



The Transformation of the Role of Madura Nobles in the Bureaucracy of the Dutch East Indies, 1830-1942

Maulana Fariqi Nuri,^{1*} Ari Sapto,¹ Daya Negri Wijaya,¹ Aditya Nugroho Widiadi¹

¹Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia

*maulana.fariqi.2507318@students.um.ac.id

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Abstract: This study analyzes the transformation of the role of Madurese noble elites within the colonial power structure of the Dutch East Indies during the 1830–1942 period. In the pre-colonial era, Madurese nobles possessed absolute sovereignty rooted in feudal legitimacy, lineage, and patronage systems. However, colonial policies through the indirect rule system gradually integrated them into the administrative bureaucracy as mediators between the Dutch government and the local population. The research method employed is the historical method, encompassing heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The results indicate that this transformation caused a shift in legitimacy from traditional-genealogical to rational-bureaucratic, where local elites functioned as tax collection apparatus and social supervisors. Despite being in a subordinate position, the Madurese elites demonstrated agency through policy negotiation and adaptation to modern education as part of bureaucratic professionalization. This study concludes that colonialism in Madura operated effectively by utilizing and modifying deeply rooted traditional social structures.

Keywords: colonial bureaucracy; Dutch east indies; local elites; Madurese nobles; power transformation

Abstrak: Penelitian ini menganalisis transformasi peran elite bangsawan Madura dalam struktur kekuasaan kolonial Hindia Belanda pada periode 1830–1942. Pada masa pra-kolonial, bangsawan Madura memiliki kedaulatan absolut yang berakar pada legitimasi feodal, garis keturunan, dan sistem patronase. Namun, kebijakan kolonial melalui sistem indirect rule secara bertahap mengintegrasikan mereka ke dalam birokrasi administratif sebagai perantara (mediator) antara pemerintah Belanda dan rakyat. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah metode sejarah yang meliputi heuristik, kritik sumber, interpretasi, dan historiografi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa transformasi ini menyebabkan pergeseran legitimasi dari tradisional-genealogis menjadi rasional-birokratis, di mana elite lokal berfungsi sebagai aparat pengumpul pajak dan pengawas sosial. Meskipun berada dalam posisi subordinat, elite Madura menunjukkan agensi melalui negosiasi kebijakan dan adaptasi terhadap pendidikan modern sebagai bagian dari profesionalisasi birokrasi. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kolonialisme di Madura berhasil beroperasi secara efektif dengan memanfaatkan dan memodifikasi struktur sosial tradisional yang telah mengakar kuat.

Keywords: elite lokal; bangsawan Madura; birokrasi kolonial; hindia Belanda; transformasi kekuasaan



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Introduction

Madura as one of the important areas in the colonial structure of the Dutch East Indies presents historical dynamics that are closely related to the change in power relations between the colonial government and the local elite. In Indonesian historiography, the research on colonialism is no longer understood solely as a process of political and economic domination by European powers, but as a process of social transformation that involves negotiations between colonial states and local power structures (Ricklefs, 2007). The colonial period of the Dutch East Indies from 1830–1942 became a crucial phase in this change because it was during this period that there was a reorganization of the local government system in various regions of the archipelago, including Madura. Primary colonial sources show that Madura since the XIX century has been placed in the administrative structure of the Dutch East Indies. *Regeerings-Almanak Voor Nederlandsch-Indië* (1870) recorded Madura in the structure of afdeeling, regentschap, districts, and villages, while *Regeeringsalmanak Voor Nederlandsch-Indië* (1941) shows the final form as Residentie Madoera with the composition of residents, assistant-residents, regents, *patih*, and other *bumiputra* officials. A comparison of the two sources shows that Madura underwent a long process of administrativeization within the framework of the colonial bureaucracy. The traditional elite of the nobility since pre-colonial times has had genealogical-based political legitimacy, patronage relationships, and social honor values that place them as local rulers as well as the controllers of society (Ramadhani & Kasdi, 2016). Therefore, the existence of Madurese nobility was not only socially important, but also a strategic element in colonial government practices.

The entry of Dutch colonial power brought fundamental changes to the structure. The colonial government did not completely abolish the power of the local nobility, but integrated it through the mechanism of indirect rule and the native government system. Through administrative policies, including the implementation of Ethical Politics and the reorganization of indigenous bureaucracy, the nobility who previously had political autonomy transformed into colonial administrative apparatus that carried out the functions of land management, tax collection, and social supervision of the community (Azhar, 2016). This process is evident in *Madoera En Zijn Vorstenhuis* (1936) which records the gradual end of the power of the *zelfbestuur* of Madura: Pamekasan was taken over in 1853, Soemenep entered direct government in 1879, and after the death of the last Panembahan of Bangkalan in 1882, the power of the *zelfbestuur* of Madura ended. By 1885, direct bestuur on Madura Island had become a reality. This transformation shows that colonialism in Madura is cooptative, that is, it works by utilizing established traditional social structures to maintain the stability of colonial power.

