



Challenging Hegemony: Fransen van de Putte's Advocacy for Alternative Colonial Policies in Aceh, 1873-1885

Ahmad Muhajir*, Universitas Andalas, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse the role of Fransen van de Putte in advocating for an alternative approach to Dutch colonial policy in Aceh during the period 1873-1885, and identifies the factors influencing his efforts. The focus of this research lies in the criticisms and alternatives proposed by Fransen van de Putte against the Dutch government's aggressive strategy in Aceh. This study employs a historical method with a social science approach and Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony as its analytical framework. The primary sources include Fransen van de Putte's speeches compiled in *Atjeh: Parlementaire Redevoeringen van I. D. Fransen van de Putte van Februari 1873 – December 1885*. Secondary sources consist of books and scholarly journal articles. The findings reveal that, despite being marginalised, Fransen van de Putte consistently voiced criticism and offered alternatives to the Dutch colonial policy in Aceh. However, he faced significant challenges in challenging the hegemonic dominance of aggressive narratives in the Dutch parliament. This research provides new insights into the political dynamics in the Netherlands during the Aceh War and the role of individuals in challenging hegemony, particularly within the context of colonialism.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Submitted 28/11/2024
Revised 14/12/2024
Accepted 17/12/2024
Published 18/12/2024

KEYWORDS

Aceh War; Fransen van de Putte; colonial policy; hegemony; Antonio Gramsci.

*CORRESPONDENCE AUTHOR

ahmadmuhajir@hum.unand.ac.id

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34007/warisan.v5i2.2459>

INTRODUCTION

The Aceh War (1873-1904) left a deep scar in the history of Dutch colonialism in Indonesia. This bloody conflict was not merely a physical battle on the battlefield but also a clash of discourses and ideologies within the Dutch parliament (Ahmad, [1983](#); Alfian, [1987](#); Reid, [1969b](#), [2004](#)). Behind the turmoil of war, politicians in The Hague engaged in fierce debates over the strategy, ethics, and objectives of military intervention in Aceh (Reid, [1969b](#)). These debates reflected the complexities and controversies surrounding Dutch imperialism, as well as the tensions between political, economic, and moral interests.

One of the critical voices that emerged from the Dutch parliament (Staten-Generaal) was Fransen van de Putte. As an elite politician with experience as Minister of Colonies and a member of the Dutch parliament, Fransen van de Putte went against the mainstream by sharply criticising the government's aggressive strategy in Aceh. He advocated for a more humane, sustainable approach that respected local sovereignty. His critiques and alternatives revealed a marginalised perspective in the history of the Aceh War, challenging the dominant narrative that favoured military conquest (Reid, [1969b](#)).

Isaïc Dignus Fransen van de Putte was born in Goes, Zeeland, on 22 March 1822. He studied law at Leiden University. His career began as a successful entrepreneur in the Dutch East Indies, where he served as an administrator, lessee, and eventually the owner of the sugar factory "Pandji" in Besuki between 1849 and 1861. He was also co-owner of a tobacco company in Bondowoso from 1855 to 1861. In 1862, he returned to the Netherlands and was elected as a member of the Dutch parliament, serving in both the House of Representatives (Tweede Kamer) and the Senate (Eerste Kamer) as a representative of the Liberal Party. Fransen van de Putte served as Minister of Colonies from 1863 to 1866 and again from 1872 to 1874. He briefly held the position of Prime Minister in 1866 for 111 days (Parlement.com, [n.d.](#)). Known for his progressive views, he often opposed government policies, particularly regarding the forced cultivation system (*cultuurstelsel*) and the Aceh War. As Minister of Colonies, Fransen van de Putte championed more humane policies towards indigenous populations in the Dutch East Indies. He opposed the forced cultivation system, which had been implemented by the Dutch government since the 1830s, arguing that it was exploitative and detrimental to the Indonesian people. He supported E. Douwes Dekker's stance and proposed a new system called the *liberal stelsel*, which allowed Indonesian farmers greater freedom to cultivate crops of their choice (Fasseur & Kraal, [1992](#)). Fransen van de



Putte was also a staunch critic of the Aceh War (1873-1904). Particularly during his second term as Minister of Colonies, coinciding with the outbreak of the Aceh War, he frequently clashed with military factions and officials in the Dutch East Indies. He opposed the Dutch government's aggressive strategy and advocated for a more peaceful and sustainable approach, arguing that the war would bring financial and moral harm to the Dutch.

The Aceh War began as a result of the Dutch's desire to secure its interests in the Strait of Malacca and control trade in the region. The Sultanate of Aceh, with its history of independence and military strength, posed a significant obstacle to Dutch ambitions. In 1873, the Dutch government declared war on Aceh, marking the beginning of a bloody conflict that lasted for four decades.

During his second term as Minister of Colonies under the Gerrit de Vries cabinet, Fransen van de Putte faced numerous challenges, including internal political issues in the Netherlands and the outbreak of the Aceh War. His tenure ended partly due to conflicts between King Willem III and his eldest son, Willem. Fransen van de Putte failed to secure the position of Prime Minister amidst this conflict, leading to the collapse of the De Vries cabinet in 1874. His challenges were compounded by pressure from the opposition, which questioned his patriotism for advocating a softer and perceived weaker approach as a leader (Parlement.com, [n.d.](#)).

Despite no longer serving as Minister of Colonies, Fransen van de Putte remained active as a member of the Dutch parliament, where intense debates about the situation in Aceh continued. Most parliamentarians, particularly from the conservative faction, supported aggressive strategies aimed at subjugating all of Aceh. They argued that military conquest was necessary to uphold Dutch authority and secure economic interests in the region.

However, Fransen van de Putte and the liberal faction offered a different perspective. Drawing on his experience as Minister of Colonies, he understood the complexities of the situation in Aceh and warned of the dangers of aggressive strategies. In his parliamentary speeches, he repeatedly criticised the brutality of the war, the financial waste, and the moral degradation it caused. He called for an approach centred on diplomacy, economic development, and respect for local culture. As he stated in one of his speeches:

"Laat ons blijven waar wij zijn en door een wijs bestuur en goede instellingen trachten te verkrijgen wat wij op gansch Sumatra verkregen hebben: dat de bevolking zich vrijwillig aan onze heerschappij onderwerpe." - 10 Mei 1878 (van de Putte, [1886](#), p. 240)

This statement underscores Fransen van de Putte's advocacy for a more sustainable approach focused on establishing good governance and gaining the voluntary support of the Acehnese people, rather than relying on military coercion.

