Snouck Hurgronje had a versatile career, and his influence was felt in a multitude of fields. His most famous contribution was as an authority on Islam, both in the Netherlands and in the Dutch East Indies. In the Dutch East Indies, he advised the colonial government on a variety of matters regarding Islam, including in relation to the prolonged and bloody conflict fought out in Aceh on Sumatra. Snouck Hurgronje’s advice was appreciated in nineteenth-century Batavia and Buitenzorg. As a result, in March 1891, he was appointed by Governor-General Pijnacker Hordijk as adviser for Oriental Languages and Islamic Law (in 1898 his title was changed into adviser for Indigenous Affairs). In this context, Snouck Hurgronje also became involved in the manner in which the colonies were administered.

Snouck Hurgronje thus played a role in a crucial period in the history of the Dutch East Indies, in which the colonial state attempted to broaden its power to include all parts of the Indonesian archipelago and above all became actively involved on Java in an increasing number of aspects of social life. In other words: at the time of Snouck Hurgronje, the Dutch East Indies were undergoing a process of state formation comparable to the state formation processes in Europe that would form the basis for the modern Indonesian Unitarian State. This meant that it was necessary to relinquish old forms of colonial administration which had as much as possible maintained the traditional power relations in the indigenous society, and to replace them with new administrative structures that were more appropriate for the twentieth century. Snouck Hurgronje played a key role in the search for these new administrative structures. He thus came to be known as someone who, in the context of nineteenth-century colonialism, would undoubtedly be considered progressive. The interests of Snouck Hurgronje in the formation of the modern colonial state are sketched below. What ideas did he contribute to the debate on the structure of the colonial administration of Java? What influence did he have, and did his ideas have a positive effect on the development of the colonial state?
The Dualistic Administration of Java

Until the end of the nineteenth century, the central island of the Dutch East Indies colony, Java, had an administrative structure in which Dutch colonial civil servants worked together with an indigenous administrative élite, the priyayi. After 1830, when the Cultivation System was introduced on Java, the Dutch rulers emphatically reinforced this structure because it left the indigenous population primarily under the administration of their “own” leaders. Regents, wedonos (district heads) and desa chiefs ruled over their own people, ensured that the people cultivated crops and delivered these to the Dutch, and in return they were rewarded in the form of “cultivation percentages.” Dutch residents, assistant-residents and controleurs (‘inspectors’) in turn left the indigenous leaders to their own devices, as long as they ensured peace and order and made sure the indigenous population delivered the crops.

Although this structure did not formally change, the relations between the Dutch administrators and the indigenous leaders changed substantially towards the end of the nineteenth century. Despite the fact that, in 1859, it was clearly established on the basis of articles 68, 69 and 70 of the Government Regulations of 1854 that the Dutch residents were to rule the indigenous population as much as possible through “the intervention of government-appointed or recognised leaders,”1 this instruction increasingly became nothing but empty words. This development was caused by a number of factors, one of the most important of which was the publication of Eduard Douwes Dekkers’ novel Max Havelaar and the impact this book was to have. In the novel, the indigenous leaders are portrayed as corrupt rulers, while the Dutch administrators are seen as the bearers of justice, prosperity and civilisation. Ambitious administrators saw it as their mission in the East Indies to – in the words of Douwes Dekker – “save the millions of people who are oppressed victims of exploitation, extortion, corruption, robbery and murder.”2

After 1860, the new generation of administrators, inspired by Multatuli (Eduard Douwes Dekkers’ pseudonym), would above all slowly start to govern the Javanese population in a much more direct manner. They would increasingly ignore the regents and district heads in particular, and often looked down on them. Among the results would be a deterioration of the position of indige-

---

1 Art. 27 and 29 of the “Instruction for the Heads of Regional Administration on Java and Madura,” in: Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië, no. 102 (1859). Announced again as ordinance in ibid., no. 114 (1867).

nous leaders and a decrease in their prestige. Characteristically, although in 1859 the stipulation had been dropped that the indigenous regents were to be seen as the “younger brothers” of the resident, in the meantime assistant-residents began calling themselves the older brothers of the regent, a misconception which was to persist in history.3

Even the lowest Dutch administrators, the controleurs, sometimes behaved like minor despots. The power that an administrator could wield was very tempting for the sometimes still young controleurs. Not only were they put in charge of large territories, they also seldom had superiors constantly checking on them. After all, the connections within the Javanese interior were, to say the least, not always good, so that an inspector could have a great degree of independence. “It is a field of activity,” one controleur said about his work,

in which a fine ambition to do that which is good and pure can provide complete satisfaction. If a man sees his task thus, if he has the determination to lead his district further on the road to prosperity and progress, and in this way truly works towards the salvation of the land and the people, then the shadow sides, the worries and unpleasantness which come with every duty, can be borne lightly. They will fall away in the face of the good and the pleasant, and the satisfaction gained through labour.4

In this way, by the end of the nineteenth century the colonial administration on Java had developed into a system in which the Dutch colonial civil servants dominated and wished to govern as much as possible “directly.” The once so powerful regent families were of course not in any way finished yet, but they had to live off their former influence. Snouck Hurgronje befriended a number of these families after his arrival on Java. He realised that old fame was insufficient to remain influential in a modern society, which is why he encouraged young priyayi to follow a Western schooling, a position in which he differed from the Dutch administrators who were against indigenous leaders behaving in “Western” ways. Snouck Hurgronje’s protégés included Achmad Djajadinigrat, Koesoemo Oetoyo and Moeharam Wiranatakoesoema, all of whom were later to occupy influential positions. For the adviser for Indigenous Affairs,

these young *priyayi* were, “thanks to a careful education, from a moral and an intellectual perspective, high enough [...] to become sound and in every way reliable administrators.” Snouck Hurgronje did not hide the fact that it was his ambition to release the indigenous leaders from what he called the “childish tutelage” under which educated and independent regents were still required to dance to the tune of assistant-residents even “to the minutest details.”

Snouck Hurgronje always kept in mind the interests of the colonial state. It had not escaped him that the modern era was also knocking on the door of the Dutch East Indies and that indigenous society, certainly on Java, was on the threshold of radical changes. It was for this reason that he emphatically advised Governor-General Willem Rooseboom quickly to give regents and *wedonos* more control in the administration. The time was past when the indigenous chiefs could be expected “spontaneously” to serve the interests of the colonial state. This is why the indigenous heads had soon to be released from the “oppressive bond of spineless servility” in which they were still being kept by the Dutch civil servants. The time was ripe. According to Snouck Hurgronje, young indigenous leaders who had for instance completed an HBS education, were “generally more intellectually developed than the average European.”

Snouck Hurgronje knew, of course, that there were also many regents and *wedonos* on Java who were not sufficiently well-educated to hold an independent position in a modern administration. Nevertheless, it would have been a grave error, in his opinion, to use this to refrain from giving them greater authority and allowing them to operate a more independent administration, especially because the indigenous administrators had to be convinced that a better education would also bring them advantages. If these advantages failed to materialise, the “oppressive yoke of childish tutelage” would only become “more severe and less bearable.” He also refuted the objection voiced by some Dutch people that indigenous rulers, due to the “characteristics of their race,”

---


7 HBS = *Hogere Burgerschool*, a secondary school type in the Netherlands and the Dutch possessions, existing between 1863 and 1974.
were not fit to rule a territory without supervision by the Dutch. Although he was convinced that “races” could have certain characteristics, he thought these were exclusively the result of shortcomings in their upbringing. In Europe the Jews in particular had, in his opinion, as a result of years of oppression, developed a number of “highly deplorable characteristics.” However, maintaining that Dutch administrators were more suitable than well-educated Javanese counterparts from the higher layers of society was proof of “a great rigidity of prejudice” and a “foolish over-estimation of one’s own abilities.” The time had therefore come to break radically with the existing administrative practices and begin the emancipation of the indigenous leaders. “The continuity of the administration can only be ensured,” in the words of the adviser for Indigenous Affairs, if “the administration is relieved of unnecessary spending, the number of indigenous administrators increases and the competence level of the European administrators now reduced in number is raised.”

