

## The Influence of Colonialism on the Existence of the Siantar Kingdom: A Historical and Socio-Political Analysis from Fanon and Gramsci's Perspectives

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of Dutch colonialism on the existence of the Siantar Kingdom in East Sumatra by analysing the dynamics of hegemony, ideological domination, and local resistance. The research examines how colonial power transformed the kingdom's political and social structures and how traditional rulers responded to these interventions. Employing a qualitative historical method through heuristic, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography, this study applies the theoretical perspectives of Frantz Fanon and Antonio Gramsci to interpret colonial practices and anticolonial consciousness. The findings reveal that the Dutch colonial administration strengthened its control by co-opting local elites, institutionalising political authority through the establishment of the *Gemeente*, and disseminating ideological influence through education and administrative systems. The resistance led by King Sang Nauluh reflected a persistent struggle to defend political sovereignty and cultural identity against colonial domination. This study argues that colonialism in the Siantar Kingdom functioned not only as a form of territorial expansion but also as a structural and ideological mechanism designed to sustain long-term hegemony over indigenous society.

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### INTRODUCTION

The Kingdom of Siantar was one of the major traditional political entities in the Simalungun region of East Sumatra, possessing an established social order and autonomous governing structure long before the arrival of Dutch colonial rule. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, the expansion of Dutch colonial authority systematically undermined the political sovereignty of local kingdoms while simultaneously transforming the social and cultural foundations of indigenous society. The experience of the Siantar Kingdom illustrates the complex nature of colonial domination, which extended beyond military conquest into administrative, political, and ideological spheres (Naheed, 2025). This historical trajectory demonstrates that colonialism functioned not merely as territorial control but also as a mechanism for restructuring local authority and weakening indigenous autonomy. The transformation experienced by the Siantar Kingdom, therefore, provides an important case for understanding the broader dynamics of colonial intervention in East Sumatra.

The process of colonisation in the Siantar Kingdom can be examined through critical theoretical perspectives on colonialism and power relations. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon argues that colonialism subjugates not only the physical dimensions of society but also the consciousness of the colonised population. Colonial domination operates psychologically by imposing foreign values that gradually erode local identities and cultural structures (Ponja et al., 2020). Antonio Gramsci complements this perspective with his concept of hegemony, which explains domination as a process maintained not solely through coercion but also through consensus-building and the co-optation of local elites, leading subordinated communities to internalise and accept colonial authority without direct resistance (Haag, 2012). These perspectives provide a critical lens for understanding how colonial power became embedded within the social and political fabric of local kingdoms.

Within the context of the Siantar Kingdom, colonialism introduced a new structure of authority that reshaped bureaucracy, social relations, and collective consciousness among both the ruling elite and the broader society. The appointment of kings by the Governor-General, the elimination of traditional economic privileges, and the territorial reorganisation imposed under the colonial administration reflected the practical implementation of hegemonic strategies as conceptualised by Fanon and Gramsci. Colonial authority gradually displaced indigenous political legitimacy



and integrated local governance into a centralised colonial system. This transformation did not merely alter administrative mechanisms but also redefined the relationship between rulers and society within a colonial framework. The process illustrates how ideological domination and structural control operated simultaneously in sustaining colonial power.

This study aims to analyse how Dutch colonialism intervened in and transformed the power structure of the Siantar Kingdom from historical and socio-political perspectives. Particular attention is given to the transition from traditional governance to colonial administrative systems, colonial strategies in constructing hegemony through the co-optation and education of local elites, and the patterns of resistance and adaptation demonstrated by King Sang Nauuluh and the royal aristocracy. The study also investigates colonialism as a socio-political phenomenon operating at both ideological and structural levels (Ivashko et al., [2024](#); Khan et al., [2024](#)). Through this approach, the research seeks to provide a broader understanding of the interaction between colonial authority and indigenous political systems in East Sumatra. The findings contribute to discussions on colonial hegemony, local resistance, and the transformation of traditional political institutions under colonial rule.