Previous research on the Aceh War has explored various aspects, ranging from military history and local resistance to the war's social and cultural impacts. Some studies have also analysed the role of the Dutch government and parliament in decision-making regarding the war (Graf et al., [2010](#), [2020](#); Reid, [2004](#), [2005](#); Ricklefs, [1993](#); Vickers, [2013](#)). Significant contributions include analyses of the political climate preceding the outbreak of the Aceh War in the context of debates over colonial policy. Reid (1969) examined Aceh's foreign policy during the reign of Sultan Mahmud (1870-1874) through diplomatic documents, providing insights into Aceh's efforts to establish relationships with other nations, such as Turkey, the United States, and Britain, to preserve its independence against Dutch threats. This research also comprehensively addressed the geopolitical complexities between the Netherlands and Britain concerning Aceh and Sumatra (Reid, [1969a](#), [1969b](#)). Lindblad (1989) investigated Dutch expansion in Indonesia from an economic perspective, framing the Aceh War as part of "imperialism at the periphery." However, the study did not specifically analyse the role of Fransen van de Putte (Lindblad, [1989](#)). Locher-Scholten (1994) discussed Dutch expansion in Indonesia within the context of modern imperialism, revealing that this expansion was driven by various factors, including bureaucratic interests and a "civilising mission." While the study mentioned Fransen van de Putte, it did not focus on his efforts to propose alternatives to Dutch policies in Aceh (Locher-Scholten, [1994](#)). De Jong (2005) examined the debates surrounding the legitimacy of the Aceh War in the Dutch parliament, including critiques from Fransen van de Putte. However, the research mainly focused on the legal and moral aspects of the war rather than Van de Putte's role in advocating alternatives (De Jong, [2005](#)). Hasbi (2024) explored the concept of "perang sabil" (holy war) in Aceh within the framework of the international order of the late 19th century. Hasbi argued that Aceh's *perang sabil* was not a spontaneous reaction to Dutch invasion but rather a response to changing societal stratifications, racialisation of Muslims, and Dutch colonial genocide. Hasbi highlighted the global significance of Aceh's struggle as part of the late 19th-century upheavals, where religious identity and Muslim solidarity played vital roles in resisting European imperialism (Hasbi, [2024](#)).

Despite these contributions, research specifically focusing on Fransen van de Putte's role in advocating alternative approaches remains limited. This study aims to fill this gap by concentrating on Van de Putte's critiques, proposed alternatives, and strategies in opposing dominant narratives in the Dutch parliament. This focus offers a novel contribution to the historiography of the Aceh War.

The key questions driving this research are: How did Fransen van de Putte articulate these alternative approaches within the context of political debates in the Dutch parliament? What strategies did he employ in advancing his cause? What were the outcomes and impacts of his efforts in challenging the hegemonic and aggressive narratives that supported the war? By addressing these questions, this study presents a historical analysis of Fransen van de Putte's role as a critic of Dutch colonial policy in Aceh, shedding light on the discursive struggles surrounding the war.

In recent decades, studies on colonial history have undergone significant developments. Historians have increasingly taken a critical approach to colonial narratives, paying greater attention to indigenous perspectives and forms of resistance against colonialism (Goudsblom, [1992](#); Locher-Scholten, [2018](#); Said, [1978](#)). Moreover, the application of social theories, such as Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony, has become prevalent in understanding the dynamics of power and ideology in colonial contexts (Said, [1978](#); Stoler, [2016](#)).

This research aligns with these trends by integrating historical analysis with Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony (Boothman, [2008](#); Gramsci, [2011a](#), [2011b](#)). This theoretical framework helps elucidate how dominant narratives supporting the war in Aceh were constructed, sustained, and challenged by individuals like Fransen van de Putte. By analysing Van de Putte's struggles within the structures of power and colonial ideology, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of resistance against hegemony.

The urgency of this research is underscored by several reasons. First, the Aceh War remains a critical event in the history of Indonesia and the Dutch, with enduring relevance. Second, Fransen van de Putte's efforts demonstrate that resistance to hegemony can emerge from within the system itself, even from members of the elite. Third, this research contributes to the development of critical approaches to colonial history by combining historical and social theory analysis. Thus, it is hoped that this study provides a more comprehensive understanding of the Aceh War, Dutch political dynamics, and the role of individuals in challenging dominant narratives.

METHOD

This study employs a historical method with a social science approach. The historical method was chosen because the research aims to reconstruct and analyse past events, specifically Fransen van de Putte's efforts to advocate for alternative approaches to Dutch colonial policy in Aceh during the period 1873-1885. This temporal scope was selected as it coincides with the outbreak of the Aceh War and the availability of primary sources comprising Fransen van de Putte's collected speeches.

The research was conducted in 2024 and consisted of several stages: (1) Heuristic stage: This stage involved gathering historical sources relevant to the research topic. The primary source utilised was a compilation of parliamentary speeches by Fransen van de Putte, titled *Atjeh: Parlementaire Redevoeringen van I. D. Fransen van de Putte van Februari 1873 – December 1885* (van de Putte, 1886), which was accessed through the digital collection of Leiden University Library. These speeches provide valuable insights into Van de Putte's critical views on Dutch policy in Aceh. Other primary sources included official government documents, newspaper archives, and colonial literature. Secondary sources, such as books and scholarly journal articles, were employed to strengthen the analysis and interpretation; (2) Verification stage: Following the collection of sources, the next stage involved source criticism to assess the authenticity (external criticism) and credibility (internal criticism) of the materials. External criticism entailed verifying the authenticity of the documents, while internal criticism involved evaluating the content of the sources, including identifying potential biases and the author's motives; (3) Interpretation stage: This stage involved analysing and interpreting the historical sources that had been collected and verified. Fransen van de Putte's speeches were analysed to identify his critical arguments against the Dutch policy in Aceh, the alternatives he proposed, and the strategies he employed to influence policy. Other sources were examined to provide historical context, comparisons, and support for the interpretation; (4) Historiographical stage: This stage involved situating Fransen van de Putte's advocacy within the historiography of the Aceh War. The aim was to re-examine the interpretations of previous historians regarding colonial policy and to contribute to the development of critical historiography on the Aceh War.

The social science approach was also utilised to analyse these events within the broader context of the social, political, and ideological structures surrounding them. Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony was adopted as the analytical framework for this research. This theory is relevant for understanding the dynamics of discursive struggles

and resistance against dominant narratives in the context of colonialism. According to Gramsci, hegemony refers to the dominance of one social class over another, achieved not only through physical force or coercion but also through ideology and consensus. The ruling class establishes "common sense" that is widely accepted by society, thereby legitimising and internalising their dominance (Boothman, 2008; Gramsci, 2011a, 2011b).

In the context of the Aceh War, narratives supporting aggressive strategies and military conquest dominated the "common sense" within the Dutch parliament. These narratives were endorsed by the government, conservative parties, and sections of the press. Fransen van de Putte, through his consistent criticisms, sought to challenge this hegemonic narrative. He offered an alternative perspective, questioning the prevailing "common sense" of the time.

Gramsci's theory of hegemony aids in understanding Fransen van de Putte's struggle as an effort to challenge the hegemonic narrative supporting aggression during the Aceh War. This analysis reveals how dominant narratives are constructed, maintained, and contested within the structures of power and colonial ideology. By employing this theory, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of resistance against hegemony in colonial history.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The political landscape of the Dutch parliament in the context of the Aceh War

To fully comprehend Fransen van de Putte's criticisms, it is essential to delve into the political landscape of the Dutch parliament at the time. The Dutch parliament (Staten-Generaal) operated under a parliamentary democracy established by the 1848 Liberal Constitution. It consisted of various political factions with differing ideologies and interests, all of which intersected in the heated debates over Aceh. Within the bicameral system, the ruling cabinet was formed in the House of Representatives (Tweede Kamer). The De Vries/Fransen van de Putte Cabinet (1872-1874) governed during this period, dominated by members of the liberal faction (see Table 1). Gerrit de Vries served as Prime Minister and Minister of Justice, while Fransen van de Putte held the position of Minister of Colonies. Both figures were prominent and influential within the parliament.