The change in the role of the aristocratic elite was evident in the development of the Sumenep region in the period 1883–1926. Research Mahmudah (2018), it shows that the local aristocratic elite no longer only functions as a symbol of traditional power, but is part of the colonial apparatus that is active in economic development, territorial administration, and infrastructure modernization. The patron-client relationship between the elite and society was not erased by colonialism, but was reproduced as an instrument of social control that facilitated the penetration of colonial policies at the local level (Jonge, 1989). In this context, the formation of the Madura Front as noted in *Madoera En Zijn Vorstenhuis* (1936) is proof that the Madurese elite were not only used in the civilian bureaucracy, but also mobilized for the interests of the colonial military. The agreement of August 17, 1831 between the Resident of Surabaya, H. J. Domis, and the Sultan of Madura, Sultan Soemenep, and Panembahan Pamekasan shows that the Madurese aristocracy was used as a source of loyalty, energy, and military support for the

Dutch East Indies government. Thus, these changes are not only institutional, but also touch the social structure of the Madurese people.

In a broader context, the integration of local elites into the colonial system also involved other social groups such as *kiai* and *blater*. These groups not only played a role as guardians of social and cultural norms, but also became part of the colonial social control mechanism. Cultural practices such as *carok* undergo a reinterpretation of meaning in colonial situations, from honor-based conflict resolution mechanisms to social phenomena supervised and controlled by the colonial state (Hafida et al., 2024). The phenomenon of bureaucratic maduranization in the Residency shows how the Madura elite gained a dominant position in the colonial *priayi* structure even though it remained in a subordinate hierarchy to the Dutch government (Winarni, 2018). Such subordination is seen in *De Sumatra Post* (1934), which shows that strategic positions such as assistant-resident and *controleur* in the Java and Madura administrations are still dominated by European officials. This source suggests that even if the *bumiputra* elite were still used, the main positions of supervision and decision-making were still in the hands of Dutch colonial officials.

Nevertheless, recent historiography emphasizes that the local elite cannot be understood only as passive colonial tools. The Madurese aristocratic elite showed the capacity to adapt and negotiate to colonial policies, including in conflicts over resource management such as irrigation and agrarian regulation (Zamroni, 2012). These changes had a direct impact on the socio-economic life of the community, especially through the integration of the local agrarian system into the production-oriented colonial economy (Razy & Dienaputra, 2023). Reports *Onderzoek Naar de Mindere Welvaart Der Inlandsche Bevolking Op Java En Madoera. XII. Oorzaken Der Mindere Welvaart*, (1914) reinforcing this reading because it shows that the problem of *bumiputra* welfare in Java and Madura is not only related to natural factors, but also to structural burdens such as taxes, compulsory labor, decrees, respect, legal inequality, and hierarchical relationships. Thus, the transformation of the Madurese aristocratic elite needs to be read in relation to the colonial mechanism that regulates the energy, obligations, and obedience of the community through local intermediaries. In fact, recent studies show that the social dynamics of post-colonial Madurese society still show traces of the power structure formed during the colonial period (Ihsani, 2024). This confirms that colonialism is not just a historical episode, but a process of forming a long-term social structure.

A number of previous studies have made important contributions to understanding the Madura people. Research (Hefni, 2009) Regarding the patron-client relationship, it explains the pattern of social relations that form the dependence between the ruling class and the peasant community through the system of *percaton*, *apanage*, and *dalemman* as a mechanism for the distribution of power and resources. Meanwhile, research (Mahmudah, 2018) about the development of Sumenep City highlights the transformation of a traditional palace city into a colonial administrative center through infrastructure development, reorganization of Dutch direct government, and the emergence of a modern colonial economic space. On the other hand, research (Razy & Dienaputra, 2023) Analyze the conflict between *Panembahan* and colonial residents in irrigation policy which shows changes in local power relations due to the intervention of the colonial state against the traditional environmental management system.

Although these three studies provide an important overview of the social and political dynamics of Madura, there are fundamental limitations in the previous research. These studies tend to focus on specific themes of social relations, urban development, and environmental policy conflicts without comprehensively examining the transformation of the role of the nobility in the long span of colonialism, especially the period 1830–1942. As a result, the change in the position of the nobility from the traditional ruler to the elite of the colonial

bureaucracy has not been analyzed as a continuous historical process. In addition, the study of the Madurese nobility still needs to be strengthened through an integrated reading of primary colonial sources, such as government almanacs, official reports of the Dutch East Indies, contemporary works on the Madurese noble family, and colonial newspapers. These sources are important because they show elite change not only as a social narrative, but as an administrative process that can be traced through government positions, regions, regulations, and hierarchies.