Snouck Hurgronje’s ideas weighed heavily with both the governor-general and the minister for the Colonies. Governor-General Rooseboom wrote to the Minister for the Colonies Idenburg that due to the continuing development of the indigenous leaders, the Dutch could no longer avoid a radical reform of the administration and it was much better “to allow the transition to happen gradually than to be forced for political reasons to take sudden measures to that effect.” Idenburg also concluded that the indigenous leaders should be given greater independence. “The indigenous administrators should be granted greater independence and be relieved of the overly severe tutelage of European administrators,” he wrote. This “de-tutelisation” was not supposed to be taken too far, in his opinion. After all, a good colonial administration also required the indigenous heads to be subject to supervision. According to Idenburg, the Dutch had both the task of protecting the indigenous population against every form of “arbitrariness and extortion” and the duty to maintain their authority as colonial rulers. “If we fail to exert enough control over the administration of the indigenous element, we will progressively lose ground and end up having to give up our authority,” wrote the minister in the spirit of Multatuli.

Regents and wedonos were therefore to remain under the daily supervision of European assistant-residents and controleurs. Representatives of the colonial administration were to travel around the interior systematically, so that they could remain up to date regarding events that were taking place there.

---

8 Snouck Hurgronje to Rooseboom, 8 September 1904, in Ambtelijke adviezen van C. Snouck Hurgronje 1889-1936, 1538-551.
9 Rooseboom to Idenburg, 22 September 1904, in National Archive (NA), Archive Colonies after 1900, Vb. 8 June 1905, lt. N14, inv.nr. 57.
intervene where necessary, and ensure that the colonial authority could be felt all the way into the smallest desas. All this because, according to Idenburg, it was certainly not the goal of an ethical colonial administration to retreat rapidly from the East Indies and leave the country to the rule of its own leaders. This did not yet “fall within the scope of practical considerations,” according to Idenburg.

The final aim of our colonial government policy must undoubtedly be to educate the indigenous population and make them suitable for a greater degree of independence, including in the political arena. However, there is still such a long way to go before that is possible, that both now and in the near future, the only conceivable possibility is administration as a colony. And as long as we are administering Java as a colony, it remains a firm requirement that the European authority provides both factual leadership and regular supervision.10

2 The Koesomo Joedo Affair

But before the ideas of Snouck Hurgronje and Minister Idenburg could be put into practice, another surprising development took place in the context of the “dualistic” administrative structure sketched above. In 1904, in Leiden, a Javanese candidate successfully took the so-called advanced civil service examination (groot-ambtenaarsexamen), which provided access to the ranks of the Dutch colonial administrative apparatus: Raden Mas Koesoemo Joedo Soemido, son of Pakoe Alam V. Governor-General J.B. van Heutsz had no objection to appointing Koesomo Joedo to the “European Interior Administration.” First of all, there was not a single legal prescription prohibiting it and secondly, the governor-general had also noticed that “Europeans as black as pitch and born of native mothers were becoming residents,” referring to Indo-Europeans who were officially ‘European’ but had an Indonesian mother.11 Van Heutsz therefore appointed Koesomo Joedo on 11 November 1904 as “civil servant available to be appointed to the Interior Administration.” He was then sent to the densely populated Central Javanese residence of Kedu, where the resident J.H.F. ter Meulen assigned him to the Kebumen District. On 5 December 1904, his per-

10 Idenburg to Van Heutsz, 8 June 1905, in NA, Archive Colonies after 1900, Vb. 8 June 1905, lt. N14, inv.nr. 57.
11 Van Heutsz to Idenburg, 13 March 1905, in Documentation Centre for Dutch Protestantism (DCNP), VU University Amsterdam, Idenburg Archive, inv. no. A 11 2b.
manent appointment as prospective inspector to the European Interior Administration followed.¹²

When Minister Idenburg heard of Koesomo Joedo’s appointment, he immediately reached for his pen. In a telegram dated 6 January 1905 he declared that the appointment of “natives” to the European Interior Administration was utterly undesirable, because this administrative body was the one that most directly represented the mother country. Idenburg therefore urgently requested Governor-General Van Heutsz to transfer Koesomo Joedo as quickly as possible to a position outside the Interior Administration. In two private letters addressed to Van Heutsz, the minister reiterated his position. Idenburg welcomed every attempt to grant the “well-practised natives” greater independence. It would, for instance, be excellent if a Javanese candidate who had successfully completed the advanced civil service examination could quickly become head of the district and regent. An appointment as controleur, however, had to be utterly excluded. “You know,” he wrote to Van Heutsz, “that I do not consider the indigenous people to be in principle in any way inferior to a European, but just as it is impossible to appoint a European to the native administration, it is equally impossible to incorporate a native in the European administration as long as he remains a native.”¹³

However, Van Heutsz was not convinced by Idenburg either. In an initial response, he informed the minister that he had no objection to the principle that a “native” could not be expected to represent the mother country “if you replace mother country with fatherland, since there are very many European administrators with a mother who is either of the indigenous race or has sprung from it.” In terms of the practical considerations, Van Heutsz was, on the contrary, of the opinion that appointing to the post of controleur a Javanese candidate who had successfully completed the senior civil service examination was to be highly recommended. He was convinced that, should Koesomo Joedo make a career for himself within the European Interior Administration, many sons of Javanese leaders would come to the Netherlands for their education with the goal of passing the senior civil service examination, which would lead within a “short period to a superior body of native administrators (who could replace) the present assistant-residents and controleurs.” “I am

---

¹² Sutherland, Pangreh Pradja, 190-192; Letter Koesoemo Joedo to Governor-General Van Heutsz, 18 November 1906, in NA, Colonial Archives after 1900, Vb. 13 January 1908, no. 40, inv. no. 518.

¹³ Idenburg to Van Heutsz, 6 January 1905, in NA, Colonial Archive after 1900, Vb. 6 January 1905, lt. J1, inv. no. 50; Idenburg to Van Heutsz, 14 February 1905 and 24 April 1905, in NA, Van Heutsz Collection, inv.nr. 2.
convinced,” wrote the governor-general to Minister Idenburg, “that the result will be surprising if the direction I have taken to appoint natives to the European Administrative Body is not abandoned again.”

In this matter, Snouck Hurgronje was unsurprisingly on Van Heutsz’ side. He too wished to make no distinction between “natives” and Europeans. Those who did so were using, as Snouck Hurgronje had written numerous times, a “fictitious racial distinction.” What was important was not origin, but education and development. Koesomo Joedo was in this context not the best example as far as the adviser for Indigenous Affairs was concerned. Snouck thought that he possessed only “average qualities and little energy”; moreover, he had not chosen administrative work out of “love” but for financial reasons. One should not, warned Snouck Hurgronje, attach too much value to Koesomo Joedo’s performance. There were other, better suited Javanese candidates who should be admitted to the European Interior Administration. People would have “to still put up (with the dualistic administration system) [...] for a long time for opportunistic reasons,” but entry to the European Civil Service had to be made dependent on the level of schooling alone. “Since for a long time now the concept of European has no longer been synonymous with Western origin, education and civilisation, and since many natives enjoy the best education, the time has come to see the [...] duality of the administrator positions as resting on two different systems of education.” The appointment of Koesomo Joedo at the European Civil Service therefore had to be seen, as far as Snouck Hurgronje was concerned, as a transitional measure towards a situation he both desired and considered normal: a unitary administration, in which the European Civil Service would to a large extent be replaced by a modern indigenous government. He warned Van Heutsz that he should work “powerfully and using all the means at your disposal” towards the emancipation of indigenous administrators. There was much at stake. If the government kept denying educated indigenous young men the possibility of making a serious career within the administration, “then in an attempt to keep everything, we would lose it all in the end.”