Table 1. De Vries/Fransen van de Putte Cabinet (1872-1874)

Official's Name	Minister / Ministry		Term of Office	Party	
Gerrit de Vries Azn.	Prime Minister		6 July 1872 – 27 August 1874	Liberal	
	Minister	Ministry of Justice (Justitie)			
J.H. Geertsema Czn.	Minister	Ministry of Home Affairs (Binnenlandse Zaken)	6 July 1872 – 27 August 1874		
J.L.H.A. Baron Gericke van Herwijnen	Minister	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Buitenlandse Zaken)	18 January 1871 – 27 August 1874		
Albert van Delden	Minister	Ministry of Finance (Financiën)	6 July 1872 – 27 August 1874		
Menno David Graaf van Limburg Stirum			6 July 1872 – 15 September 1873 (resigned)		
L.G. Brocx	Minister	Ministry of War (Oorlog)	15 September 1873 – 6 October 1873 (acting minister)		
A.W.Ph. Weitzel			6 October 1873 – 29 April 1875		Conservative – Liberal
L.G. Brocx			4 June 1868 – 18 December 1873 (resigned)		Liberal
I.D. Fransen van de Putte	Minister	Ministry of Navy (Marine)	18 December 1873 – 16 May 1874 (acting minister)		Social-Liberal
W.F. van Erp Taalman Kip			16 May 1874 – 3 November 1877	Technocrat	
I.D. Fransen van de Putte	Minister	Ministry of Colonies (Koloniën)	6 July 1872 – 27 August 1874	Social-Liberal	

Two main political forces dominated the parliament: the liberal and conservative factions. The liberals, who generally adhered to principles of economic liberalism and individual freedom, were divided in their stance on the war. Some supported the war, citing the need to safeguard Dutch economic interests. They argued that Aceh, with its strategic location in the Strait of Malacca, was vital for controlling regional trade. Additionally, some liberals were driven by the belief in the Dutch "civilising mission," seeing the war as a means to disseminate European values such as modernity, rationality, and Christianity to the "backward" people of Aceh (De Jong, 2005; Kreemer, 1922, 1923; Lindblad, 1989). However, not all liberals shared this view. Internal divisions within the liberal faction led to polarisation.

Others opposed the war, considering it a waste of resources and contrary to humanitarian principles. They condemned the violence and oppression inflicted upon the Acehnese people and raised concerns about the war's financial and moral implications for the Dutch state. On the other hand, the conservative faction generally supported the war. They perceived Aceh as a threat to Dutch authority and prestige. Conservatives argued that subjugating Aceh was crucial to demonstrating the strength of the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (Koninkrijk Nederlandsch-Indisch Leger, KNIL) and maintaining colonial dominance in the region. They also emphasised Aceh's importance in the broader context of competition with other colonial powers, such as Britain and France (De Jong, [2005](#); Reid, [1969b](#)).

Table 2. Political map of the Staten-Generaal during the De Vries/Fransen van de Putte Cabinet Era (1872-1874)

Party/Faction	Ideology	Political View on Aceh	Main Criticism	Key Figures
Liberal	Liberalism, capitalism	Supported colonial expansion for trade interests but critical of poor war management.	- Inefficient war management. - Concerns over international prestige.	- Fransen van de Putte - James Loudon
Conservative	Conservatism, nationalism	Supported Dutch colonial policies but sceptical of the government's handling of the war.	- Ultimatum seen as overly aggressive. - Poor military preparation. - War costs burden the state.	- Nierstrasz - Van Zuylen van Nijevelt
Anti-Revolutionary	Protestant conservatism, Calvinism	Criticised military approaches and colonial expansion on moral and legal grounds.	- Lack of a strong legal basis for the war. - European legal standards irrelevant to Aceh. - Moral cost of the war.	Abraham Kuyper
Socialist	Socialism, labour	Not yet strong in parliament but generally critical of colonialism as exploitation of indigenous peoples.	War seen as exploitation of the Acehnese people. - Waste of state resources for imperial ambitions.	No dominant figures

Aside from these two dominant forces, smaller factions also contributed to the political dynamics within the parliament. The socialist faction, emerging towards the late 19th century, tended to criticise war and colonialism in general. They viewed the war as a form of exploitation of the Acehnese people and called for independence for all Dutch colonies. Meanwhile, the Anti-Revolutionary faction, characterised by Protestant conservatism and Calvinism, focused more on religious and social issues. This faction was inclined to support government policies as long as they did not conflict with their interests or moral standards (De Jong, [2005](#)).

In this complex political landscape, Fransen van de Putte occupied a unique and courageous position. Despite being part of the liberal faction, he vocally opposed the mainstream narrative, sharply criticising the government's aggressive strategy in Aceh, which was supported by the majority of parliamentarians from both the liberal and conservative factions. He advocated for alternative approaches that were more humane, sustainable, and respectful of local sovereignty. His criticisms were not only directed at the government but also at his liberal colleagues who supported the war. Over the years, he challenged the dominant narrative and proposed a different vision for Dutch-Aceh relations.

To fully understand the polemics surrounding the formulation of policy in Aceh, it is necessary to consider the hierarchy of governance within the Dutch constitutional monarchy at the time. In the Dutch colonial administration, the Staten-Generaal played a crucial role in determining general policy objectives, including colonial goals in the Dutch East Indies. However, the direct influence of parliament on specific decisions in the field, such as in Aceh, was relatively limited due to geographic distance and communication constraints. The Minister of Colonies, such as Fransen van de Putte, served as a bridge between the Staten-Generaal and the colonial government, translating parliamentary policies into directives for the Governor-General. However, the Minister of Colonies often had to adapt to dynamic and unpredictable field conditions (Kreemer, [1922](#)).

In the Dutch East Indies, the Governor-General had significant autonomy in making strategic decisions. During this period, Governor-General James Loudon acted decisively in addressing the situation in Aceh by issuing an ultimatum and initiating military expeditions, even without explicit directives from the Dutch parliament. Loudon perceived an urgency to act swiftly, particularly after receiving reports of Aceh's attempts to establish treaties with foreign powers such as the United States and Turkey. This operational independence extended to military expedition commanders, such as J.J. van Swieten, who took the initiative to annex Aceh directly. Van Swieten's actions ultimately compelled the central government to adopt a policy of full annexation of Aceh (De Jong, [2005](#); Kreemer, [1922](#)).

The Staten-Generaal played a significant role in evaluating the outcomes of policies implemented in the field. Criticisms of the ultimatum, inadequate military preparations, and the financial impact of the Aceh War became central themes in parliamentary debates. The decision-making dynamics during the Aceh War were marked by information

asymmetry between parliament and field conditions, independent decisions made by the Governor-General and military expedition commanders (KNIL), and the parliament's more prominent role in *post-facto* evaluations (De Jong, 2005).

Table 3. Hierarchy of the Staten-Generaal, Minister of Colonies, Governor-General, and KNIL Commander in Aceh War Policy Determination

Power Level	Primary Role	Relationship
Staten-Generaal	Establishes general colonial policy	Provides strategic directives through the Minister of Colonies, evaluates decisions post-facto.
Minister of Colonies	Connects central government and colonial administration	Directs the Governor-General, adapts to field conditions.
Governor-General	Main decision-maker in the Dutch East Indies	Receives directives from the Minister of Colonies, acts autonomously in the field.
KNIL Commander	Executes military strategy	Reports to the Governor-General, directly implements actions on the battlefield.