Existing studies on colonialism in East Sumatra have generally concentrated on economic exploitation, plantation expansion, and the broader political influence of the Dutch colonial administration. Discussions of local kingdoms often place greater emphasis on administrative chronology than on the deeper socio-political transformations experienced by indigenous ruling systems. As a result, the Kingdom of Siantar has rarely been analysed as a dynamic political entity negotiating colonial intervention through both resistance and adaptation. The interaction between colonial authority and indigenous elites, therefore, remains insufficiently explored, particularly in relation to the formation of ideological control within local society. This condition creates an important scholarly gap in understanding how colonial domination reshaped local political consciousness and traditional legitimacy.

Previous historical analyses also tend to frame colonial domination primarily in terms of military conquest and territorial expansion. Such an approach often overlooks the subtle mechanisms through which colonial power became normalised within indigenous governance structures. The restructuring of bureaucracy, the manipulation of royal succession, and the integration of local aristocracies into colonial administrative networks reveal that domination operated through more complex processes than coercion alone. The absence of studies that combine historical inquiry with socio-political analysis has limited a more comprehensive understanding of colonial hegemony in local kingdoms. This study addresses that limitation by examining colonialism not only as a political occupation but also as a process of ideological restructuring.

The Kingdom of Siantar presents a particularly significant case because the transformation of power occurred simultaneously at institutional and cultural levels. Colonial intervention altered the relationship between traditional rulers and their communities, shifting the foundation of political legitimacy from customary authority and indigenous values. The colonial administration gradually repositioned local rulers within a bureaucratic hierarchy controlled by external power, reducing their autonomy while maintaining their symbolic status within society. This dual strategy enabled colonial authorities to preserve social stability while consolidating political control over the region. The complexity of this transformation demonstrates that colonial governance relied heavily on negotiation, accommodation, and ideological influence.

The issue of resistance also forms an essential dimension of this study. Resistance within the Siantar Kingdom did not always manifest in open military confrontation but often took subtle forms such as political negotiation, cultural preservation, and symbolic opposition. The responses of King Sang Nauuluh and the royal elite reflected attempts to defend local authority and maintain the continuity of indigenous political identity amid increasing colonial intervention. These patterns indicate that local actors were not merely passive recipients of colonial domination but active participants in shaping the trajectory of political change. Examining these dynamics provides a more balanced interpretation of colonial encounters in East Sumatra.

Based on these considerations, this research aims to examine the transformation of the Siantar Kingdom under Dutch colonial rule by focusing on the relationships among colonial hegemony, institutional restructuring, and indigenous responses. The study seeks to identify how colonial power was institutionalised within traditional governance systems, how local elites became involved in reproducing colonial authority, and how forms of resistance emerged under changing political circumstances. Through this analysis, the research intends to contribute to broader

discussions concerning colonialism, indigenous political adaptation, and the transformation of traditional states in Southeast Asian historical studies.

## METHOD

This study employs a critical historiographical method within a qualitative historical framework to re-examine the transformation of the Siantar Kingdom under Dutch colonial rule. The analysis centres on the reinterpretation of colonial archives through the theoretical perspectives of Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony and Frantz Fanon's colonial psychopolitics in order to uncover patterns of domination and resistance embedded within local political change. Historical facts are presented chronologically while simultaneously being interpreted through structures of power, ideology, and colonial domination. The study adopts an interpretive and analytical approach to explore the broader dynamics of colonialism beyond conventional political narratives. Its research design takes the form of a historical case study focusing specifically on the Kingdom of Siantar and the figure of King Sang Nualuh as a representative case within the wider context of colonial transformation.

This approach emphasizes the local historical context while situating the Siantar Kingdom within broader global colonial dynamics. The research does not aim to produce universal generalisations but instead seeks to generate a deeper understanding of the socio-political realities faced by indigenous kingdoms under colonial rule. Through this framework, the study highlights the interaction between local agency and colonial structures in shaping political transformation. The focus on a single kingdom allows for a more detailed exploration of how colonial intervention influenced governance, legitimacy, and collective consciousness at the regional level. The analytical depth of the case study, therefore, becomes central to understanding the complexity of colonial hegemony in East Sumatra.