The Koesomo Joedo question incidentally seemed to resolve itself when the Javanese aspirant inspector was moved to another governmental department.

---

14 Van Heutsz to Idenburg, 4 June 1905, in DCNP, Idenburg Archive, inv. no. A 11 2b.
the Indigenous Agricultural Credit System. Nor was Koesoemo Joedo the last Javanese who would pass the senior civil service examination. In 1905, he was followed by Raden Mas Sajogo and in 1907 by Mas Mohammad Achmad and Raden Soejono. It was clear, though, that the problem of the administrative body to which these Western-educated Javanese should be appointed had to be resolved once and for all. Governor-General Van Heutsz no longer allowed Snouck Hurgronje to advise him on this issue. Grave differences in opinion concerning the Aceh policy had led to a break between Van Heutsz and Snouck Hurgronje. “Working in the East Indies gradually turned bitter for me through wilful lack of appreciation and cooperation from the highest echelons,” wrote Snouck Hurgronje some time later to Colonel K. van der Maaten. “Maybe my increased sensitivity, resulting from so long a stay, meant that I felt it more keenly than I would have done before, but it simply got to be ‘too much’ for me.” As a result, Snouck Hurgronje decided in March 1906 to leave for the Netherlands, for good, as it turned out later, leaving behind his twenty-one-year-old Sundanese wife (he himself was forty-nine years old) and five children (four of whom were from a previous marriage).

Without Snouck Hurgronje in the role of adviser for Indigenous Affairs, Van Heutsz eventually allowed himself to be convinced that the Javanese could not occupy the administrative positions reserved for the Dutch. Although he did appoint Koesomo Joedo as an inspector on 2 October 1907, it was on the understanding that in this function he would still be working for the Indigenous Agricultural Credit System. A real career in the European Civil Service was thus factually excluded and in 1916, Koesomo Joedo, having been a regional inspector of the People’s Credit System for almost four years (still as a controleur à la suite), was appointed as regent of Ponorogo in the residence of Madiun. “Natives” were not to be allowed into the European Civil Service.

---

17 Excerpt from the register of decisions of the governor-general, 1 July 1905, no. 39, in NA, Colonial Archive after 1900, Vb. 30 December 1905, lt. E31, inv. no. 65.
18 Sutherland, Pangreh Pradja, 190.
19 Snouck Hurgronje to Van der Maaten, 11 October 1907, in K. van der Maaten, Snouck Hurgronje en de Atjeh Oorlog, 2 vols. (Leiden: Oostersch Instituut, 1948), 11, appendix XLVIII.
21 Hulshof Pol to De Graaff, 2 October 1907, in NA, Colonial Archive after 1900, Vb. 13 January 1908, no. 40, inv. no. 518.
The colonial administration was therefore resolute in its decision to stick to a system in which the Dutch administrators and indigenous leaders operated alongside each other. The basis of this continued to be that as far as possible the Dutch administrators would govern the Dutch East Indies at all levels of administration. From the outset, the Javanese were excluded from important positions in the administrative apparatus on the grounds of race. The “character failings” or, as the Council of Dutch East Indies termed them, “racial characteristics” of the regents and wedonos ensured that, as regards “competence, education, experience, understanding and righteousness,” they generally did not meet “by a long way, even the most modest requirements.”

Snouck Hurgronje did not leave it at this once back in the Netherlands. He was indeed disappointed when he left the Dutch East Indies in March 1906, but on arriving back in the Netherlands this ambitious scholar was certainly not a beaten man. He arranged almost immediately to be interviewed by Het Vaderland and declared that it was still his aim to ensure that the indigenous civil servants would be granted greater influence in the entire administration. However, Snouck Hurgronje no longer considered admitting Javanese people with a Western education to the European corps of civil servants in the domestic administration to be a good method of emancipating the Javanese leaders. “Just as it would be irrational to appoint a European as regent, to appoint a native as resident would be equally so; due to their nature, both offices set completely different requirements concerning birth, origin and education,” said Snouck Hurgronje, showing that he had somewhat modified his point of view regarding dualism. Whereas at the lower administrative level “a good number of the native and European administrative posts” could be merged, for the time being representatives of Western culture and civilisation must keep the administration of the colonial state in their hands. After all, it was their duty to pass on Western values to the indigenous elite. However, the government of the Dutch East Indies should be striving here to reduce the tutelage of the European domestic administrators.

Snouck Hurgronje’s reputation had preceded him when he made his way to

---

23 Conclusion of the Council of the Dutch East Indies, 4 March 1904, in NA, Colonial Archives after 1900, Vb. 8 June 1905, lt. N14, inv. no. 57.

the Netherlands. In 1906, he had barely arrived back when he was already approached by Leiden University about a professorship in Arabic and the Islamic institutions. He was naturally flattered by this request, but he also realised, with some dismay, that such an appointment could mean the end of his involvement in Dutch East Indies policy and the loss of some of his colonial retirement benefits. In a letter to the minister of the Colonies, Fock, Snouck Hurgronje therefore made it clear that he could only accept the appointment at Leiden University if he could also be associated with the ministry as an adviser for Indigenous and Arabic Affairs, including an official salary. Fock agreed to this proposal and consequently Snouck Hurgronje, although now in the Netherlands, remained involved in policies relating to the Dutch East Indies.

For Snouck Hurgronje, one of the most important colonial issues continued to be the relationship between the European and the indigenous administration on Java. The responsible administrators in the Dutch East Indies and the Netherlands were well aware of his opinions on this, but his many policy documents and letters had achieved little in the way of results. Snouck Hurgronje therefore decided to take a decisive step into the public domain with his ideas rather than reserving them only for the eyes of the civil servants in The Hague or Batavia. On 25 March 1908 he gave a lecture in Leiden about the application of article 67 of the Government Regulations which prescribed that, in as far as circumstances permitted, the indigenous population should be left to the immediate governance of its own leaders and should be subjected only to the higher supervision of the European domestic administration. Snouck Hurgronje’s lecture proved to be an extremely sharp attack on the policy of keeping the indigenous civil servants in a subservient position. In order to achieve even greater publicity for his opinions, he published the lecture in the autumn of 1908 in De Gids under the title of “The Indigenous Civil Service, particularly on Java.”

Both during his lecture and in his article Snouck Hurgronje made it clear that, in his view, the administrative principle that was laid down in article 67 of the Government Regulation was the only correct basis for the colonial administrative practice. Approvingly, he quoted the Arabic proverb: “sort above sort: that is mercy.” He considered it necessary to state this in clear terms, because only few people in the Netherlands understood how unpleasant it was to be governed by foreigners and even fewer understood that the Asian peoples also always preferred their own administration to colonial administration, especially when the latter was trying so hard to “dissolve” them. “Even under the

most favourable circumstances," said Snouck Hurgronje, "foreign control remains a disadvantage for a population, even if it is also sometimes an unavoidable disadvantage." The colonial administration should therefore aim to give the indigenous leaders and organisations as much room as possible to manoeuvre. If the colonial authorities did not follow this line of action, they would cultivate "in an energetic population endless resistance that would gradually intensify into enmity and hate."