Fransen van de Putte's critique of Dutch colonial policy in Aceh

Before the outbreak of the Aceh War in 1873, Fransen van de Putte had already demonstrated a preference for diplomatic and peaceful approaches over military confrontation. His early stance emphasised the importance of maintaining stable relations with Aceh without expanding Dutch control over the region. This is reflected in some of his initial instructions and policies, which encouraged friendly interactions and efforts to maintain stability through dialogue, including sending commissions to negotiate with Acehnese representatives.

Fransen van de Putte did not explicitly support aggressive or military actions against Aceh before the war began. He underscored the need to preserve a stable relationship with Aceh and avoid unnecessary conflict. However, the situation changed when reports from the Dutch consulate in Singapore suggested that Aceh was attempting to forge alliances with foreign powers, particularly Turkey, the United States, and Italy. This raised concerns about potential threats to Dutch interests in the region (Reid, 1969b, 1969a; van de Putte, 1886). Nevertheless, Fransen van de Putte believed these rumours were exaggerated (De Jong, 2005; van de Putte, 1886).

The first expedition to Aceh was approved by the Dutch Council of the Indies (Raad van Indië) and executed under the leadership of J.H.R. Kohler (Reid, 1969b). While Fransen van de Putte, as Minister of Colonies, was not directly responsible for this military operation, he did not obstruct the Council of the Indies' decision to launch an expedition aimed at pressuring Aceh to respect Dutch interests without escalating the conflict into a full-scale war (van de Putte, 1886). However, the first expedition ended in failure, with Kohler killed in action. This dramatic turn of events underscored the resilience of the Acehnese forces and became a source of ridicule in newspapers across Britain, Germany, and France (De Jong, 2005). The failure of the expedition sparked intense debates among Dutch citizens, the press, and politicians, including Fransen van de Putte, about the next course of action. This placed Van de Putte in a precarious position amidst the polemics.

Fransen van de Putte consistently and vehemently criticised the aggressive military strategy pursued by the KNIL. He regarded this approach as ineffective, costly, and unnecessarily harmful to the Acehnese people. He opposed the notion that military conquest was the only means to secure Dutch interests in Aceh. In a speech delivered in 1873, early in the war, he firmly stated:

"Geheel Atjeh moet ten onder gebracht, en moet veroverd worden... Dat kan niet het doel zijn van de Nederlandsche Regeering, dat doel gaat onze krachten te boven." - 30 November 1876 (van de Putte, 1886, p. 220)

This statement reflects Fransen van de Putte's opposition to the objective of conquering the entirety of Aceh. He argued that such an ambition was overly ambitious and beyond the capabilities of the KNIL. He expressed concerns that the war would drag on, drain resources, and cause significant casualties on both sides. He also criticised the military tactics employed, such as the destruction of villages, which he considered cruel and inhumane. He opposed the excessive use of force and advocated for a more proportional and humane approach.

The fact that concerns in the Dutch public were somewhat mitigated did not ease Fransen van de Putte's anxieties. He sought international support for Dutch policy, believing it would be easier to secure if the Netherlands could demonstrate initial efforts at negotiation. The same political astuteness seemed evident in his selection of General J.J. van Swieten to lead the second expedition. However, the outcome did not align with Fransen van de Putte's expectations. In practice, Van Swieten issued an ultimatum to the local rulers, demanding they recognise Dutch sovereignty with three options and their consequences: (1) acknowledge the sovereignty of the Dutch East Indies and

avoid conflict; (2) refuse to recognise Dutch sovereignty and face a naval blockade (embargo); or (3) fail to respond to the ultimatum and prepare for a confrontation with the KNIL (Alfian, [1987](#); Reid, [1969b](#)).

Fransen van de Putte's criticisms were not limited to the humanitarian aspects of the war but also extended to the effectiveness of military strategies. He doubted the Dutch capability to subdue Aceh militarily, given the challenging terrain, the strong resistance of the Acehnese people, and the escalating costs of war. He argued that aggressive strategies would only strengthen Acehnese resistance and prolong the conflict.

In another speech, he ridiculed costly and risky infrastructure projects in Aceh, such as tramway construction, which he deemed wasteful and irrelevant to the war effort:

"Ik raad den Minister aan vóór hij den tramweg in exploitatie brengt, voor de locomotieven en wagens eene pantsering uit te zenden." - 15 December 1882 (van de Putte, [1886](#), p. 274)

This quote illustrates Fransen van de Putte's disapproval of not only the military strategy but also government policies that he deemed irrational and wasteful. He urged the government to manage the war budget more wisely and allocate resources to more productive efforts.

Fransen van de Putte also highlighted the negative impact of the war on the Dutch nation itself. He argued that the war had depleted state finances, weakened the military, and tarnished the country's moral standing. He warned that the consequences of the war extended beyond material losses to include moral degradation that could not be quantified. In a speech in 1882, he candidly stated:

"Die noodeloze uitbreiding van ons grondgebied is het, die onze finantien ruineert; ons leger fysiek en moreel bederft." - 5 Desember 1882 (van de Putte, [1886](#), p. 273)

This statement underscores Van de Putte's deep concern about the economic and moral consequences of the war for the Dutch. He argued that the war had resulted in budget deficits, rising national debt, and declining troop morale. He also criticised the government for concealing the true costs and casualties of the war from the public. The Dutch appeared to have quickly forgotten their previous exhaustive experiences during the Java War (against Diponegoro) and the prolonged the Bali Wars (De Jong, [2005](#); Reid, [1969b](#)).

Fransen van de Putte was also deeply concerned about the war's impact on the Dutch reputation in the eyes of the world. He was acutely aware that the atrocities committed by the KNIL in Aceh had drawn condemnation from various quarters, both domestically and internationally. He warned that such brutal actions would tarnish the Dutch image as a civilised nation and jeopardise Dutch interests in the long term.

Fransen van de Putte did not merely criticise government policies but also offered what he considered better alternatives. He articulated his vision for a Dutch-Acehnese relationship that was more peaceful, just, and sustainable. He called for an approach centred on diplomacy, economic development, and respect for local culture. He argued that the Dutch could achieve their interests in Aceh without resorting to military force. In his speech in 1878, he stated:

"Laat ons blijven waar wij zijn en door een wijs bestuur en goede instellingen trachten te verkrijgen wat wij op gansch Sumatra verkregen hebben: dat de bevolking zich vrijwillig aan onze heerschappij onderwerpe." - 10 Mei 1878 (van de Putte, [1886](#), p. 240)

This statement illustrates Fransen van de Putte's advocacy for a more sustainable approach, focusing on the establishment of good governance and securing the support of the Acehnese people rather than resorting to military coercion. He believed that through such means, the Dutch could achieve their economic interests in Aceh without compromising humanitarian principles or inciting hostility among the Acehnese population.

Fransen van de Putte proposed that the Dutch respect Aceh's sovereignty and establish equal diplomatic relations. He also suggested that the Dutch provide economic and technological assistance to Aceh to improve the welfare of its people. He believed that by doing so, the Dutch could gain the trust and cooperation of the Acehnese people, ultimately benefiting both parties (van de Putte, [1886](#)).