The sources used in this research include both primary and secondary materials. Primary data were obtained from colonial archival records, including *besluit*, *staatsblad*, and *korte verklaring*, as well as reports produced by local colonial administrators such as Residents and Controllers. These materials are complemented by local government documents and royal records related to the Siantar Kingdom. Secondary sources include scholarly works on colonial history, historiographical studies, postcolonial analyses, and theoretical writings related to Fanon and Gramsci (Gajinov, 2023; Gani & Marshall, 2022). The combination of archival and academic materials enables the study to construct a comprehensive interpretation of colonial intervention and indigenous responses.

The analytical process involves interpreting historical texts, political contracts, colonial decrees, royal archives, and local narratives to identify the mechanisms by which colonial power operated. Fanon's and Gramsci's theoretical perspectives serve as interpretive tools for examining how ideology, domination, and political authority were institutionalised within colonial society. The analysis pays particular attention to the formation of hegemonic structures, the construction of colonial subjects, and the transformation of indigenous political consciousness. Colonialism is therefore examined not merely as an administrative system but as a broader socio-political process that reshaped social relations and cultural legitimacy. This approach allows the study to reveal the interconnected relationship between colonial governance, ideological control, and local resistance within the Siantar Kingdom.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Pre-Colonial Siantar Kingdom Government System

Based on records produced by Chinese analysts during the Sui Dynasty period (570–620), the existence of the Nagur Kingdom has been discussed in the studies of Sutan Martua Raja Siregar. The Nagur and Batangiuou Kingdoms are regarded as the earliest traditional political entities to have emerged in the Simalungun region. Chinese historical sources, particularly *Ying-yai Sheng-lan*, dated to around 1416, indicate that the Nagur Kingdom was centred in the Pidie area near the western coast of Aceh. The kingdom is estimated to have existed for approximately five centuries and maintained barter-based trade relations with China, particularly through the export of balata rubber (*Ficus elastica*), which was used as an adhesive for wooden ship masts in the maritime industry (De Juan & Pierskalla, 2017; Künzler, 2020). To strengthen commercial relations, the Chinese Dynasty established a trading port, *Sam Pang To*, in the Nagur region, which later became associated with the present-day trading area.

The territorial influence of the Nagur Kingdom extended far beyond the boundaries of contemporary Simalungun Regency. Its authority reportedly stretched from the Aceh border in the west to the Siak Sri Indragiri River in the

northeast and reached the Tapanuli region in the south. The royal capital was relocated several times due to repeated attacks from external powers seeking to dominate the region. One of the former centres of government was located near what is now known as Bukit Dolok in the Perdagangan area (De Juan & Pierskalla, [2017](#); Künzler, [2020](#)). These relocations illustrate the kingdom's adaptive political strategy in responding to external threats and regional instability. The strategic position of Nagur also demonstrates its significant role within broader regional trade networks during the *pre-colonial* era.

Members of the royal family who remained in Nagur later continued to administer a new settlement known as Pamatang Nagur Raja (*Naga Raja*), located near present-day Tebing Tinggi. Since the thirteenth century, particularly following the Singosari invasion, the sovereignty of Nagur gradually declined until several subordinate territories separated and established independent kingdoms (K. D. Purba, [1987](#)). This historical narrative still requires more intensive archaeological and historiographical investigation in order to produce more reliable and comprehensive historical evidence. Prior to the expansion of Dutch colonial influence, the Kingdom of Siantar had already developed a traditional monarchical system of governance. At that time, the Simalungun region consisted of four kingdoms united within the confederation known as *Harajaan Maroppat*: Siantar (Damanik), Panei (Purba Dasuha), Dolog Silou (Purba Tambak), and Tanah Jawa (Sinaga) (Marpaung et al., [2024](#)).