Although article 67 of the Government Regulations appeared to endorse this, in practice Hurgronje believed it had served "more as an empty symbol than as a living administrative principle." The “great majority” of the European civil servants who were “bowed under the weight of prejudice” were responsible for this because they had ensured that, instead of functioning as independent civil servants, the indigenous leaders on Java had become the “children and servants in the administrative family,” in other words, “the wayang puppets that are played by dhalangs who swap over much too quickly.” Snouck Hurgronje did not hesitate to wipe the floor with these dhalangs, the European civil servants who, through rash judgement and ignorance and laziness, had started to believe in the moral and intellectual inferiority of their indigenous colleagues. He called on the government to intervene strongly by giving the positions that they deserved to those indigenous civil servants with a Western education. The European civil servants would also have to change their attitude drastically and thus see it as their final aim to “gradually make themselves for a good part superfluous.” In all of this the “own leaders” from article 67 of the Government Regulations were, for Snouck Hurgronje, a completely different kind of administrator, of course, than Jean Chrétien Baud, governor-general of the Dutch East Indies from 1833 to 1836, had conceived of in 1836 when he officially formulated this administrative principle. Whereas Baud was thinking about quasi-feudal national leaders, Snouck Hurgronje did want the indigenous population to be governed by “their own” civil servants, but first and foremost he wanted these civil servants to have a Western education. 26

In Snouck Hurgronje’s opinion, the true aim of colonial policy must be the voluntary merger of the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies, the realisation of a “noble political and national sentiment,” namely, the coming into being of a Dutch state consisting of two parts that were geographically far removed from each other "but with profound spiritual bonds." The Dutch owed this to

themselves. In 1911, Snouck Hurgronje presented a number of Dutch administrators who were on leave with the following words of Goethe:

“Was du ererbt von deinen Vätern hast,
Erwirb es, um es zu besitzen.”

The legacy alluded to here was the political link between fatherland and colony, and if this unit wished to withstand “the storms of time” Snouck Hurgronje believed the “material merger would have to be followed by the spiritual one.” By “spiritual merger” Snouck Hurgronje did not mean, incidentally, that the Javanese would have to assume Western culture in full. He was for a policy of association, which would enable the Javanese people to “participate in the life of their rulers in their own way.” A policy focusing on association would make what was previously foreign for the Javanese people their own. Snouck Hurgronje believed that in the end there would only be “Eastern” and “Western” Dutch people who would “form a whole in a political and national sense in which racial differences do not count.” What counted was therefore only the wish to live as one state. An association policy should, in the eyes of Snouck Hurgronje, focus primarily on the higher groups in Javanese society, who were most able to combine “Western wisdom” with “Eastern experience.” The government should therefore make it possible for the sons of indigenous leaders to receive a Western education and to come to the Netherlands for higher education. Such educated indigenous civil servants should then, to repeat it once more, be granted greater independence. Snouck Hurgronje was less enthusiastic about expanding the desa schooling system: not only was this beyond the colonial means, but the psychology of the average person also still represented too many “currently unsolvable mysteries.” Snouck Hurgronje challenged the opponents of a policy focusing on association by making it clear that ambitions awakened in the indigenous populations could no longer be repressed. The only question that still needed addressing was whether the continuation of the movement that began with such strength will take place with our cooperation and under our leadership or despite our opposition and then under the leadership of others who will not be made to wait for long.” The emergence of a nationalistic movement in the Dutch East Indies did not instill fear in Snouck Hurgronje, but he considered the “strong promotion” of an association policy, which included granting an important part of the colonial administration to educated indigenous civil servants, to be extremely urgent. 28

---

27 Faust I, Nacht. “What you have inherited from your fathers, make it yours to possess it.”
28 C. Snouck Hurgronje, Nederland en de Islâm. Vier voordrachten gehouden in de Neder-
As Snouck Hurgronje wrote this plea, a young nationalist movement was forming in the Dutch East Indies. In 1908, a small number of the priyayi and a larger group of older students at the higher education establishments for Javanese had become convinced that the time had come to unite in order to advance the Javanese people. The quick development of China and Japan in particular had led them to believe that, if the Javanese did not develop quickly, they would lag behind the rest of Asia. This belief finally led to the establishment on 20 May 1908 of the Budi Utomo (“The Noble Endeavour”) association, which held its first congress on 5 October in that year in Jogjakarta.29 For Godard Hazeau, Snouck Hurgronje’s successor as adviser on domestic affairs, the significance of the Budi Utomo congress was clear. In a letter to Governor-General Van Heutsz, he wrote that it was “of a not to be underestimated significance as the first expression of a new life that, under favourable circumstances, will lead to development and flourishing in the long term.” The indigenous society on Java certainly appeared to be about to enter a new phase in its development.30

Against this backdrop, it was striking that Snouck Hurgronje’s reflections only related to the position of the traditional Javanese elite, the priyayi. Budi Utomo was not yet a mass movement – far from it – but from Snouck Hurgronje’s observations, it would seem that there were no masses at all on Java. Snouck Hurgronje made it look as if it was all about the regents and that if they could be bound to Dutch convictions and the Dutch administration, this would provide the guarantee of the unthreatened possession of the colony of the Dutch East Indies. In other words, people like Snouck Hurgronje, who were in principle progressive, had in fact a rather traditional view of the structure of the indigenous society. They did not appreciate that it was precisely the students at establishments of higher education for the Javanese people and not the regents who had given the impulse to the formation of Budi Utomo.

However this may have come about, with his publications Snouck Hurgronje appeared to be able to count on the approval of the minister of the Colonies, Idenburg. “I agree with the conclusion of Dr Snouck’s De Gids article from August,” the minister wrote to J. Th. Viethoff, the head of the A3 department of his ministry, which was the department that dealt with the colonial administra-

tion. “It is my resolute conviction, on the basis of what I read about Japan and Siam, that we must move, and preferably not too slowly, in the direction of the greater independence of the native civil servants.” At the beginning of November 1908 Minister Idenburg wrote to Governor-General Van Heutsz that they must not wait until all the indigenous leaders had been educated in the Western fashion but must immediately commence an experiment to give the indigenous administration more independence, even if it was only in one district or part of one.

However, Idenburg’s proposal was rejected in the Dutch East Indies. Snouck Hurgronje was no longer Governor-General Van Heutsz’s most important adviser; this position was now held by the director for Domestic Administration, the hardworking and intelligent but archconservative Simon de Graaff. He was firmly against the idea of leaving the actual administration to the indigenous leaders. To begin with, he believed, such an experiment would cause a great deal of unrest, given that the most suitable indigenous civil servants would have to be transferred from all over Java to the specific district that had been chosen for the trial. De Graaff was also convinced that such a trial would quickly cause “all sorts of undesirable complications” and would result in “such confusion” that “the matter would lead to a complete fiasco, sufficient to cause the desire to take further steps in the intended direction to be dampened for years.”

In November 1909, Simon de Graaff came up with his own plan: the conservative answer to the proposals made by Snouck Hurgronje in his article in De Gids. In contrast to many colonial civil servants, De Graaff was very aware of the changes that were occurring in the indigenous society and he understood that, sooner or later, the government would have to react to them. If the government, De Graaff wrote in his policy document, “does not want the population to see it forced in the near future to do […] that which is demanded by the natural course of events and […] is a sign of the times” then it should strike out on a new course, “quickly and determinedly,” with regard to the structure of the domestic administration.

This new direction was not the one indicated in Snouck Hurgronje’s ideas about association. It went without saying that the administrative authority in

31 Idenburg to the head of the A3 Department of the Ministry, 1 October 1908, in NA, Colonial Archives after 1900, Vb. 3 November 1908, no. 18/1807, inv. no. 595.
32 Idenburg to Van Heutsz, 3 November 1908, in NA, Colonial Archives after 1900, Vb. 3 November 1908, no. 18/1807, inv. no. 595.
33 S. de Graaff, Nota over eene hervorming van het bestuurswezen in Nederlandsch-Indië (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1909), 66-68.
34 Ibid., 80-81.
the Dutch East Indies should remain in the hands of a racially “pure” Dutch administrative corps. The indigenous civil servants and leaders should never be allowed to assume executive positions within the internal administration alongside their Dutch colleagues. De Graaff was very categorical here:

Just as there is no room for Europeans, however driven they might be in their use of native languages and however greatly they have penetrated the life of the native people, in the indigenous administrative corps, [...] it is not fitting to open the way to natives entering the corps of European civil servants whose duty it is to maintain the general administration with respect for our terms of Western government and the interests of the Dutch supreme authority.