However, it proved challenging for Fransen van de Putte to garner the full support of the Staten-Generaal. Meanwhile, in the Dutch East Indies, the authority and autonomy of Governor-General James Loudon remained unchallenged, as did the position of the second expedition's commander, Van Swieten. These figures were "untouchable" and believed they knew best what needed to be done regarding Aceh. One compelling reason for the Dutch to proceed with the annexation of Aceh was the geopolitical agenda long in the making since the London Treaty of 1824 and the Sumatra Treaty of 1871. The competition with Britain over Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula heavily preoccupied the colonial government at the time. Regardless of the difficulties, the Dutch were determined to realise

Pax Neerlandica, which meant Aceh had to be subdued and incorporated into the Dutch East Indies. Eventually, the drums of war were sounded amid a backdrop of vengeance, and the KNIL returned to annex Aceh—a move that became inevitable. The second expedition in 1874 arrived with greater strength and successfully captured the heart of the Acehnese Kingdom. Under Van Swieten's leadership, the KNIL restored its prestige in the eyes of the international community (Jongejans, [1939](#); Kielstra, [1883](#); Reid, [1969b](#), [2004](#), [2005](#); Ricklefs, [1993](#); Vickers, [2013](#)). Nonetheless, the Dutch were virtually blind regarding information about Aceh, which caused considerable frustration. This continued until a special mission was assigned to Cristian Snouck Hurgronje to Aceh in 1891 (Gobee & Adriaanse, [1990](#); Graf et al., [2010](#); Hurgronje, [1906](#)).

Fransen van de Putte's strategies in advocating for alternative approaches

Fransen van de Putte did not merely voice criticisms of Dutch colonial policy in Aceh. He was an active advocate for alternative approaches that were more humane and sustainable. As a seasoned politician who had served as Minister of Colonies, he possessed a deep understanding of the dynamics of Dutch politics and colonialism. He employed various strategies, both within and outside parliament, to promote his views and influence government policy.

The Dutch parliament became the main stage for Fransen van de Putte to voice his criticisms and ideas. He used his position as a parliamentarian to directly confront the government and other members of parliament. Known as an eloquent orator, Fransen van de Putte's speeches often captivated his audience and drew significant attention. He skilfully presented data, logical arguments, and moral appeals to challenge Dutch policies in Aceh. Quotes from his sharp and bold speeches frequently appeared in the media and sparked public debate. For instance, in his 1874 speech, he boldly declared:

"...zou ik niet durven adviseeren na al hetgeen omtrent de toestanden in Atjeh gebleken is uit de stukken die, hetzij geheel of bij uittreksel, in de Staatscourant zijn medegedeeld." - 8 Juni 1874 (van de Putte, [1886](#), p. 199)

This statement underscores Fransen van de Putte's demand for transparency and accountability from the government regarding policies in Aceh. He emphasised the role of parliament in scrutinising the government and ensuring that implemented policies align with the people's interests. He often cited newspaper reports and testimonies from soldiers stationed in Aceh to refute government claims and expose the realities of the war.

In another speech, he called for an end to the war and proposed a more realistic peaceful solution. He argued:

"Geheel Atjeh moet ten onder gebracht, en moet veroverd worden... Dat kan niet het doel zijn van de Nederlandsche Regeering, dat doel gaat onze krachten te boven." - 30 November 1876 (van de Putte, [1886](#), p. 222)

This appeal demonstrates Fransen van de Putte's courage in opposing the mainstream narrative and offering alternatives to the government's policies. Despite knowing that his views could provoke anger from the government and some parliamentarians, he remained undeterred in voicing his stance.

Fransen van de Putte also did not hesitate to interrupt the speeches of ministers or other parliamentarians who supported the war. He swiftly posed critical questions, challenged their arguments, and presented alternative perspectives. He actively participated in parliamentary debates and tirelessly advocated for his views, despite facing frequent rejection and ridicule.

For example, during a debate with James Loudon in 1874, Fransen van de Putte sharply criticised Loudon's reports, which he claimed concealed military failures in Aceh and presented an overly optimistic picture of the situation. He also opposed Loudon's justification for the war, which argued that it was necessary to uphold Dutch authority. Fransen van de Putte contended that continuing a brutal and costly war would only further erode Dutch authority and prestige (De Jong, [2005](#); van de Putte, [1886](#)).

In his diplomatic efforts, Fransen van de Putte supported the Treaty of Siak, signed in 1857 with Sultan Siak Sri Indrapura. However, he overlooked the significant differences between Siak and Aceh. Loudon opposed the Treaty model, arguing that it was overly detailed, prone to misinterpretation, and encouraged unnecessary intervention in Aceh and East Sumatra. In contrast, Fransen van de Putte viewed the Treaty of Siak as an example of flexible diplomacy, while Loudon preferred a simpler assertion of sovereignty without excessive involvement. Fransen van de Putte argued that protecting trade and Dutch international reputation required a more active approach (De Jong, [2005](#)).

Ultimately, it was neither Fransen van de Putte nor Loudon who decided to change the policy toward Aceh, but rather the second expedition commander, Van Swieten. Given full autonomy, Van Swieten attempted to initiate negotiations with Aceh through letters stating that the Dutch government had no intention of interfering in Aceh's internal affairs, such as religion or finances. However, Van Swieten ultimately shifted the policy toward annexation,

capitalising on the chaos in Aceh following the death of the Sultan and regional leaders. He justified the annexation as more cost-effective and beneficial, claiming that direct Dutch governance would bring greater advantages to the Acehnese. Although Fransen van de Putte eventually supported this policy, he maintained that direct control beyond Aceh's core regions should only be temporary (De Jong, [2005](#)). However, the war persisted and turned out to be far longer than the Dutch had anticipated, as they were no longer merely facing autonomous rulers (*uleebalang*), but also the Acehnese populace mobilised by Islamic scholars (*ulama*). The conflict evolved from a state-versus-state war into a new phase—a holy war against the infidel colonisers, known as the *perang sabil* or the war in the path of Allah (Alfian, [1987](#)).

In another debate in 1879, Fransen van de Putte clashed with members of the conservative faction in parliament who supported the war. He challenged their view that Aceh posed a threat to Dutch interests. Fransen van de Putte argued that Aceh had never attacked the Dutch and that the war had been initiated by the Dutch themselves. He called on the government to end the war and establish amicable diplomatic relations with Aceh.

Fransen van de Putte was also active in proposing motions and amendments aimed at altering government policy in Aceh. He suggested that the government halt military operations and focus on diplomatic efforts and economic development. He also proposed amendments to reduce the war budget and reallocate the funds to social and educational programmes in Aceh. Although his motions and amendments were rarely adopted, they underscored his commitment to pursuing policy changes through formal parliamentary channels.

In 1877, Fransen van de Putte submitted a motion urging the government to cease the war and withdraw Dutch troops from Aceh. He argued that the war had inflicted immense suffering on the Acehnese people and drained Dutch finances. However, the motion was rejected by the majority of parliamentarians (van de Putte, [1886](#)).

In 1880, he once again proposed an amendment to reduce the war budget. He suggested reallocating the funds to build schools, hospitals, and infrastructure in Aceh. He believed that economic and social development would be more effective in creating stability and security in Aceh than military operations. However, this amendment was also rejected by parliament (van de Putte, [1886](#)).

Fransen van de Putte recognised that his struggle could not be confined to the parliamentary chambers. He was equally active outside parliament in influencing public opinion and garnering support for his ideas. He utilised mass media, such as newspapers and magazines, to disseminate his views and criticise government policies. He wrote articles, opinion pieces, and letters to the editor highlighting the atrocities of the war, the wasteful spending, and the failures of military strategies in Aceh. His writings often stirred controversy and sparked public debate about the war.