In addition, some studies still place local elites in the framework of a descriptive narrative, thus emphasizing the chronology of events rather than a historiographical analysis of changes in the legitimacy of power. In fact, the social and political historical approach demands an interpretation of how colonialism works through the production of local bureaucratic elites and how these elites maintain their agency in the midst of colonial domination. This emptiness of analysis opens up space for research that places the Madura nobles as the main subjects in understanding the mechanisms of colonial power. Based on these gaps, this study seeks to analyze the transformation of the role of the Madura noble elite in the bureaucratic structure of the Dutch East Indies as well as the adaptation and negotiation strategies they carried out to maintain their social and political legitimacy.

This research not only aims to explain institutional changes, but also to reinterpret the relationship between colonialism and local elites in the perspective of Indonesian historiography. By using primary sources such as *Regeerings-Almanak Voor Nederlandsch-Indië* (1870), *Madoera En Zijn Vorstenhuis* (1936), *Onderzoek Naar de Mindere Welvaart Der Inlandsche Bevolking Op Java En Madoera. XII. Oorzaken Der Mindere Welvaart* (1914), *Indisch Verslag* (1935), *Regeeringsalmanak Voor Nederlandsch-Indië* (1941), and *De Sumatra Post* (1934), this study seeks to show that the transformation of the Madurese nobility can be read through changes in the administrative structure, the abolition of the *zelfbestuur*, the reorganization of the *regentschap*, the professionalization of Bumiputra officials, and the dominance of European officials in the colonial bureaucracy. Thus, this study argues that colonialism in Madura did not destroy the traditional aristocratic structure, but rather transformed it into a colonial bureaucratic elite through a process of administrative integration, reproduction of social patronage, and power negotiation. Understanding this transformation is important to explain how the modern local power structure in Indonesia was formed through colonial experience. Therefore, the study of Madura nobility in the period 1830–1942 has academic urgency in enriching Indonesian colonial historiography while offering a new interpretation of the relationship between tradition, colonialism, and the formation of modern bureaucracy.

Research Methods

The research method in this article uses historical research methods according to (Kuntowijoyo, 2003). The research is carried out in a heuristic way by looking for historical sources such as literature in the form of; books, documents and journal articles as well as other references related to the main issues in the article. At the heuristic stage, the author uses two types of sources, namely primary sources and secondary sources. The primary sources used include colonial documents and contemporary newspapers, namely *Regeerings-Almanak Voor Nederlandsch-Indië* (1870), *Madoera En Zijn Vorstenhuis* (1936), *Onderzoek Naar de Mindere Welvaart Der Inlandsche Bevolking Op Java En Madoera. XII. Oorzaken Der Mindere Welvaart* (1914), *Indisch Verslag* (1935), *Regeeringsalmanak Voor Nederlandsch-Indië* (1941), and *De Sumatra Post* (1934). These primary sources are used to trace changes in the

structure of government, the position of local elites, indigenous bureaucracy, and colonial power relations in Madura.

The secondary sources used are books, journal articles, and the results of previous research that are relevant to the themes of Madura nobility, colonialism, social history, and political history. These secondary sources are used, among other things, to help authors build a conceptual framework, read historiographic contexts, and interpret findings obtained from primary sources. Thus, primary sources serve as the primary basis for historical reconstruction, while secondary sources serve as support for analysis and interpretation.

After searching for sources, the author criticizes sources based on the sources that have been successfully obtained. Source criticism is carried out through external criticism and internal criticism. External criticism is used to assess the authenticity, timing, and origin of the source, while internal criticism is used to assess the content of the source, the credibility of the information, the viewpoint of the source author, and its relevance to the research topic. Sources that have gone through the criticism process then the author interprets the source. Through this interpretation, the results in the form of the required data are obtained. The final step is to compile a historiography in the form of this article.

The methodology in this study uses social history and political history approaches to assist the author in making this article. Social history in this case is used to analyze how the local elite often intersects with the Madurese people. The social history approach according to (Kartodirjo, 1992) emphasizing the integration of social sciences to analyze the dynamics of society as a whole, so that changes in the role of the Madura nobility, patron-client relations, and the position of local elites in the social life of the community can be read as part of the transformation of the social structure. The role played by Madurese nobles who began to change or local elites who underwent this shift can be analyzed using social history methods. Another approach is political history, which is used to uncover how the power exercised by the local elite of Madura and the Dutch East Indies Colonial Government shaped the historical narrative, not as a chronology of events, but as a subject.

Research Result

Madura Era Dutch East Indies

During the Dutch East Indies period, Madura was not only understood as an island, but also as a political and administrative space that was gradually incorporated into the colonial government structure. Before it was fully under colonial administration, Madura consisted of several local power centers, especially Bangkalan, Pamekasan, and Sumenep. *Regeerings-Almanak Voor Nederlandsch-Indië* (1870) shows that Madura has been recorded as part of the colonial government structure with four afdeeling, namely Pamekasan, Madura, Soemenep, and Sampang, as well as three regentschap. The document also notes that Madura has 30 districts and 1,233 villages, with the seat of government in Pamekasan. In the arrangement, C. Bosscher is listed as a resident, while Prince Arjo Sosro Winoto is listed as a regent. This data is important because it shows that since the 19th century Madura was no longer only seen as a former local kingdom area, but had been mapped as a multi-tiered and measurable colonial administrative unit.