Each kingdom was governed by a king who exercised authority over a defined territorial domain and maintained a governmental centre known as *Rumah Bolon*, which functioned as the official residence of royal authorities (M. Purba, [1993](#)). The four rulers oversaw several administrative territories, each led by local officials who served as representatives of royal authority within society. This traditional governing structure operated through royal institutions known as *partuanon harajaan*, or customary royal apparatuses. Royal commands were transmitted to the population through customary intermediaries who functioned as mediators between the king and the people (Ochoa-Ochoa et al., [2023](#)). Such a system demonstrates that an organised bureaucratic structure had already existed long before colonial intervention. The existence of these local political institutions indicates that Simalungun society possessed a well-established socio-political order during the *pre-colonial* period.

From Antonio Gramsci's perspective, this traditional structure of authority can be interpreted as a form of local cultural hegemony, namely a system of social domination accepted by society because it aligned with indigenous values, customs, and social norms. Social consensus emerged not through structural coercion, but because the king was regarded as the protector of customary law and the symbolic representative of ancestral authority. Frantz Fanon's perspective further suggests that the *pre-colonial* era was a period in which the people of the Siantar Kingdom maintained an autonomous value system and collective identity untouched by colonial alienation. The society remained fully sovereign in both its socio-political structure and cultural consciousness. This traditional sovereign order later became crucial because Dutch colonialism did not simply create a new system of power, but rather dismantled, manipulated, and replaced existing indigenous structures with a hegemonic order designed to serve colonial interests (Lodigiani, [2020](#); Mejias & Couldry, [2024](#)).

The Kingdom of Siantar, as part of the *Harajaan Maroppat* confederation, is believed to have been founded by King Namartuah Damanik (*Bariba*). However, several alternative narratives about the kingdom's origin also exist. King Namartuah held numerous royal titles, including *Puanglima Permata Tunggal*, *Datu Parmata Mamunjung*, *Datu Parmata Manunggal*, and *Datu Partigatiga Sihapunjung*. He became known as *Datu Parmata Tunggal* because he was considered the only son of the last ruler of Nagur and was believed to possess a unique physical characteristic in the form of a single eye located on his forehead, which led to the epithet "Single Gem" (Lestari et al., [2025](#)). Before Dutch colonial penetration intensified, the appointment of kings in Simalungun, including the Kingdom of Siantar, was conducted through the traditional ceremony known as *patappei sihilap* under the authority of the *Harajaan*, or royal council. After Dutch intervention expanded into the region, the appointment of the King of Siantar required formal ratification through a *besluit* signed by the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies and witnessed by colonial officials, thereby placing royal legitimacy under the authority of the Dutch colonial administration.

### Dutch Penetration and the Beginning of the Strategy of Political Domination

The penetration of Dutch colonialism into the Simalungun region, including the Kingdom of Siantar, did not merely represent a form of military expansion but constituted a gradual and systematic process involving diplomacy, elite co-optation, and political-legal engineering. Following the success of Dutch tobacco plantations in Deli in 1863 under Jacobus Nienhuys, colonial policy increasingly shifted toward the exploitation of East Sumatra's inland territories as

strategic plantation zones. To secure the continuity of this colonial capitalist agenda, the Dutch administration required political stability and formal recognition from local rulers, including the King of Siantar. Colonial expansion was therefore pursued not only through territorial conquest but also through the restructuring of indigenous political authority. This approach enabled the Dutch to consolidate economic interests while simultaneously embedding colonial influence within local governance structures.

The signing of the Sumatra Treaty in 1871 between the Dutch and the British marked a crucial turning point in the intensification of Dutch colonial domination in East Sumatra. The agreement provided the Dutch colonial government with broader opportunities to expand its influence into territories previously controlled by independent local kingdoms, including the Kingdom of Siantar. One of the primary strategies employed by the Dutch involved establishing land lease agreements and political contracts with local rulers, including those negotiated with Sang Nualuh. However, he was still under the influence of royal guardians when the initial agreements were concluded. These contracts served to legitimise colonial intervention while gradually limiting indigenous political autonomy. Through such agreements, colonial authority became increasingly institutionalised within the region's traditional political order.