De Graaff could not sympathise at all with Snouck Hurgronje’s reflections on whether article 67 of the Government Regulation had been correctly implemented. Snouck Hurgronje was “seriously misled” with these comments. What was the case here? Article 67 did, it was true, speak of the “immediate governing” of the population by indigenous leaders but also of “higher supervision” by the European administration. That this had led to a dualistic administrative structure was no denial of what article 67 had to say but merely “a necessary outcome” of “the pressing circumstances.” De Graaff believed that the contrôleurs were, in principle, only instruments of the residents and assistant-residents to allow the higher supervision required by the Government Regulation to be more than nominal. The task of the contrôleurs therefore consisted of checking the lower indigenous administration together with the regent.35

In other words, De Graaff did not wish to make any changes to the foundations of the colonial administration on Java. The Dutch administrators must be able to assert their authority at all levels of the administration. He did want to provide the regents with “proficient, well-educated native helpers who are permeated as much as possible by Western social opinion,” but this was all he wanted.36 Although there was also some criticism of De Graaff’s plans, he expressed the views of many Dutch administrators who could see a continuing role for themselves in indigenous society. The administrators continued to defend almost en masse the idea that the indigenous civil servants were unreliable by definition, primarily because of their “Oriental” characteristics, which meant that the only thing that could protect the indigenous population was

35 De Graaff, Nota over eene hervorming van het bestuurswezen in Nederlandsch-Indië, 17-23.
36 Ibid., 1-7 and 51-81; for these so-called “assistant-regents” see further Idenburg to De Waal Malefijt, 22 March 1911, in DCNP, Archief De Waal Malefijt, inv. no. 38.
daily contact between the inspector and the population. “Only such intimate contact can act as a guarantee,” Fokkens, a former resident, wrote, “that efforts are continually being made to ensure that the common man is not cheated, robbed and bled dry by Arabs or Chinese and [...] abused by native leaders, their family members and accomplices.”

Snouck Hurgronje, however, found De Graaff’s ideas thoroughly reprehensible. He believed that the “native helpers” with a Western education should, for example, start to act as “the special instruments of the European administration” so that they would continually, albeit indirectly, be able to look after all the details of the everyday administration. “Anyone who is familiar with the smell of the atmosphere of the higher civil servants in the Indies,” wrote Snouck Hurgronje, “can certainly smell in all of this the stink of deeply rooted mistrust about the native world's suitability for higher education.”

4 The “Detutelisation” of the Indigenous Administration

In the meantime the development of Javanese society was by no means stagnant. In 1911 the Sarekat Islam was established. This movement quickly attracted over a million followers with a variety of nationalistic demands. P.H. Fromberg, previously a member of the Dutch East Indian Supreme Court, offered an incisive analysis of the consequences of the rise of the Sarekat Islam in an article published in 1914, entitled “The indigenous movement on Java”:

The chief basis of government policy, that is, rule over the indigenous populations by their own leaders, whom the Government Regulations (art. 67) regard as chiefs and representatives of the people, is in a state of irreversible decay. At present the historical and traditional element that envelops the regents, from which they derive their authority as well as through state appointment, will retain its integrity, but the decay cannot be withstood.”

In fact, every initiative related to internal governance was becoming obsolescent with the rise of Sarekat Islam. Whether one adhered to the conservative or

37 F. Fokkens, De ontworpen reorganisatie van het bestuur in Nederlandsch-Indië (’s-Gravenhage: Daamen, 1911), 23-36 (quote on 23).
the progressive wing, whether one counted oneself a Simon de Graaff or a Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, the standpoint was always one in which the traditional indigenous leaders played a central role, in the one case from time immemorial subordinate to European internal policy, in the other trained in a more modern ethos and with greater independence. Even Snouck Hurgronje’s “ideas of association” seem out-dated. The events on Java made clear that it was no longer possible to sustain the idea that it was sufficient to train the indigenous leaders in such a way that they in turn could help their fellow-inhabitants. The feudal structure of society, that for the most conservative through to the most progressive thinkers formed the basis for their ideas about future government, was now definitively seen to rest on insecure foundations. If the authorities wished to continue to enhance the development of the indigenous society—by which is meant here the rise of a nationalist movement—then it was obliged to develop a completely fresh vision about the future of internal government: the population must be accorded a place in the colonial administration itself. The Dutch East Indies must be given democratic administrative structures.

But it would never come to this. In September 1917, Governor-General Van Limburg Stirum indeed initiated a concrete reform of internal administration along the lines of Snouck Hurgronje’s 1908 article “Indigenous administrators, with special reference to Java,” an article which, at the time of its publication, was probably still of some relevance, but certainly not almost a decade later. Nevertheless Van Limburg Stirum decided once again to make clear to the European authorities that the era of a permanent “state of rulelage” in which the indigenous administrators were held was over once and for all, and that it was necessary to steer “a new course.” But his director of Internal Affairs H. Carpentier Alting wanted to go further. The most ideal solution would then be the entire abolition of the dual administrative system, but he realised that such a measure would never be acceptable. He therefore proposed to remove the controleurs as co-administrator solely for the departments of inspection on Java and Madura, in itself a revolutionary measure within the colonial context. Abolishing the controleurs in this way would in any case bring about dramatic changes to the administration, given the permanent and significant influence they exercised on internal administrative affairs. The director took the view that many regents “[saw] in the controleur the man responsible for everyday policy.” In other words, it was this official who “[gave] the regent in question a sense of dissatisfaction [and] in whatever way [prevented] the advancement

40 Van Limburg Stirum to Pleiże, 15 September 1917, in NA, Archief Koloniën na 1900, Vb. 11 January 1918, no. 33, inv.nr. 1781.
of beneficial qualities within indigenous administrative circles.” In future the role of the inspector should be restricted to that of a co-operator to the local assistant resident. Complete control of the indigenous administration should be left to the regents themselves, a view that did not, however, imply that Carpentier Alting considered these officials wholly capable of independent supervision: for a long while to come the inspectors would continue to be indispensable as “guides.” There was equally a large difference in rank between an inspector who, by means of his wedonos, more or less administered directly, and one who was solely responsible for advising a regent. So the measures proposed by Carpentier Alting would dramatically alter the manner in which the practice of indigenous administration was carried out on Java and Madura, and indeed in the direction that had previously been indicated by Snouck Hurgronje himself.\textsuperscript{41}

In principle, Governor-General Van Limburg Stirum agreed with Carpentier Alting’s proposals, but it remained unclear to him when, and indeed whether, those proposals could actually be implemented. He therefore commissioned the director of Internal Affairs to develop by way of example a concrete plan for a given regency. To this end Van Limburg Stirum suggested selecting Cianjur in the residence of Preanger (now Priangan) Regency, where the young protégé of Snouck Hurgronje, Moeharam Wiranatakoesoema was regent.\textsuperscript{42} Carpentier Alting took up this idea, and in February 1918 empowered the resident of the Priangan Regency, \textit{Jongheer} (title of nobility) L. De Stuers, to develop a directive that would share the regency’s charges and competences between the European and the indigenous administrators.\textsuperscript{43}