Madura is a name used by colonial rulers to refer to the kingdom that would later be known as Bangkalan. Although it is in the form of a money island consisting of several regions, this island has never been a stand-alone political unit. Not to mention that after 1624 Sultan Agung of Mataram succeeded in conquering Prince Mas, the ruler of Madura by using 50,000 troops (Anekawati et al., 2021). Before that, Madura was still made up of competing kingdoms. Shortly after 1800, Madura was included in the Dutch East Indies colonial state. Madura is

basically the same as other regions of Indonesia with a very hot tropical climate with two seasons, namely summer and rainy season. In contrast to the ecological conditions in Java, Madura almost does not have large rivers like Brantas and Bengawan Solo, however, there are several rivers that flow and stretch in the Madura areas, including the Bangkalan River, the Blega River, the Sampang River, the Marengan River, and the Saroka River (Sumenep). The function of rivers in Madura, such as Sarokka and Marengan in Sumenep, as well as the Songai Raja (Big River) which covers the Sreseh-Pangarengan Sampang area, is as the main river for salt transportation (Syafi'i, 2021). The Sarokka River, apart from being a route for transporting salt from salt ponds to warehouses or boats, is a crossing river for Salt Company employees from their villages to factories in Kalianget.

Geographically, Madura is known as an area that has relatively dry and less fertile ecological conditions than Java. This condition forms the economic character of the community that does not depend on the large plantation system such as in central and western Java and has a character that tends to be harsh (Hafida et al., 2024). On the other hand, the Madurese people developed adaptation strategies through subsistence agriculture, livestock, and labor migration to other regions such as eastern East Java and plantation areas outside the island. In Madura itself, which is a dry land due to various natural factors that accompany it, moorland farming is used. The natural topography in Madura ultimately makes the people of Madura need a good and correct irrigation system to irrigate their rice fields. The ecology of the moorland in Madura has produced various commodities, such as tobacco, corn, and other crops (Hefni, 2009). During the period of the kingdoms in Madura (consisting of the kingdoms of Bangkalan, Pamekasan and Sumenep), especially in the late XVIII and early XIX centuries, irrigation was managed by the *Panembahans* with the help of the Madurese people. Although indeed the irrigation system in Madura at that time was not good, the reason is that drought still occurs everywhere, besides, if the rainy season arrives, floods occur everywhere (Razy & Dienaputra, 2023).

However, Madura's economic limitations cannot be explained only through natural factors. Reports *Onderzoek Naar de Mindere Welvaart Der Inlandsche Bevolking Op Java En Madoera. XII. Oorzaken Der Mindere Welvaart* (1914:9) shows that the low welfare of the bumiputra population in Java and Madura is also related to structural burdens, such as compulsory work, prentahwezen, respectstelsel, legal inequality, and unbalanced tax pressures. Thus, drought, limited irrigation, and low agricultural productivity need to be read together with colonial socio-political mechanisms that regulate people's labor, taxes, and compliance through local heads.

Obviously, this is a picture of the poor irrigation system in Madura. The impact on the poor agricultural system. This is exacerbated when the harvest arrives, the quality of the harvest also remains poor. This problem must be faced continuously by the people of Madura in the period of the XVIII to XIX centuries. This environmental problem has actually been tried to be solved by the Dutch East Indies Colonial Government after the collapse of the authority of the Kingdoms in Madura in the 1850s. The Colonial Government itself has then regulated various systems that have actually been regulated by the Kingdoms in Madura, one of which is the irrigation system. But in its implementation it received resistance from local rulers.

This means that in the first half of the XIX century, the local rulers of Madura had their own autonomy in regulating their government without interference from the Dutch East Indies Colonial Government. The Dutch colonial government itself did not interfere too much in the internal affairs of the government in Madura, the rulers ruled arbitrarily. Some of these arbitrariness is when the rulers collect taxes in the form of in-kind (Razy & Dienaputra, 2023). This massive tax collection seems to make the rulers in Madura adhere to a luxurious life far

from the life felt by their people (Wahid, 2021). In addition, low-ranking officials in Madura were awarded many crooked land which seemed to be quite large when compared to the settlements inhabited by the general community in Madura. This is also supported by the fact that all the land in Madura at that time belonged to *Panembahan*. The people only have the right to hereditary cultivation of the land owned by the *Panembahan*. The land owned by the *Panembahan* usually includes rice fields, barren land, fish ponds, salting lands and moorlands (Hernawan, 2016).