Fransen van de Putte's social network provided him with access to the information and resources necessary to advance his ideas. He corresponded with missionaries, traders, and Dutch officials stationed in Aceh to obtain on-the-ground information. He also engaged in discussions with legal experts, historians, and public figures to deepen his understanding of Aceh and secure support for his proposals.

One significant figure within Fransen van de Putte's network was Eduard Douwes Dekker, a writer and former Dutch East Indies government official better known by his pen name, Multatuli (Multatuli, [1860](#)). Douwes Dekker was a sharp critic of Dutch colonialism and a proponent of Indonesian independence. Fransen van de Putte and Douwes Dekker frequently exchanged ideas and supported each other in their fight against colonial injustice.

Fransen van de Putte was actively involved in the peace movement opposing the war in Aceh. He attended demonstrations, delivered speeches, and raised funds to support war victims. He also collaborated with humanitarian organisations that provided aid to Acehnese refugees.

His participation in the peace movement demonstrated his commitment to ending the war and achieving peace in Aceh. He sought to mobilise public support and pressure the government to change its policies. He also wrote articles and pamphlets advocating for peace and opposing violence. He appealed to the Dutch public to empathise with the suffering of the Acehnese people and support peace efforts.

One of the peace organisations supported by Fransen van de Putte was *De Vredesbond* (The Peace League). This organisation aimed to promote peace and resolve conflicts through peaceful means. Fransen van de Putte was actively involved in *De Vredesbond* and frequently gave speeches at their events (van de Putte, [1886](#)).

Despite Fransen van de Putte's vigorous efforts and strategies, he was ultimately unsuccessful in changing government policy in Aceh. The war continued until 1904, with Aceh eventually being subdued by the Dutch. What, then, caused Fransen van de Putte's failure? Several factors hindered the effectiveness of his strategies.

Firstly, dominance of aggressive narratives. The narrative supporting the war and the conquest of Aceh was pervasive in both the Dutch parliament and society. This narrative was backed by the government, conservative parties, much of the press, and powerful political and economic interests (Furnivall, [2009](#), [2014](#)). Fransen van de Putte's alternative narrative struggled to penetrate this dominance. The aggressive narrative was built on several key assumptions: (a) Aceh was perceived as a threat to Dutch interests in the Strait of Malacca; (b) The Acehnese people were portrayed as "primitive" and "fanatical," necessitating Dutch "pacification"; (c) The conquest of Aceh was seen as evidence of Dutch strength and prestige as a colonial power.

This narrative was disseminated through various channels, including speeches by government officials, newspaper articles, and history books. It was further reinforced by early Dutch military successes in the war, which created the impression that the conquest of Aceh was merely a matter of time. Fransen van de Putte attempted to counter this narrative by presenting data and evidence showing that the war had caused significant casualties and material losses, that the Acehnese had the right to defend their independence, and that peaceful approaches would be more effective in achieving Dutch objectives in Aceh. However, his efforts met with strong resistance from groups invested in the continuation of the war (van de Putte, [1886](#)).

Secondly, political and economic interests. The Aceh War was strongly supported by political and economic interests. For some politicians, the war was an opportunity to demonstrate power and gain popularity. For certain businessmen, the war created lucrative business opportunities, such as the sale of weapons and military supplies. These interests made it difficult for Fransen van de Putte to influence government policy. One example of political interests tied to the Aceh War was the ambition of James Loudon to conquer Aceh and expand Dutch territorial control. Loudon viewed the conquest of Aceh as a personal achievement that would bolster his political career. He was also supported by conservative groups eager to showcase the strength of the KNIL. Meanwhile, some Dutch businessmen saw the war as an opportunity to profit economically. They supplied weapons, ammunition, and other provisions to the Dutch government to support the war effort. They also invested in plantations and mining enterprises in Aceh, anticipating substantial profits if Aceh was successfully subdued (Reid, [1969b](#)). These political and economic interests created significant barriers to Fransen van de Putte's efforts to change government policy. He recognised that his struggle was not only against dominant narratives but also against a network of power supporting the war (van de Putte, [1886](#)).

Thirdly, limited access to information. Fransen van de Putte and other critics faced significant challenges in obtaining accurate and objective information about the situation in Aceh. The colonial government tended to censor information and provided overly optimistic portrayals of the war's progress. This made it difficult for Fransen van de Putte to refute government claims and present the public with the war's harsh realities. The colonial government controlled the flow of information from Aceh through various means. They censored newspapers and other media to prevent the dissemination of negative news about the war. They also restricted access for journalists and independent observers to the conflict zone. Official government reports were often carefully crafted to conceal military failures and highlight minimal successes. This limitation of access to information made it challenging for Fransen van de Putte to construct strong arguments and convince the public that the war in Aceh was a mistake. He often relied on information from unofficial sources, such as letters from soldiers and missionaries, which were difficult to verify (van de Putte, [1886](#)).

Despite facing various obstacles, Fransen van de Putte's strategies cannot be deemed entirely unsuccessful. He succeeded in voicing sharp and consistent criticism of the Dutch government's policy in Aceh. He also managed to offer an alternative narrative that stood in stark contrast to the dominant discourse. Although he did not directly influence government policy, his efforts made a significant contribution to the development of critical discourse and thought about colonialism in the Netherlands.

The critiques and alternatives proposed by Fransen van de Putte helped raise public awareness about the war in Aceh. Parliamentary debates and media publications shed light on the atrocities of war, the wastage of public funds, and the damages incurred. While the aggressive narrative remained dominant, more people began questioning the government's policy in Aceh.

Fransen van de Putte's struggle also inspired a broader opposition movement against the war in Aceh. Various organisations and individuals began voicing criticisms and demanding that the government change its policies. Although this opposition movement was not strong enough to end the war, it managed to create political pressure on the government and compelled it to be more transparent and accountable.

Fransen van de Putte's criticisms also contributed to the development of critical thought about colonialism in the Netherlands. He challenged the fundamental assumptions underpinning colonial policies, such as the "civilising mission" and European superiority. He called for the Dutch to respect the rights of the Acehnese people and to establish

more equitable and just relations. These ideas influenced some Dutch intellectuals and activists who began to question the legitimacy of colonialism.

The fate and impact of Fransen van de Putte's advocacy

The criticisms and alternatives proposed by Fransen van de Putte regarding the Dutch government's policy in Aceh elicited varied reactions, often sparking polemics in the Dutch parliament and society. Responses to his views can be mapped based on the political affiliations and interests of various groups, ultimately shaping the debates surrounding the Aceh War.

As expected, the colonial government and the majority of parliamentarians from the conservative party strongly resisted Fransen van de Putte's criticisms. They viewed the war in Aceh as essential for upholding Dutch authority and securing economic and political interests in the region.

James Loudon was particularly steadfast in defending the war policy. He rejected Fransen van de Putte's calls for a peaceful approach, dismissing them as a sign of weakness. Loudon and his supporters believed that only by demonstrating military strength could the Dutch maintain their position as a dominant colonial power.