From Antonio Gramsci's theoretical perspective, this Dutch strategy can be interpreted as an attempt to construct hegemony through consensus rather than direct coercion. The Dutch colonial administration did not immediately dismantle local power structures; instead, it offered political recognition and economic cooperation to the royal elite. Local rulers received formal legitimacy through *a besluit* issued by the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies. They were allowed to maintain traditional governance systems as long as these did not conflict with colonial interests. This mechanism represented a form of co-optation in which traditional authority was transformed into an indirect instrument of colonial power. Frantz Fanon's perspective further reveals that such policies also embodied symbolic violence because the formal ratification of kings by the colonial administration effectively subordinated indigenous sovereignty to foreign authority (Baten & Maravall, [2021](#)).

Fanon characterises this process as a form of psychological deconstruction in which indigenous authority is detached from its cultural roots and reconstructed in accordance with the legitimacy of colonial power. Dutch penetration into the Kingdom of Siantar, therefore, reflected not only administrative or territorial domination but also a systematic reconfiguration of political legitimacy and authority. The king was no longer positioned as a fully sovereign ruler over his people and territory, but rather became integrated into the broader colonial governmental structure. This transformation marked the beginning of the shift from customary-based political authority toward subordination under modern colonial governance. Evidence of this process can be observed in the Dutch efforts to secure control over the Kingdom of Siantar through negotiations with local elites, culminating in the acquisition of a land lease contract from King Sang Nualuh at the end of 1890. The Kingdom of Siantar itself had previously been subdued by Dutch forces in 1888, when Sang Nualuh was only seventeen years old and remained under the guardianship of his uncle, Tuan Anggi, Raja Itam, and Bah Bolak (Mercer & Simpson, [2023](#)).

Dutch efforts to consolidate immediate control over the Kingdom of Siantar were also motivated by concerns regarding the involvement of competing European business interests in the region. Prior to the establishment of formal political relations between the Dutch colonial administration and the Kingdom of Siantar, a German-American businessman, Baron von Horn, met with Tuan Itam, who was then serving as acting ruler. Baron von Horn, the owner of the Helvetia plantation in Medan, sought permission to open plantation estates in the Siantar region. This development alarmed the Dutch colonial authorities, who feared that German influence might eventually dominate the Kingdom of Siantar. Sang Nualuh himself reportedly entered into a secret agreement with von Horn around 1885, stipulating that if Germany succeeded in assisting the expulsion of the Dutch from Siantar, von Horn would receive plantation concessions in the area as compensation. The plan was eventually discovered by Dutch colonial officials, particularly Controller Kroesen and P.A.L.E. van Dijk, leading to the expulsion of Baron von Horn from the Dutch East Indies (Quimby & Levine, [2021](#)).

### The Resistance of Sang Nualuh against Dutch Colonialism

According to the traditional customs of the Kingdom of Siantar, when a king passed away before the crown prince had reached political maturity, authority would temporarily be exercised by *Tuang Anggi*, Tuan Itam, and Bah Bolag, who were regarded as close royal relatives entrusted with preserving the continuity of governance. When Raja Sang Nualuh Damanik was inaugurated as the fourteenth King of Siantar on 16 September 1888, replacing his father Raja Mapir

Damanik, he was only seventeen years old. His coronation took place during a period marked by intensified Dutch colonial penetration into the Simalungun region. The Dutch colonial administration immediately formalised Sang Naualuh's appointment through a *besluit* issued by the Governor-General, an administrative decree that symbolically placed the Kingdom of Siantar under colonial authority. Sang Naualuh, however, did not interpret this ratification as a surrender of sovereignty, but rather as a formal acknowledgement of his legitimacy as an independent ruler (Gajinov, [2023](#); Künzler, [2020](#)).