A major change occurred when the political authority of the local rulers was gradually transferred into direct colonial rule. *Madoera En Zijn Vorstenhuis* (1936:57) notes that after the death of Panembahan Tjakraadiningrat VIII in 1882, the government immediately prepared steps to bring the Madoera Vorstendom under direct government or *direbestuur*. This information shows that the collapse of Madura's local power did not take place as a social abolition of the nobility, but as a takeover of their political authority by the colonial state. In this context, the nobility was still maintained as a social elite, but its political power was increasingly directed into administrative positions dependent on colonial recognition.

From a social history perspective, this ecological condition affects the social structure of Madura which is relatively harsher and hierarchical. According to (Kuntowijoyo, 2017) Madurese people have a strong pattern of patron-client relations, where the nobility and local elites play the role of protectors as well as controllers of social resources. This structure then became an important foundation for colonialism in integrating Madura into their power system. The patron-client relationship occurs namely the ruling class (patron) and the peasant class (client). The ruling class is the class that controls the economic resources and has political power, while the peasant class is the class that has labor to "sell" to the ruling class. The two are connected by a tribute system in the form of a *percaton* or *apanage* system. In Madura, there are no villages that are exempt from the *percaton* system, except for *daleman* villages (owned by the king) and *perdikan* villages (tax-free) (Hefni, 2009). *Percaton* was a system of "payment of salaries by rice fields" for the families of the unemployed kings and their followers. In addition to *percaton* village, *Panembahan* (as patron) also has an economic dependency relationship with the people (as clients) through the management of *daleman* village. *Daleman* village is a village owned by the king because it brings income for the *Panembahan* (Kuntowijoyo, 2017). As the best agricultural land, *Panembahan* claims to have ownership rights of one-third of all agricultural land in each *daleman* village. The rest is the property of farmers.

The patron-client relationship was then used by the colonial government as an entry point to control society. This is seen in the *Madoera En Zijn Vorstenhuis* (1936:84) when discussing the formation of the Barisan. On August 17, 1831, an agreement was made between the Resident of Surabaya, H. J. Domis, on behalf of the Dutch East Indies government, with the Sultan of Madura, Sultan Soemenep, and Panembahan Pamekasan regarding the formation of the Barisan corps. The sultans and *Panembahans* were given a role in the formation of military units, while their sons were given ranks in the colonial military structure. Even weaponry and instruction were provided by the colonial government through European officers. This data shows that the Madura elite was not only used as an administrative intermediary, but also as a source of loyalty, energy, and military support for colonial interests.

Dalam sistem kolonial, Madura dimasukkan ke dalam struktur Residentie Madoera, yang led by a Dutch resident. Under him there are indigenous officials such as regents, wedana, and village heads who carry out daily administration. This system reflects what historians call *indirect rule*, which is a form of indirect government that uses local elites to control society (Mahmudah, 2018). Administrative evidence of *Regeerings-Almanak Voor Nederlandsch-Indië*

(1870) shows that since the XIX century Madura has been placed in the structure of resident, regent, afdeeling, regentschap, district, and village. This means that the local elite of Madura were not simply removed, but were included in the chain of colonial government. They still have a social position in front of the public, but their political function is increasingly changing to the executor of the colonial administration.

The sustainability of the structure was seen until the end of the colonial period. *Regeeringsalmanak Voor Nederlandsch-Indië* (1941:320) noted that Residentie Madoera is domiciled in Pamekasan and is led by J. E. V. A. Slors as a resident. Below him are assistant-residents for Pamekasan, Soemenep, and Bangkalan. At the same time, bumiputra positions were maintained through the positions of regent and patih, such as Raden Adipati Ario Abdul Azis as Regent of Pamekasan, Raden Roestam Tjondrokoesoemo as patih, Raden Adipati Ario Samadikoen as Regent Soemenep, and Raden Pandji Zainalfattah as patih. This arrangement shows that until 1941 the Madura government continued to bring together European officials and bumiputra elites in a single bureaucratic hierarchy, but the highest supervisory position remained in the hands of European colonial officials.

According to Kartodirjo (1992), this system not only creates stability, but also opens up space for social conflict. Integration into the colonial system led to changes in the distribution of power and resources, which in turn fueled tensions between the elite and the people. In the context of Madura, this can be seen in the increase in tax burden, labor mobilization, and changes in the agrarian structure. *Indisch Verslag* (1935) strengthens this picture because it records the reorganization of the Inheemsch bestuur in 1934. Starting January 1, 1934, the Regentschap of Pamekasan was abolished and its territory was incorporated into the Regentschap of Soemenep. The same report also mentions the change in the division of districts and subdistricts in the Gouvernmentlanden of Java and Madoera as reasons for savings. This data shows that the position of the bumiputra elite and the division of administrative territory are no longer entirely determined by local traditions, but can be changed according to the needs of the colonial state. Thus, the integration of Madura into the Dutch East Indies not only meant the entry of Madura into the government structure, but also the change in the function of the local elite from patrimonial rulers to administrative officials under colonial supervision.