Figure 1. Portrait of Fransen van de Putte during his tenure as Minister of Colonies
Source: digitalcollections.universiteitleiden.nl (<http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:791528>)

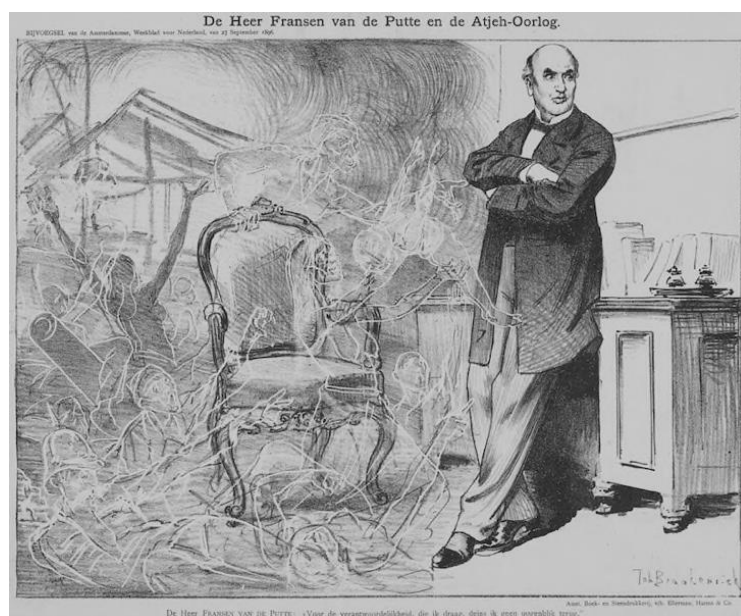


Figure 2. A caricature of Fransen van de Putte in *Amsterdammer* magazine (27 September 1896), depicting his steadfastness against pressure or criticism
Source: digitalcollections.universiteitleiden.nl (<http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:854517>)

A similar rejection was shown by members of parliament from the conservative party. They tended to hold strong nationalist views and supported Dutch colonial expansion. They regarded Aceh as a threat to Dutch sovereignty and considered war the only way to address this threat. The conservative faction viewed Fransen van de Putte's criticisms as a form of betrayal. They called for national unity in facing the war and rejected any criticism that could undermine morale. Among the liberals, the reception of Fransen van de Putte's criticisms was more mixed. Some liberal members supported his views and advocated for a more humane and sustainable approach in Aceh. They sympathised with the suffering of the Acehnese people and were concerned about the negative impacts of the war on the Dutch. They considered the war a humanitarian tragedy and urged the government to seek a diplomatic solution. However, not all liberals shared this perspective. Others continued to support the government's policy and viewed Fransen van de Putte's criticisms as overly idealistic and unrealistic. They argued that the Dutch had significant economic and political interests in Aceh and that war was the only way to secure these interests (van de Putte, [1886](#)).

This internal debate among liberals reflected the complexity of their stance on colonialism. On the one hand, they adhered to humanitarian principles and opposed violence. On the other hand, they recognised the need to protect vital economic and political interests. Fransen van de Putte, through his sharp criticisms, forced the liberal party to confront these contradictions and question the moral foundations of their colonial policies.

In Netherlands, the Aceh War also generated both support and opposition. Some segments of society supported the war, viewing it as a heroic struggle to assert Dutch authority. They were influenced by the heroic narrative constructed by the government and mass media, which portrayed the KNIL soldiers as heroes bringing civilisation to Aceh (van de Putte, [1886](#)).

However, as the war dragged on and more reports emerged about the atrocities and suffering it caused, critical voices within society began to grow. Some members of the public started to question the morality of the war and called on the government to seek a peaceful resolution.

Fransen van de Putte's criticisms in parliament and the mass media contributed significantly to the development of public opinion on the Aceh War. He exposed the Dutch public to the harsh realities of the war and challenged the heroic narrative constructed by the government. Although not everyone accepted his views, he succeeded in sparking an important public debate about the war and colonialism. He played a pivotal role in generating critical discussions about the Aceh War and challenging the dominant narratives that supported it. He acted as a dissenting voice, reminding the Dutch public of the moral and humanitarian consequences of their colonial policies.

Analysis of Gramsci's theory of hegemony in historical interpretation

Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony provides a valuable analytical framework for understanding the fate of Fransen van de Putte's struggle within the context of the Aceh War. Firstly, hegemony and "common sense". Gramsci explains that hegemony is a condition in which a dominant group controls the social, political, and ideological order through the active consent of subordinate groups. This dominance is achieved not only through force or coercion but also through the construction of "common sense" that upholds the status quo (Boothman, [2008](#); Gramsci, [2011a](#), [2011b](#)). In the context of the Aceh War, the Dutch colonial government and its supporters succeeded in creating hegemony by constructing a narrative that framed the war as necessary, even noble. This narrative emphasised the importance of upholding Dutch authority, securing economic interests, and spreading "civilisation" to the Acehnese people. This narrative became the "common sense" accepted by the majority of parliamentarians and Dutch society, leaving little room for alternative perspectives.

Secondly, the role of organic intellectuals. Gramsci also highlights the importance of "organic intellectuals" in maintaining or challenging hegemony. Organic intellectuals are individuals who formulate, disseminate, and legitimise the ideology of a particular group. They can come from various backgrounds, such as academics, journalists, or politicians (Boothman, [2008](#); Gramsci, [2011a](#), [2011b](#)). In the context of the Aceh War, most organic intellectuals in the Netherlands played a role in sustaining the hegemony of the aggressive narrative. They wrote books, articles, and speeches that supported the war and attacked its critics. However, a small number of organic intellectuals opposed this hegemony, and Fransen van de Putte was one of them. He utilised his knowledge of history, politics, and colonialism to criticise the war and offer a different perspective.

Thirdly, the struggle against hegemony. Fransen van de Putte's efforts can be seen as an attempt to resist the hegemony of the aggressive narrative dominating the discourse on the Aceh War. He challenged the "common sense" that justified the war and sought to build critical awareness among the Dutch public. However, he faced significant challenges in dismantling this hegemony because the aggressive narrative was deeply entrenched within the structures

of power and colonial ideology (Boothman, [2008](#); Gramsci, [2011a](#), [2011b](#)). Although Fransen van de Putte's criticisms gained support from some members of parliament and the public, they were not sufficient to alter government policy. This underscores that changing hegemony is a complex process requiring time, effective strategies, and broad support.

Despite his inability to directly change government policy, Fransen van de Putte's struggle had a significant impact within the context of the Aceh War and Dutch colonial history. *Firstly*, his critiques and alternative proposals contributed to the development of discourse on colonialism and war in the Netherlands. He introduced a different perspective and sparked public debates on the ethics, morality, and effectiveness of war. He also opened up space for discussions about alternatives to military conquest in the Dutch relationship with its colonies. *Secondly*, Fransen van de Putte's struggle raised public awareness in the Netherlands about the realities of the war in Aceh. He exposed the atrocities and suffering caused by the war and criticised the government for withholding information from the public. While not everyone accepted his views, he succeeded in fostering critical awareness among segments of the Dutch public regarding war and colonialism. *Thirdly*, his struggle inspired future generations fighting against colonialism and injustice. He demonstrated that resistance could be carried out from within the system itself and that critical voices could have a significant impact, even if not immediately successful.

Fransen van de Putte's courage and persistence in advocating for alternative approaches amidst the dominance of aggressive narratives serve as an example for future activists and politicians. They learned from Fransen van de Putte the importance of voicing criticism, offering alternatives, and employing various strategies to combat injustice.

Fransen van de Putte was a bold and visionary figure. He challenged the mainstream by criticising the war in Aceh and proposing a more humane and sustainable approach. Although he did not succeed in changing government policy, his efforts contributed significantly to the development of critical discourse and thought about colonialism in the Netherlands. He also left a valuable legacy for future generations in their fight against colonialism and injustice.