Through the Decree of the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies Number 25 dated 23 October 1889, the Dutch colonial government declared that Sang Naualuh had officially submitted to Dutch authority. Sang Naualuh rejected this interpretation and considered the decree politically meaningless in terms of his kingdom's sovereignty. He continued to perceive the Dutch merely as external allies and protectors rather than as supreme political authorities over Siantar (Gajinov, [2023](#); Künzler, [2020](#)). This conflicting interpretation became the primary source of tension between the Kingdom of Siantar and the Dutch colonial administration. Sang Naualuh consistently refused to fully comply with colonial decrees, instead maintaining his position as the legitimate sovereign ruler of his people.

Sang Naualuh openly resisted colonial policies that he considered detrimental to the dignity and traditional rights of the Siantar population. His opposition included rejecting colonial taxation, refusing administrative intervention, and resisting the abolition of traditional economic rights such as *pancong alas* and *sokei*. From Frantz Fanon's perspective, Sang Naualuh's actions represent resistance by a colonial subject who refused psychological subjugation and mental colonisation. Fanon argues that colonialism operates not only through coercive force but also through symbolic and bureaucratic domination intended to reshape indigenous consciousness. Sang Naualuh therefore resisted not merely colonial military authority, but also the colonial attempt to transform him into an extension of foreign power and reduce his role to that of a puppet ruler.

From Antonio Gramsci's perspective, Sang Naualuh's resistance demonstrates the failure of Dutch colonial hegemony to establish a genuine consensus among local elites. The colonial government attempted to secure elite approval through *besluit*, financial allowances, and promises of modernisation, yet Sang Naualuh refused to recognise Dutch legitimacy as the highest political authority. He continued to position himself as the rightful sovereign of the Kingdom of Siantar and rejected any subordinate status within the colonial administrative structure. The Dutch colonial administration considered him disobedient for refusing to implement clauses in earlier political contracts, despite his belief that he had never legally surrendered the sovereignty of his kingdom. Colonial officials such as *Controleur* Kroesen and Resident Ballot regarded Sang Naualuh's resistance as a serious threat to Dutch colonial projects in East Sumatra, particularly because of his firm stance, which obstructed plantation entrepreneurs seeking to expand concession lands (Saragih, [2022](#)).

Sang Naualuh consistently asserted that he remained the fully sovereign ruler of his kingdom. At the same time, Kroesen repeatedly reminded him to comply with the political agreements concluded in 1891 and the declarations made in 1888. His influence and steadfast resistance gradually shaped a powerful narrative of anti-colonial struggle within the collective memory of the Siantar people. Sang Naualuh emerged not merely as a historical ruler but also as a symbol of dignity, sovereignty, and unwavering opposition to colonial domination. Within the theoretical frameworks of Fanon and Gramsci, he can be understood as a manifestation of indigenous resistance against colonial attempts to transform local authority into a mere instrument of imperial power. Kroesen later considered earlier colonial policies ineffective because the geographical distance between Damak Jambu, where the *Controller* was stationed, and the Kingdom of Siantar hindered effective supervision and rapid intervention.

Kroesen's successor, Westenberg, subsequently established the *Afdeling Simalungun* as a new administrative unit incorporated into the Residency of the East Coast of Sumatra. This policy was strongly motivated by pressure from plantation entrepreneurs whose economic expansion in Siantar was obstructed by Sang Naualuh's uncompromising resistance to colonial authority (Sihombing et al., [2022](#)). In January 1904, Westenberg introduced policies targeting several traditional economic rights of the Kingdom of Siantar, particularly *sokei* and *pancong alas*. *Sokei* consisted of a levy equal to 10% of the value of commodities and forest products transported and traded within the kingdom's territory. At the same time, *pancong alas* represented a similar levy imposed on agricultural and forest products originating from royal lands. These revenues, previously collected by the King of Siantar, were planned to be abolished and redirected into the colonial regional treasury.