Madura Local Elite

The local elite of Madura during the Dutch East Indies period was a social group that had a strategic position in the colonial power order, especially because they came from the nobility, local ruling families, and figures who had social and cultural influence in society. Historically, the existence of this elite cannot be separated from the structure of the Madurese kingdoms in the pre-colonial period which had built the legitimacy of power based on lineage, customary authority, and patronage relations with the community (Hernawan, 2016). In this context, the local elite is understood not only as the owner of high social status, but also as an actor who has access to resources, symbolic authority, and political influence at the local level. This position made them an important element in the continuity of traditional power as well as in the process of adjustment to the Dutch colonial system (Zamroni, 2012).

In colonial government practice, the local elite of Madura were placed as intermediaries between the Dutch East Indies government and the local community. The indirect model of government allowed the Dutch to harness the legitimacy possessed by the nobility and indigenous officials to maintain stability and ensure that colonial policies could be effectively implemented (Mahmudah, 2018). Through this mechanism, regents, *wedanas*, district heads, and other local officials function as administrative implementers who carry out various daily government affairs. They are involved in territorial supervision, tax collection, labor regulation,

and the maintenance of social order. Thus, the local elite not only maintained their traditional positions, but also entered into the colonial bureaucratic structure that tied them to the interests of the Dutch government (Winarni, 2018). This position shows the ambivalent nature of the local elite of Madura. On the one hand, they are still seen by the community as local leaders who have social authority. However, on the other hand, they also became executors of colonial orders that connected the interests of the colonial state with the daily lives of the people.

The stratification of the local elite of Madura during the colonial period can be seen from several layers of interconnected roles. The first layer is the aristocratic elite or aristocrats who have genealogical legitimacy, such as the descendants of kings, *Panembahans*, or local royal families. The second layer was the indigenous administrative elite who occupied formal positions in the colonial bureaucracy, such as regents and district officials, whose positions were increasingly dependent on the appointment of the colonial government (Romadhon, 2020). The third layer is the socio-religious elite, especially the *kiai*, who although not always in a formal bureaucratic structure, still have a great influence in shaping the attitudes, orientation, and obedience of the people. The existence of these layers shows that the local elite of Madura works in a multilayered and mutually supportive network of power, not as a group that stands alone (Zamroni, 2012).

The role of local elites in colonial structures is not only related to government, but also concerns the management of the economy and resources. In various studies on Madura, local elites are seen to play a role in land regulation, taxation, irrigation, and distribution of community production. Colonial policies that touched these sectors often placed the elite as a link between the interests of the government and the needs of the local community. In the case of irrigation management, for example, there is tension between the *Panembahan* and the residents which shows that the local elite still has bargaining power, even though they are in a subordinate position (Wahid, 2021). On the other hand, the colonial tax system also made the local elite as policy implementers who at the same time bore the social burden of the policy. This condition shows that the local elite of Madura is in an ambivalent position: they secure colonial power, but at the same time also face social resistance from the community (Mahmudah, 2018).

In addition to administrative and economic roles, Madura's local elite also hold important functions in social and cultural control. In Madura society, the values of honor, obedience, loyalty, and patronage are the strong foundation for the relationship between the elite and the people (Hefni, 2009). Strong patron-client relationships made the nobility and local figures have a position as protectors as well as controllers of the community (Hafida et al., 2024). In the cultural realm, local elites play a role in maintaining social order through customary mechanisms, including in responding to conflicts, traditions, and symbols of honor such as *carok*. Therefore, the local elite is not only a bureaucratic element, but also a cultural element that maintains the continuity of the Madura social order under colonial domination (Azhar, 2016).

Thus, the local Madura elite in the colonial structure of the Dutch East Indies consisted of nobles, indigenous administrative officials, and socio-religious figures who together formed a network of local power. They played the role of mediators, administrators, social controllers, as well as implementers of colonial policies at the regional level (Winarni, 2018). Their existence shows that colonialism in Madura does not work through the complete disconnection of the local structure, but through the process of adjustment and utilization of the existing elite. Therefore, the discussion of local elites is important to understand how colonial power can operate effectively through traditional social structures that have been firmly rooted in Madura.

The Transformation of the Role of the Nobility in the Dutch East Indies Bureaucracy

The transformation of the role of the Madura nobility in the period 1830–1942 was part of a broader process of social change. According to (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, 2026), The word transformation is defined as a change in appearance (be it form, properties, functions, and so on). It refers to the process of shifting or changing from one state to another. To understand this process of transformation, it is important to use the analytical framework of several historians that emphasize the structural, cultural, and agency dimensions of social change. The relationship pattern applied by the Madurese people is part of the power of the Javanese kingdom with the pattern of patron-client relationships. As a territory, it will certainly establish a harmonious relationship with the ruler of Java. When there was a dynamism of new leadership in the history of the Javanese kingdom, the rulers of Madura only followed the new ruler (Romadhon, 2020).

