral system be reviewed for having harmed the community, even damaging the morals of the villagers. C.E. Bodemeijer, a resident assistant wrote in *Tijdschrift voor Binnenlandsch Bestuur* about the proposed review of village headman elections. In his experience of being a controller in a number of places in Central Java, East Java, and West Java he witnessed that the village headman electoral system was highly damaging to the morale of most of the villagers. The promises made to deal with it, the sale of votes to various candidates, false complaints, lawsuits filed by lawyers after the completion of the election, and all bad things related to elections, such as gambling, prostitution, opium and so on were increasing rapidly in the village. It all led to the demoralization of the villagers. He therefore requested that the entire electoral system be terminated.⁴⁴ However, considering the possible risks, the colonial government felt it was safer to maintain the existing system.

⁴¹ Een verkiezing, in *Het Nieuws van den dag voor Nederlandsch Indie*, May 24th 1905

⁴² Dessa verkiezingen, in *Algemeen Handelsblad*, October 2th 1906.

⁴³ Dessa Verkiezingen, in *Het Nieuws van den dag voor Nederlandsch Indie*, May 16th 1905.

⁴⁴ Dessa Verkiezingen, in *Het Nieuws van den dag voor Nederlandsch Indie*, November 11th 1902

Article 71 of Law 1854 stipulates that the village headman shall be elected by majority vote. But the law did not regulate who the electoral holder was so in the field, the election commission assigned to lead the election had difficulty in determining voter criteria.⁴⁵ In addition to producing a poor electoral system, Article 71 also can not produce qualified leaders. Therefore, various parties propose that the election of the village headman be immediately removed to end the oppression of the population. Instead, the village headman was appointed and paid by the government. With the appointment the government can determine the criteria of a village headman who was able to lead his village well. The problem was that in the whole of the Dutch East Indies there were 35 thousand villages. Thus it can be imagined how much the state budget should be provided by the state to pay the village headman.

The Council of the Dutch East Indies in 1876 wrote that with the salary of the village headman the budget required not thousands, but tens of millions of guilders. The village headman was a person who was assigned to pay attention to the public interest, not the government agency, but the exploiter of the population.

So from the state treasury, he was paid for the work he must show to the state, but his salary becomes the affairs of the community. So if he was paid by the state, then he was required to meet certain requirements.⁴⁶ With limited budgets, the government only paid the village chiefs in the middle towns, who had no land or crooked land.

The election and dismissal of the village headman was first stipulated in the Ordinance on the election and dismissal of indigenous community leaders in 1878 (Statute Book No. 47). It was stipulated that the village election was elected by the village community in the biggest vote, elected by a commission headed by A controller. The results of the election were reported to the head of the region (resident) to be determined. Here was still not explained who had the right to vote and be elected. Because there was a limit on how long people become head of the village, in this regulation was explained about the dismissal of the village headman, To resign or to be dismissed because of criminal matters such as corruption. The rule was later amended by the Ordinance of 28 September 1883 (state official Gazette/Lembaran Negara 229) and Ordinance 24 November 1893 (State official Gazette 272) and subsequently replaced by Ordinance dated 7 April 1907 on the election, punishment, and dismissal village headman of indigenous communities (State Official Gazette 212). In this Ordinance it was arranged who is eligible to be elected and elect the village headman, that was, the person who has obligatory obligatory work. The person who has obligatory employment obligations was the person who owns the land and the house, or in other words the person who had the obligation to pay taxes. The election was carried out by a commission that covers for the controller and the district chief (wedana). Election was valid if attended by 2/3 holders of suffrage. In Article 6 of the Ordinance it was stated that voting by majority vote, but at least 1/5 of the village right holders. The elected village headman was set by the resident. Resident may refuse to appoint an elected village headman if the resident knew that the elected village headman was involved in a criminal matter. In this ordinance it was also prescribed that the village headman may be temporarily dismissed in case of trial. If a court decision declared that he was innocent, then he may occupy the position of the village chief again. Conversely, if a court decision declared him guilty, then the resident can dismiss the village headman in disrespect.

CONCLUSION

The village was an autonomous institution that can meet the needs of the people of their village. The Dutch colonial government's policy of exploiting natural resources in Java was done by letting the villagers live under their village headmans. The various obligations that villagers charged to their village headmans like compulsory labor were diverted for compulsory labor in colonial government plantations, such as sugar cane plantations and coffee growers. Thus, the village headman was exploited by the Dutch East Indies colonial government for the recruitment of labor, the provision of land, and the collection of taxes.

The government maintains village autonomy. But the village government as an autonomous institution always puts pressure from the colonial government to meet government targets. For that reason, the village headman as a sole ruler often impose pressure on the villagers to meet the targets set by the government above him. Not infrequently also the village headman to make allowance (distort) some of the taxes he picked up for his own benefit. If there was a shortage of tax deposits, the government will immediately investigate why tax payments were reduced. From there, then, there

⁴⁵ Dessa verkiezingen, in *de Preanger Bode*, February 15th 1908

⁴⁶ Bezoldiging van dessahoofden op Java en Madoera, in *Algemeen Handelsblad*, April 6th 1907.

was a lot of misappropriation by the village headman, as reported by various newspapers of the day. The incursions carried out by the village headmans were caused by several things:

1. The cost of nomination to become the village headman. The nomination of village headmans cost a lot, among others, to buy votes, and to bribe officials on top to smooth out his victory. Thus, not infrequently the kicking into the village headman was determined by the amount of capital owned, or the strength of the group to suppress / influence the villagers.
2. The lifestyle of the village headman. Many village headmans had an above-average lifestyle. The village headman generally had a lifestyle above the common people. It had a magnificent stone house with a large yard, had many cattle, had several horses with its chariots, even had more than one wife.

The village headman's revenues were derived from crooked land and the percentage of the collected taxes is between 6-8%. Income was not sufficient to meet the needs of life so they need to get additional obtained from the various activities of the population such as levy of crops, marriage, births, displacement, and various other celebrations. Thus the villagers were not only a source of income for the colonial government, but also for the leadership. The village headman was elected by the villagers. The existing electoral system creates the possibility of the villagers instead of choosing a qualified leader, but selling his voice to the highest bidder. This means that villagers sell their voice to leaders who will become extortionists for their citizens.

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