CONCLUSION

The struggle of Fransen van de Putte in advocating for an alternative approach to Dutch colonial policy in Aceh reflects the dynamics of discourse and hegemonic battles within the Dutch parliament. Although his speeches were captivating and his arguments incisive, he was unable to alter the course of government policy, which was entrenched in aggressive narratives and political and economic interests. Nevertheless, this study has revealed an important historical fact from the early episodes of the Aceh War: not all Dutch people supported bloodshed. Fransen van de Putte stands as a symbol that resistance to hegemony can emerge from within the heart of the Dutch government itself.

The analysis using Gramsci's theory of hegemony demonstrates that the narratives supporting the war and the conquest of Aceh successfully established a dominant "common sense" within the Dutch parliament and society. Fransen van de Putte, with his criticisms and alternatives, sought to challenge this hegemonic narrative, yet he faced significant difficulties in altering a "common sense" that was deeply rooted in colonial structures of power and ideology. Despite this, Fransen van de Putte's struggle had a meaningful impact. He voiced an alternative perspective that challenged the dominant narrative and opened space for critical discussions on colonialism and war. He also left a valuable legacy for future generations in their fight against injustice and oppression.

This study has several important implications. *Firstly*, it highlights the importance of studying resistance to hegemony within the history of colonialism. Resistance is not always physical but can also take the form of discursive and ideological opposition. *Secondly*, this research demonstrates the relevance of Gramsci's theory of hegemony in analysing the dynamics of power and ideology in a colonial context. This theory helps us understand how dominant narratives are constructed, maintained, and challenged. Fransen van de Putte's struggle not only sheds light on the dynamics of hegemonic resistance during the Aceh War but also provides a foundation for future studies exploring the applicability of Gramsci's theory in analysing colonial and post-colonial power structures.

However, this study also has certain limitations. The primary sources utilised mainly focus on Fransen van de Putte's speeches and writings. Further research using a more diverse range of primary sources, such as government archives, newspapers, and memoirs of other figures, is needed to provide a more comprehensive picture. Additionally, this research focuses on Fransen van de Putte's role within the Dutch parliament. Further studies are required to analyse the reception and impact of his criticisms among Dutch society and in Aceh itself. By addressing these limitations, future research can expand and enrich our understanding of Fransen van de Putte's struggle and the underlying dynamics of the Aceh War.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad, Z. (Ed.). (1983). *Sejarah Perlawanan terhadap Imperialisme dan Kolonialisme di Aceh*. Departemen P & K, Direktorat Sejarah dan Nilai Tradisional, Proyek Inventarisasi dan Dokumentasi Sejarah Nasional.
- Alfian, I. (1987). *Perang di Jalan Allah: Perang Aceh 1873-1912*. Pustaka Sinar Harapan.
- Boothman, D. (2008). The Sources for Gramsci's Concept of Hegemony. *Rethinking Marxism*, 20(2), 201–215. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08935690801916942>
- De Jong, J. (2005). 'Negotiations in Bismarckian Style': The Debate on the Aceh War and its Legitimacy, 1873–1874. *Itinerario*, 29(2), 38–52. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0165115300023615>
- Fasseur, C., & Kraal, A. (1992). *The Politics of Colonial Exploitation: Java, The Dutch, and the Cultivation System*. Cornell University Press. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctv1nhkvp>
- Furnivall, J. S. (2009). *Hindia Belanda: Studi tentang Ekonomi Majemuk* (S. Berlian, Trans.). Freedom Institute.
- Furnivall, J. S. (2014). *Colonial policy and practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gobee, E., & Adriaanse, C. (1990). *Nasihat-nasihat C. Snouck Hurgronje Semasa Kepegawaiannya Kepada Pemerintah Hindia Belanda* (Vol. 3). INIS.
- Goudsblom, J. (1992). *Fire and civilization*. Allen Lane.
- Graf, A., Schroter, S., & Wieringa, E. (Eds.). (2010). The Aceh War (1873–1913) and the Influence of Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje. In *Aceh* (pp. 39–62). ISEAS Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1355/9789814279130-006>
- Graf, A., Schröter, S., & Wieringa, E. (2020). *Aceh: History, Politics and Culture*. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Gramsci, A. (2011a). *Letters from Prison* (F. Rosengarten, Ed.; R. Rosenthal, Trans.; Vol. 1). Columbia University Press.
- Gramsci, A. (2011b). *Letters from Prison* (F. Rosengarten, Ed.; R. Rosenthal, Trans.; Vol. 2). Columbia University Press.
- Hasbi, B. (2024). Holy war and the international order: Rethinking Acehese perang sabil in the late 19th century. *Indonesia and the Malay World*, 52(153), 199–220. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2024.2384177>
- Hurgronje, C. S. (1906). *The Achehnese* (A. W. S. O'Sullivan, Trans.). E. J. Brill.
- Jongejans, J. (1939). *Land en Volk van Atjeh, Vroeger en Nu*. NV. Baarn.
- Kielstra, E. B. (1883). *Beschrijving van den Atjeh-Oorlog: Vol. I*. De Gebroeders van Cleff.
- Kreemer, J. (1922). *Atjeh: Algemeen Samenvattend Overzicht van Land en Volk van Atjeh en Onderhoorigheden: Vol. I*. E. J. Brill.
- Kreemer, J. (1923). *Atjeh: Algemeen Samenvattend Overzicht van Land en Volk van Atjeh en Onderhoorigheden: Vol. II*. E. J. Brill.
- Lindblad, J. T. (1989). Economic Aspects of the Dutch Expansion in Indonesia, 1870–1914. *Modern Asian Studies*, 23(1), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X00011392>
- Locher-Scholten, E. (1994). Dutch Expansion in the Indonesian Archipelago Around 1900 and the Imperialism Debate. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 25(1), 91–111. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S002246340000669X>
- Locher-Scholten, E. (2018). *Sumatran Sultanate and Colonial State: Jambi and the Rise of Dutch Imperialism, 1830–1907* (B. Jackson, Trans.). Cornell University Press. <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501719387>
- Multatuli. (1860). *Max Havelaar*. J. de Ruyter.
- Parlement.com. (n.d.). *I.D. Fransen van de Putte*. Parlement.com. Retrieved December 8, 2024, from https://www.parlement.com/id/vg09ll0s6rz8/biografie/i_d_fransen_van_de_putte
- Reid, A. (1969a). Indonesian Diplomacy: A Documentary Study of Atjehnese Foreign Policy in the Reign of Sultan Mahmud, 1870–4. *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 42(2), 74–114. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41491994>
- Reid, A. (1969b). *The Contest for North Sumatra: Atjeh, the Netherlands and Britain, 1858–1898*. Oxford University Press.
- Reid, A. (2004). War, peace and the burden of history in Aceh. *Asian Ethnicity*, 5(3), 301–314. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1463136042000259761>
- Reid, A. (2005). *An Indonesian frontier: Acehese and other histories of Sumatra*. KITLV Press.
- Ricklefs, M. C. (1993). *A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1200*. MacMillan London.
- Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism*. Pantheon Books.
- Stoler, A. L. (2016). *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times*. Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822373612>
- van de Putte, I. D. F. (1886). *Parlementaire Redevoering van I. D. Fransen van de Putte (Van Februari 1873—December 1885)*. H.A.M. Roelants.
- Vickers, A. (2013). *A history of modern Indonesia*. Cambridge University Press.