The transformation or change that occurred in the nobility began to occur when the colonial government intensified power in Madura in the 19th century, and very massive social changes occurred. After the previous arbitrary power of the indigenous elites over the people began to weaken, the Madurese people had the opportunity to become freer. With the impact on the clearing of new land for agriculture and along with the increase in infrastructure on trade, transportation routes and greater prosperity. The fruits of this situation are often used by the people of Madura for religious purposes, to donate religious schools and mosques (Anekawati et al., 2021). The direct government in Sumenep in 1883 after the death of Sultan Pakunataningrat caused fundamental changes in the land tax system such as the revocation of the *vorsten* in Madura, the royal family who owned the land of the *caton*, the *daleman* was revoked and compensated for losses according to the annual yield and land area and every month was given an allowance. Land taxes and tax breaks were abolished and many palace officials were dismissed. The Dutch only retained the heads of districts, sub-districts and villages. Interaction with Java began to be carried out in a more professional way.

With the revocation of bureaucratic rights in the system used by the colonial government, the nobility or local elites in Madura experienced a change in political function: from regional rulers to administrative officials. The nobility no longer had absolute power, but instead acted as the executor of the colonial government's policies. The change led to the basis from traditional genealogical and culturally based legitimacy to bureaucratic legitimacy that depended on appointment by the colonial government. This changed the relationship between the nobility and the people, as their loyalty was directed more towards the colonial government than just the ruler over the people. Even so, the Madura aristocracy experienced the professionalization of the bureaucracy, in the early 20th century, especially after the Ethical Politics, there was a need for more educated bureaucrats. This prompted some of the Madurese elite to access colonial education and adopt modern administrative values (Afandi et al., 2020). There is one of the peculiarities of the Madura Nobles that is relatively strategic compared to elites in other regions. This is due to colonial stereotypes that saw the Madurese as a loyal and militant group, so they were trusted to fill important administrative positions. There is a Maduranisasai frame that was even applied in the Besuki area, where the position of regent was filled by the Madura elite as part of the colonial political strategy (Winarni, 2018). In practice, the local elite of Madura underwent a transformation by carrying out several main functions:

Social changes in colonial societies are often marked by shifts in power structures (Kartodirjo, 1992). In the context of Madura, the nobility who previously had local sovereignty gradually lost their autonomy and became part of the colonial bureaucratic structure. This change did not happen suddenly, but through a long process of institutionalization. The appointment of regents by the colonial government, the payroll system, and administrative

supervision were mechanisms that tied local elites into the colonial system. Thus, their power was no longer autonomous, but dependent on colonial legitimacy.

Changing Elite Legitimacy and Identity emphasizes that social change occurs not only in structures, but also in value systems and culture (Kuntowijoyo, 2017). In this context, the Madurese nobility experienced a change in their source of legitimacy. If previously their legitimacy was based on lineage and tradition, in the colonial system the legitimacy shifted towards the rational-bureaucratic. Colonial education, the use of the Dutch language, and the adoption of the European lifestyle became a symbol of a new status among the elite. However, this change does not completely remove traditional identities. Instead, there is a process of merger, in which the elite combines traditional and modern elements in their identity. According to (Stoler, 2009) It is important to see the local elite as actors who have agency, not just colonial tools. The Madurese nobles not only carried out orders, but also negotiated with the colonial power. They took advantage of their position to maintain local power, secure resources, and even in some cases protect communities from exploitative colonial policies. However, at the same time, they also engaged in practices that reinforced colonial dominance.

The transformation of the Madura nobility in the Dutch East Indies bureaucracy cannot be separated from the colonial policy of *indirect rule*, which is an indirect government strategy that relies on local elites as power intermediaries. In this context, the nobility, especially in Sumenep, experienced a fundamental change from traditional rulers to colonial administrative officials. Although at first the Madurese nobles also took arbitrary actions against the community, the colonial government deliberately chose the Madura elite as regents and local officials because they were considered loyal and effective in controlling the community. The nobility or elite experienced the "depoliticization of power" in other words they lost their autonomy in politics, but still retained their administrative functions. The nobility was no longer an autonomous local center of power, but rather part of a hierarchical chain of colonial bureaucracy. When viewed from a broader perspective, the transformation of the role of the Madura nobility has several long-term implications. The transformation of roles entails the formation of an increasingly hierarchical and fragmented social structure, in which the elite has access to power and resources, while small communities remain in subordinate positions. Second, the strengthening of the patron-client relationship as the main mechanism in social organizations, which not only survives but also adapts to the changing times. Third, the emergence of bureaucratic elites who are the basis for the modern government structure in Indonesia, but with a colonial legacy that is still felt in the practice of local power.