Resident De Stuers appeared to fully support Carpentier Alting’s initiative. Moreover, he was attracted by the choice of Cianjur because of all the regencies in his residency it was among the most straightforward to administer. It would be possible to intervene in case of possible difficulties. Furthermore, De Stuers was completely convinced of the capacities of Wiranatakoesoema who, in his view, “as far as intellectual development and character traits are concerned” would make the ideal ruler of an autonomised regency. In the provisions De Stuers drew up for Cianjur the number of Dutch administrators was reduced to two: one assistant-resident and one \textit{controleur}, both based in the capital Cianjur itself. The \textit{controleur} was in the first instance expected to assist the regent and to manage the work of the regent’s office. The assistant resident

\textsuperscript{41} Carpentier Alting to Van Limburg Stirum, 16 November 1917, in NA, Archief Koloniën na 1900, Vb. 16 October 1920, no. 34, inv.nr. 2183.
\textsuperscript{42} Erdbrink to Carpentier Alting, 30 January 1918, in ibid.
\textsuperscript{43} Carpentier Alting to De Stuers, 9 February 1918, in ibid.
would be given the task of “advanced general supervision.” The latter role meant that he would consult with the regent in regard to all cases of important administrative concern. The proposal entailed allocating the regent general administrative leadership within the regency, assisted by an official who must occupy a higher rank than that of *wedono*. The older function of *patih* was thus revived under De Stuers’s proposal. The dual positions of regent and *patih* would assign all responsibility to the *wedonos*, whose tasks were considerably extended as a result of the abolition of the inspectorate. In this way the *wedono* would act as district judge and chief of police, take responsibility for the election of *desa* heads or minor administrators, and among other matters supervise minor administrative credit affairs, indigenous schools and teachers of religious education.44

De Stuers’s plans were approved by both Wiranatakoesoema along with the other indigenous administrative offices in Cianjur, and by Carpentier Alting as well, and they were presented to Governor-General Van Limburg Stirum on 3 July 1918.45 During the installation of the People’s Council, the latter had already, in fact, officially made the further detutelisation known, and had even emphasised that the Dutch East Indian government—like Snouck Hurgronje himself—were at the same time convinced of the sovereignty of the traditional indigenous power structures. “The progeny of the established higher echelons in Javanese society,” would, in his view, “continue to play a leading role in the development of their people. Greater independence will therefore be ensured them as a result of the steps that are leading towards the autonomisation of indigenous administration. The greater responsibility that will result will in turn lead to an increase in the self-confidence that must form the basis of the moral guidance without which a nation cannot arrive at a higher destiny.”46 In other words, for Van Limburg Stirum it was the regent families that were crucial to the maintenance of colonial authority and the progress of an indigenous society, and this was precisely what Snouck Hurgronje had proposed.

By the middle of 1918 the governor-general therefore had to hand a detailed proposal, with which the detutelisation of the indigenous administration could be put to the test. On 23 September 1918, at his summer residence Ciapanas, he signed a decree bringing into force the detutelisation of the indigenous administration on Java and Madura. At first sight such a decree did not

44 De Stuers to Carpentier Alting, 29 May 1918, in NA, Archief Koloniën na 1900, Vb. 16 October 1920, no. 34, inv.nr. 2183. See also Sutherland, *Pangreh Pradja*, 314-315.
45 Carpentier Alting to Van Limburg Stirum, 3 July and 1 August 1918, in NA, Archief Koloniën na 1900, Vb. 16 October 1920, no. 34, inv.nr. 2183.
46 *Handelingen van den Volksraad*, 1918, 2.
seem to amount to much. It simply opened up the “possibility” for a “modest” transfer of various powers from European administration to indigenous administrators “as a trial measure.” It was left to the residents themselves to determine which competences would be affected by this measure.⁴⁷ Even the decree, in which it was Cianjur that was earmarked as the regency for this experiment in detutelisation, did not seem exceptionally far-reaching. A number of powers were explicitly named that could be transferred in this way, powers that among other things concerned land rental to Europeans, the cultivation of waste ground, the appointment and dismissal of police officers, and the splitting up and merging of desas. But it was not the transfer of these powers, “the detutelisation in the stricter sense of the word,”⁴⁸ that was in any way remarkable; it was the change in the administrative division of Cianjur, “the detutelisation in the broader sense of the word,” that in fact led to something quite revolutionary. The administrative units of Cianjur and Sukanegara were actually abolished, as a result of which one of the controleurs was transferred elsewhere, while the other was attached to the assistant-resident. As a result of this measure, in addition to the powers transferred on the basis of the detutelisation decree, the wedonos were simultaneously obliged to fulfill many other tasks independently, now that most of the executive tasks of the inspectors were completely entrusted to the indigenous administrators. In Cianjur the overseer had in fact been withdrawn to a supervisory position, in consequence of which he would officially be solely answerable to the regent in the future. On account of the extra administrative burden placed on the indigenous administration, an experienced patih once more had to be appointed, who no longer needed to be concerned with the administration of a given district.⁴⁹

In choosing to detutelise, the authorities intended not only to give the indigenous administrators a more independent role: there was another, implicit intention that lay behind this decision. This was the neutralisation of the growing might of the nationalist movement. It was not their intention that the process should be rolled back, making further experimentation difficult to carry out. During the official ceremony marking the detutelisation of Cianjur on 8 January 1919 resident De Stuers made no secret of this. “This reorganisation is frequently spoken of as an experiment,” he said. “This is not correct. In the case of an experiment the assumption is that if it is unsuccessful, one can return to the old way of doing things, and in this particular instance that is simply not

---

⁴⁷ Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië, 1918, no. 674.
⁴⁸ The phrase is taken from J.M. Pieters, De zoogenaamde ontvoogding van het inlandsch bestuur (Wageningen: Veenman, 1932), 33.
⁴⁹ Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië, 1918, no. 675.
possible." He made it clearer still to the indigenous administrators that in view of the authority vested in them by the leadership, they should maintain that authority, "above all in these times in which disaffected elements attempt to remove the insignia of authority and place themselves between the governors and the people." Naturally, De Stuers did not need to specify what he meant by "disaffected elements." He enjoined the indigenous administrators emphatically not to tolerate any deviation from the charges and competences invested in you by the government, nor that any grouping of irresponsible people should attempt to intervene between you and the people, thereby undermining your indispensable power by sowing mistrust and contempt for you as custodians of that power. There must be no toleration of any attempt whatsoever to undermine matters of state that come within the competence of the Internal Administration by elements, often posing as representatives of the people, who would disempower and sideline the official administrators.50

Needless to say, the authorities kept a very close eye on developments in the detutelised Cianjur. It was always possible that detutelisation might provide a response to various problems facing the indigenous administration, not least those having to do with the rise of the nationalist movement. During 1919, the various indigenous administrators with a role in Cianjur repeatedly had to report to the government about various issues in the regency. Naturally the regent Wiranatakoesoema affirmed that up to that point his executive had enjoyed great success, and in so doing he even openly attacked the Sarekat Islam movement. The relationship between the administration and the populace had perceptibly improved, witness the number of desa works that, since the removal of the controleurs, had been brought under the control of the wedonos, something that previously, because of physical resistance from the populace, would not have been possible. For Wiranatakoesoema another positive aspect of the detutelisation was the transfer of the office of the jaksa, the indigenous justice officer, to the kabupaten. As a result, the regent could now be closely involved with judicial matters, which were previously the preserve of the assistant resident. Advances had also been made, according to Wiranatakoesoema,
in disempowering the nationalist movement, even though many Javanese were still reluctant to express themselves openly towards the indigenous administrators. In this respect a sense of discontent still prevailed among the populace, something that surfaced through the “familiar, spiritually destructive ‘gripping’” of the Sarekat Islam. This “gripping” would, however, disappear of its own accord, in the view of the regent who two years previously had hosted the nationalist party during the first national congress. “Trust in the fullest sense of the word,” wrote an optimistic Wiranatakoesoema “will be more effective than a show of force”—in so doing allowing the government to hear precisely what it wished to hear.51