The colonial regional treasury, known as *landschapskas*, served as a financial institution to fund administrative operations and pay government employees. Westenberg planned to expand the authority of the *landschapskas*, thereby eliminating the rights of the king and the nobility of Siantar to collect regional revenues independently. In exchange, the colonial government proposed fixed monthly salaries and allowances for the royal elite derived from the *landschapskas*. Under Westenberg's proposal, Sang Nualuh would receive a salary of f.250 per month, while lower-ranking nobles would receive smaller allowances determined by the colonial administration. This policy reflected the colonial strategy of transforming indigenous rulers from autonomous sovereigns into salaried bureaucratic functionaries under Dutch control.

Westenberg also sought to assume direct colonial control over transportation and trade infrastructure within the Kingdom of Siantar. Goods belonging to the colonial government that passed through Siantar territory were exempted from all taxes and levies traditionally imposed by the kingdom. Colonial officials were appointed to manage transportation administration, including ferry crossings and lake ports, that the Kingdom of Siantar's employees had previously supervised. Because Sang Nualuh consistently rejected all of Westenberg's demands, colonial authorities intensified efforts to remove him from power (Saragih et al., [2025](#)). In September 1905, Westenberg negotiated with the Resident Ballot of East Sumatra to arrange Sang Nualuh's dismissal and detention, arguing that his continued influence endangered colonial stability and order.

Resident Ballot subsequently reported to Governor-General J.B. van Heutsz in Batavia that Sang Nualuh posed a threat to colonial security and public order. Sang Nualuh was accused of refusing to recognise Dutch authority through the *Korte Verklaring (Short Declaration)*, which the colonial administration interpreted as evidence of political defiance. After reviewing Ballot's report, Governor-General van Heutsz declared that Sang Nualuh was no longer recognised as the legitimate ruler of the Kingdom of Siantar (Naheed, [2025](#)). Under Dutch colonial law, he was arrested and detained in Siantar on charges of conspiracy and threats to public security. Between April and May 1906, Sang Nualuh was imprisoned in the Assistant Resident's prison in Siantar before being transferred to the Residency prison in Medan in June 1906 for further interrogation.

The results of Sang Nualuh's interrogation were forwarded to the Director of Justice in Batavia on 5 July 1906. In September 1906, he was officially designated as a state prisoner and exiled (*interned*) to Bengkalis, the capital of the *Afdeling* Bengkalis. The Assistant Resident of Bengkalis was assigned the responsibility of supervising Sang Nualuh and several members of his family who accompanied him into exile, while also ensuring their daily necessities were provided (Asmiralda et al., [2024](#)). Sang Nualuh died in Bengkalis on 9 February 1913. No official colonial records clearly explained the cause of his death at forty-two, a silence that further strengthened his symbolic position in local historical memory.

The colonial government regarded Sang Nualuh's body as politically sensitive because many of his loyal supporters remained in Siantar and continued to revere him as a legitimate ruler. Colonial authorities feared that returning his remains to Siantar could provoke mass mobilisation and reignite anti-colonial resistance throughout the region. Concerns over public security and political stability ultimately led Governor-General Idenburg to decide that Sang Nualuh would be buried in Bengkalis rather than in his homeland. The Assistant Resident of Bengkalis subsequently expressed readiness to provide land for the royal burial complex of the former King of Siantar. This decision illustrates how Dutch colonial authorities continued to perceive Sang Nualuh as a political threat even after his death.

### Dutch Co-optation Politics and the Transformation of the Siantar Kingdom

The declaration of the Kingdom of Siantar's submission to the Dutch colonial government on 16 September 1888 was not issued by Sang Nualuh himself, as he had not yet been formally enthroned as king. The declaration was instead delivered by Tuan Anggi (Raja Itam) and Tuan Bah Bolag, who temporarily exercised regency during the transitional period of royal succession. This political circumstance demonstrates that, despite the formal acknowledgement of Dutch authority, Sang Nualuh consistently opposed colonial policies after assuming power. He actively resisted Dutch interference within the kingdom, including attempts by the Dutch to intervene in internal royal affairs and customary governance. These conditions indicate that the formal declaration of submission did not necessarily reflect the Kingdom of Siantar's complete political surrender to colonial authority.