Conclusion

The transformation of the Madurese aristocratic elite during the period 1830–1942 shows that colonialism did not merely present the termination of traditional power, but a complex process of reconfiguration of authority. The implementation of the colonial administrative system from the Cultuurstelsel to the reorganization of the final government of the Dutch East Indies shifted the basis of the nobility from the control of traditional economic resources such as control over land, tribute rights, and agrarian patronage to administrative positions within the structures of the Binnenlands Bestuur and Inlandsch Bestuur. This can be seen from primary colonial sources that show the transformation of Madura from a former local power area to a residentie which is regulated through the structure of residents, assistants, regents, patih, districts, and villages. *Regeerings-Almanak Voor Nederlandsch-Indië* (1870) shows the beginning of the administrative of Madura in the colonial structure, while *Regeeringsalmanak Voor Nederlandsch-Indië* (1941) shows the final form of the bureaucratic hierarchy before the collapse of the Dutch East Indies. The regents of Madura no longer stand as semi-autonomous

rulers within the framework of the vassal state, but rather as an extension of the colonial state that works through modern legal mechanisms, archives, and regulations. This shift led to the erosion of traditional economic power as well as the consolidation of a new, more stable political status within the colonial bureaucratic hierarchy.

The change does not take place as a process of passive subordination. The Madurese nobility actively negotiated their positions through institutional adaptation strategies, the utilization of local patronage networks, and the reinterpretation of charismatic legitimacy that had previously been sourced from genealogists and aristocratic symbols of grandeur. De-traditionalization does not mean the loss of elite identity, but the transformation of the way the elite practices power. They internalized the colonial administrative logic of archiving, territorial control, taxation, and social control while maintaining symbolic authority before the local community. *Madoera En Zijn Vorstenhuis* (1936) shows that the abolition of zelfbestuur in Madura did not abolish the entire role of the nobility. Some noble families were retained in the regent's office, but their position was no longer based on traditional sovereignty, but rather on the recognition and supervision of the colonial government. Colonial bureaucratization in Madura created a simultaneous aristocratic figure: a modern state official as well as a maintainer of traditional social structures.

The transition between the two power bases reveals a fundamental colonial paradox. Dutch colonialism sought to rationalize government through a modern bureaucracy, but its success depended on the reproduction of local elites who had deep social legitimacy. The integration of the nobility into the colonial administration made them mediating agents between the state and the village people. In practice, administrative modernization does not remove personalistic relations and only institutionalizes them. Formal power went hand in hand with personal loyalty, patron-client relations, and the symbolic influence of the aristocracy that survived under the colonial legal structure. Reports *Onderzoek Naar de Mindere Welvaart Der Inlandsche Bevolking Op Java En Madoera. XII. Oorzaken Der Mindere Welvaart* (1914) shows that these relationships are also related to the socio-economic burden of the community, such as taxes, compulsory work, decrees, respect, and hierarchical relationships. Therefore, the transformation of the Madurese nobility did not only take place at the level of office, but also had an impact on the way the colonial state regulated the energy, obligations, and obedience of the people through the local elite.

From a historiographical perspective, these findings challenge the old narrative that sees indigenous elites solely as collaborators or victims of colonial structures. The Madurese aristocracy showed a real historical agency: they chose, adjusted, and took advantage of the opportunities that arose in the reorganization of colonial rule to maintain its political relevance. Colonialism, in this context, is not only an arena of European domination, but a space for local power negotiations. This process produced a new form of administrative elite that was neither completely traditional nor fully modern, a political hybridity that characterized the development of the late colonial state. *Indisch Verslag* (1935) reinforced this picture through the accounts of the reorganization of the Inheemsch bestuur, including the abolition of the Regentschap of Pamekasan and its incorporation into the Regentschap of Soemenep in 1934. This fact shows that the position of the local elite can be rearranged according to the needs of the efficiency and administration of the colonial state.

The experience of bureaucratization in Madura in the 19th to the early 20th centuries can ultimately be read as an early prototype of modern Indonesian bureaucracy. The postcolonial inherited structure of government retains a pattern of personalistic relationships within the formal institutions of the state, demonstrating a historical continuity between the charismatic legitimacy of the local aristocracy and the rationality of modern administrative. *De Sumatra*

Post (1934) suggests that at the end of the colonial period the main supervisory position was still in the hands of European officials, while the bumiputra elite, including the Madura nobility, remained placed as administrative liaisons at the local level. Thus, the colonial bureaucracy formed a multi-tiered power structure: modern in institutional form, but still dependent on traditional social authority. Therefore, the study of the transformation of the Madura nobility is not just a reconstruction of regional history, but the key to understanding the sociopolitical roots of contemporary Indonesian bureaucracy, a heritage in which tradition and modernity do not negate each other, but are historically intertwined in the formation of state power practices.

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