Like Wiranatakoesoema, resident De Stuers was generally speaking satisfied with the results of the detutelisation. The indigenous administrators seemed perfectly capable of performing the tasks assigned to them. However, it could not be maintained that the detutelisation had caused the power of the Sarekat Islam to wane. According to the resident, one had only to read the reports of the well-attended assemblies of this movement in the regency of Cianjur to appreciate that it was scarcely possible to detect a growing trust on the populace’s behalf in the indigenous administration.52

Governor-General Van Limburg Stirum had not waited for the results of the “experiment” in Cianjur before deciding to detutelise other regencies. He took the view that detutelisation was no less than “one of the most important measures that aim to allow the indigenous society to grow to greater independence.”53 Between 1919 and 1921, at least one regency in every residence on Java was detutelised “in the broader sense of the word.”54 The districts of the controleurs in the regencies concerned were disbanded and in general terms the indigenous administrators were allocated the same competences and charges as their colleagues in Cianjur. In these regencies the European Internal Administration was only represented in its primary location by an assistant resident,

51 Report Wiranatakoesoema, 22 June 1920, in NA, Archief Koloniën na 1900, Vb. 1 February 1922, no 52, inv. no. 2373.
53 Valkenburg to the heads of the departments, 30 December 1918, in NA, Archief Koloniën na 1900, Vb. 16 October 1920, no. 34, inv. no. 2183.
54 Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië, 1919, no. 668 (Banjumas), no. 804 (Blora); ibid., 1920, no. 44 (Pasuruan), no. 45 (Batang), no. 66 (Berkem), no. 91 (Indramajoe & Cherbon), no. 128 (Grisee), no. 246 (Bangkalan); ibid., 1921, no. 353 (Seang), no. 424 (Banjoewangi), no. 425 (Krawang), no. 476 (Koeningen & Madjalengka). In addition the following regencies were autonomised before the 1925 Governmental Reform: Madiun & Ngawi (ibid., no. 435) and Megatan & Patjitan (ibid., 1927, no 534).
supported at most by one \textit{controleur}. The uniformity of the detutelisation further enabled the government to incorporate the \textit{Inlandsch ontvoogdingsbesluit} (“detutelisation decision”) in the \textit{Staatsblad} on 9 May 1921, in which the number of issues to be considered for inclusion in the transfer of competencies was actually extended.\(^{55}\)

Of course, it was not so much the transfer of competences but the removal of the \textit{controleur} as co-administrator in internal affairs that was by far the most important consequence of this policy, a policy that had been propagated by Snouck Hurgronje in particular a decade before, in order to take concrete steps towards the reform of the interior administration on Java and Madura. Eventually many indigenous administrators came to view the detutelisation on Java and Madura as the start of a new era. Notohadisuryo, the regent of Banyuwangi, addressed the People’s Council with these words: “The detutelisation process is indeed a matter of honour to our indigenous peoples, a matter of the greatest importance. I cannot adequately express how important this occasion is to us. For detutelisation contains the core of the self-governance so long promised us.”\(^{56}\) But there was criticism as well. The former aspirant-inspector Koesemo Joedo made it emphatically clear to the People’s Council that he was anything but satisfied with “the quantity and quality of the competences transferred.” In his view, the issues that were the concern of the transfer of competences vied with each other for clarity of purpose.\(^{57}\) Whatever the truth of the matter, the indigenous administration certainly operated more independently, but the question as to whether this measure had indeed strengthened the position of the indigenous administrators themselves in respect of the populace and—in consequence—had diminished the role of the nationalist movement, was of course another matter altogether.

It quickly became apparent that the nationalist movement had lost none of its influence, but instead could now rely on still more support from the populace. Eventually this led, in colonial circles, to a conservative reaction characterised by a distancing of themselves from the very principles upon which the concept of detutelisation had been based. “Abrogation, liberation, autonomisation, information, association, socialism, ethics, and so many other such terms,” thundered assistant-resident M.B. van der Jagt in the People’s Council,

\(^{55}\) Ibid., 1921, no. 310. See also: ibid., 1921, no. 779; ibid., 1922, no. 438 and ibid., 1923, no. 276.

\(^{56}\) Handelingen van den Volksraad, 1921, 312; see also: ibid., 1922, 264; and ibid., 1923, 293.

\(^{57}\) Handelingen van den Volksraad, 1920, First General Assembly, 533. Djajadinigrat later insisted that the transferred competencies were “of such minimal importance” (“\textit{van zóó gering belang}”) that he could not even recall them. See A. Djajadinigrat, “De positie van de regenten op Java en Madoera in het huidige bestuursstelsel,” \textit{Indisch Genootschap} (1929): 99-100.
“have become the mantras under which the pseudo-leaders, the indigenous populace, are quickly being caught up in modish terminology. Even now, God help us, full-blooded Europeans are busy with their demolition work, visible to all, even the outsiders, the non-indigenous peoples.”

From within Leiden University, which would come to be known as a bastion of progressive colonial thinking, emanated a note of dissent. In 1923, Snouck Hurgronje wrote in an article in *De Gids* entitled “Forgotten jubilees” that the administration in the Dutch East Indies was truly in every area “a concatenation of abysmal misunderstandings.” The majority of colonial administrators paid only lip service to their task, without any awareness of responsibility. “A minority does possess such awareness,” wrote the Leiden professor, “but perceives it as gradually eroding under the pressure of a despicable system, that shows appalling injustices on a daily basis.” Snouck Hurgronje therefore urged “a powerful reform of the system of government in the Dutch East Indies,” as a result of which he above all wished to bring an end to “the contemptible system of administration, that rests on a failure to recognise the individual lives of the indigenous people, that consistently operates in despotic fashion, without any sense of enlightenment.”

The period when progressive colonial thinkers were celebrated, was, however, long gone. Conservative voices could count on more consent in colonial circles. An example of the latter was the book *Koloniale vraagstukken van heden en morgen* (“Colonial questions of today and tomorrow”) that the future Prime-Minister Hendrik Colijn wrote on board ship back to the Netherlands in 1928 after a four-month tour of Java and Sumatra. In his view, the only correct policy was to regard every development in the Dutch East Indies in the context of an indigenous, oriental society. A policy based on association would, on the contrary, operate in a destabilising manner, and, what was worse, would in the opinion of many undermine “the authority of the indigenous chiefs and of adat organisations, that we can ill afford to lose.” Association would allow space for “political agitation” on the part of the nationalist movement which, according to Colijn, was “merely an upper layer of the populace, as thin as the outer membrane of a grain of rice.” The anti-revolutionary proponent Colijn thus considered the regents as more than purely administrators. In his view, they were “also the forum and negotiators for the populace, a populace aware that both respect and obedience are required from them.” As a result, the government would not be able to avoid future dealings in support of such local

chiefs, and would decidedly be unable to reckon on an expansion of democratic, Western, institutions.\footnote{60}

Snouck Hurgronje was appalled by this attitude: “Despotic authority has left its traces across the entire world,” he wrote in response to Colijn’s book. “We would make ourselves a picture of ridicule abroad were we to attempt to weaken a natural democratic movement that has arisen and flourished in the Dutch East Indies not least through our presence there, to smother it by galvanising the power of an aristocratic class whose authority has been undermined through our own system of governance for an entire century.”\footnote{61} In this way Snouck Hurgronje also distanced himself from his earlier elitist theory of association. He was now drawn to the liberal-democratic movement, which was at this time fighting against the tide. It was moreover clear where sympathy for a modern Indonesia lay. Achmad Djajadiningrat contributed forcefully to the debate in a speech to the Indisch Genootschap in 1929, arguing against those who believed that “the glory of the pajong” could be revived on Java. The regent was convinced that it was precisely the reversal of the process of democracy and the modernising that would undermine the authority of the indigenous administrators. “Let us not forget that the present-day Javan is not the Javan of hitherto. He does not expect an invisible berkah or blessing from his overseer. […] He wants to see accomplishments.”\footnote{62}

But Snouck Hurgronje and Djajadiningrat were voices calling in the wilderness. Certainly during the 1930s, the Dutch East Indies took on the character of a police state, nationalism was violently suppressed, and even the detutelisation of its indigenous administration partially rescinded. Snouck Hurgronje would not live to see the disastrous consequences of this colonial policy. He died on 26 June 1936.

5 Conclusion

Van Doorn and Hendrix in their brief sketch of a “sociology of the colonial order” have rightly ascertained that this order consisted of a system that aimed at “maintaining the initiative of the upper echelons of colonial society in relation to the lower strata.” Where a nationalist movement attempted to take over this initiative “from the bottom up,” as was the case in the Netherlands East

\footnote{60}{H. Colijn, Koloniale vraagstukken van heden tot morgen (Amsterdam: De Standaard, 1928), 17-18, 45, 85-86.}
\footnote{61}{C. Snouck Hurgronje, Colijn over Indië (Amsterdam: H.J.W. Becht, 1928), 26.}
\footnote{62}{Djajadiningrat, “De positie van de regenten,” 90.}
Indies from the First World War, the colonial authorities had two possible protective measures at their disposal. First, they could opt to respect and preserve as far as possible the existing indigenous social structure and culture, in other words to allow as many as possible of the traditional authority relationships to continue to exist, but they could also endeavour to give the colonial order its own stability, by creating a modern bureaucracy and semi-democratic institutions in which the modern indigenous elites would have a place. In other words, by creating a modern colonial state.63

From the end of the nineteenth century, the Netherlands East Indies colonial state had indeed attempted to create stability through a process of modernisation and rationalisation: specific government departments were created and a cautious start was made on instituting joint decision-making fora, such as the People's Council. As a consequence of the association theory propagated mainly by Snouck Hurgronje, modernisation and rationalisation were the keywords in the policies relating to the indigenous administrators. Not only should they receive a modern, Western education, they should also be given a much more significant role within the administration. The detutelisation of the indigenous administration would be the practical consequence of this policy. There was also a paradoxical aspect to detutelisation: it was focused on the traditional indigenous elite rather than aiming to further incorporate the nationalist movement or the indigenous people into the colonial state structure. The relation between the government and the people would have to be maintained primarily via the indigenous administrators who had been released from tutelage and had received a modern education, while the influence of the nationalist movement could at the same time be neutralised by the same autonomised officials.

Snouck Hurgronje had played a crucial role in these developments, first as adviser for Indigenous Affairs, later as professor in Leiden and adviser at the ministry for the Colonies. He had built up a good relationship on Java with families from the Javanese and Sundanese elites and encouraged young priyayi to gain a modern education. As a result, a group of ambitious young Javanese men was formed who, in terms of the level of their education, were equal to the Dutch administrators who occupied positions level with or superior to them. It was clear to Snouck Hurgronje that this group of young Javanese and Sundanese had to be given a place within the colonial administration. In his opinion, the structure of the colonial state should in no way be based on “a fictitious racial distinction.” It was not ancestry that was important, but educa-

It was on the basis of this reasoning that Snouck Hurgronje was in favour of appointing Koemoeso Joedo to the ranks of the so-called European Civil Service, while there was an unwritten rule stating that these positions were reserved for the Dutch – even though in the colonies these “Dutch” may have been born of indigenous mothers. Governor Van Heutsz eventually followed Snouck Hurgronje’s advice and in 1904 appointed Koesoemo Joedo as prospective controleur, but this appointment did not endure within the colonial context: there were too many forces that defended the continuing presence of an entirely Dutch-occupied administrative corps.

Snouck Hurgronje subsequently concentrated on the “detutelisation” of the indigenous leaders on Java. In 1908 he wrote an exceptionally influential article containing ideas that were eventually put into practice a decade later. Indonesian bureaucrats were extremely proficient at prevaricating and postponing measures that they considered less correct, but eventually at the end of 1918 Snouck Hurgronje’s protégé Wiranatakoesoema obtained a more independent position within the colonial administration as regent of Cianjur. It was a measure that would have been appropriate in 1908, but that in 1918, following the rise of the nationalist movement on Java, had lost its relevance. It would be difficult to blame Snouck Hurgronje for failing to perceive the rise of this nationalist movement in the intervening period. Just as other “Indonesian specialists” who had established themselves in the Netherlands following their career, he based his ideas partly on his experiences from the period in which he played an active role in the colony. The development of Javanese society following the foundation of *Budi Utomo* and the *Sarekat Islam* was difficult to follow from a distance.

Scarcely any measures were taken to give the nationalist movement a role in the colonial administration. The establishment of the People’s Council was in this context barely a minimal first step and in any event was not followed by further measures. After 1918 colonial politics were in the grip of conservative powers. These included most of the Dutch officials who were old enough to have experienced the period before the rise of the nationalist movement and young enough to still have a large part of their career ahead of them. They held fast to the idea that the most important elements of Indonesian society were still organised along traditional and feudal lines. A modern colonial state was in this context little more than an anomaly. This denied the importance and the influence of the nationalist movement and the ideas about the need to modernise the colonial administration and to provide a Western education for its indigenous officials. Meanwhile, feudal “national leaders” and traditional institutions should, on the contrary, give the colonial order the stability and
legitimacy it needed. In ethical circles, too, the idea that the individual, “oriental” character of Indonesian society should be preserved as far as possible, was strongly embraced.

Snouck Hurgronje was powerless to resist this. At the age of 66, he did publish a cutting article in *De Gids* in which he advocated a “powerful reform of the political structure of the Dutch East Indies,” where “one should reject the assumption of moral and intellectual inferiority on the part of the indigenous people” and afford them “free representative bodies and as much autonomy as possible” – but the tide had turned. What ensued was a policy that took absolutely no account of the real evolution of Indonesian society, where the growing influence of the nationalist movement constituted an important aspect. There was no question of democratising the colonial administration, and the detutelisation of the indigenous leaders was partially reversed. Consolidating the position of the Dutch officials may have laid the basis for “a reinvigorated Beamtenstaat,” as Benda wrote; what was more important was that the legitimacy of this state had been fundamentally damaged.

In the final event, the influence of Snouck Hurgronje on the development of the administrative structure of the colony was relatively minor. It is true that a number of fundamental questions arose when he occupied the position of adviser for Indigenous Affairs, but as a result of his conflict with Governor-General Van Heutsz, he left for the Netherlands, thereby losing his influence. Consequently, it was easier for conservative powers in the colony to resist the reforms he advocated. Snouck Hurgronje’s most important contribution was his *De Gids* article “The indigenous administrators, particularly on Java,” that ensured that the indigenous civil service on Java were eventually “detutelised.” But this measure, too, was a case of “too little and too late.” The influence that a Leiden professor from his house on the Rapenburg could exercise on colonial policy proved to be subject to significant limitations.

**Bibliography**


Colijn, H. *Koloniale vraagstukken van heden tot morgen*. Amsterdam: De Standaard, 1928.

Coolhaas, W.Ph. “Ontstaan en groei,” in *Wij gedenken...* Gedenkboek van de Vereniging van ambtenaren bij het binnenlands bestuur in Nederlands-Indië, edited by C. Noote-


Fokkens, F. De ontworpen reorganisatie van het bestuur in Nederlandsch-Indië. ’s-Gravenhage: Daamen, 1911.

Fromberg, P.H. “The Indigenous Movement on Java.” De Gids 78 (1914).


Snouck Hurgronje, C. “De inlandsche bestuursambtenaren, vooral op Java.” *De Gids* 72 (1908).