Although, since 1892, the kingdoms in Simalungun had *de jure* been incorporated into the administrative structure of the *Residentie Oostkust van Sumatra* under Dutch colonial governance, the formal establishment of colonial

administrative control was only fully implemented following the issuance of the Decree of the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies No. 22 dated 12 December 1906, published in *Staatsblad* No. 531. This decree established the *Afdeeling Simeloengoen en Karolanden*, which was placed under the authority of an Assistant Resident headquartered in Saribudolog. The Dutch colonial administration subsequently appointed V.C.J. Westenberg as the first Assistant Resident of the new administrative division (Haag, [2012](#)). The *Korte Verklaring* (*Short Declaration*) signed on 16 September 1888, when Sang Naualuh was only seventeen years old, was interpreted by the Dutch as formal evidence of the kingdom's submission to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, despite the coercive political circumstances surrounding the agreement. Nevertheless, historical evidence indicates that effective Dutch control over the Kingdom of Siantar was not fully realised until 16 October 1907, following the suppression of Sang Naualuh's resistance and the subsequent meeting of Siantar's royal dignitaries, convened by *Controller* I.L.O. Brien.

Following the re-signing of the *Korte Verklaring* in 1907, the King of Siantar was effectively transformed into a representative of colonial authority within the local political structure. Despite having achieved both *de jure* and *de facto* control over the kingdom, the Dutch colonial administration did not immediately abolish the traditional *feudalistic monarchy* system that had long existed in Siantar. Instead, the colonial government maintained the formal structure of indigenous governance to facilitate land concessions and economic exploitation. The Dutch frequently introduced profit-sharing arrangements with local rulers, presenting them as accommodations of customary land law while simultaneously consolidating colonial control over regional resources. This strategy marked a crucial phase in the transformation of local sovereignty into colonial subordination through systematic political co-optation.

The process of co-optation began with the reconstruction of royal legitimacy through the renewed signing of the *Korte Verklaring* by royal dignitaries in 1907. Within Antonio Gramsci's framework of hegemony, this phase can be interpreted as a process of structural hegemonic consolidation in which colonial domination no longer depended primarily on open violence because indigenous elites had become integrated into the colonial system itself. Members of the nobility were transformed into colonial bureaucratic officials (*zelfbestuurder*), provided with fixed salaries, and deprived of their traditional authority to collect taxes and regulate local resources. Traditional economic rights such as *pancong alas* and *sokei* were abolished and redirected into the colonial treasury known as the *landschapskas*, reflecting the centralisation of fiscal power under Dutch colonial control (Hasibuan et al., [2023](#)). Through these policies, the Dutch administration systematically weakened the economic independence of the Siantar Kingdom while strengthening colonial administrative authority.

From Frantz Fanon's perspective, the co-optation of local elites represented a process of constructing colonial subjects who, although ethnically indigenous, had become psychologically and structurally detached from autonomous local authority. Indigenous rulers gradually functioned as passive agents of colonial administration operating within a modern bureaucratic system that outwardly retained local cultural symbols. The king, who had once symbolised sovereignty and indigenous legitimacy, was transformed into a localised representation of colonial authority. This process coincided with the establishment of the *Afdeeling Simaloengoen en Karolanden* in 1906, as set out in *Staatsblad* No. 531, which formally integrated the Kingdom of Siantar into the Dutch colonial administrative structure. Although the formal symbols of kingship were preserved, the colonial government effectively controlled all strategic policies, financial management, and administrative decisions. Such developments demonstrate that colonial domination operated not only through military force, but also through ideological and institutional restructuring.

These transformations reveal that Dutch colonialism in Siantar was fundamentally based on the systemic subjugation of indigenous institutions through co-optation and hegemonic integration. By incorporating the king into the colonial bureaucratic apparatus, the Dutch successfully weakened the kingdom's political and symbolic functions as a centre of resistance. It turned it into an instrument for maintaining colonial stability at the local level. This condition reflects Gramsci's argument that modern domination increasingly relies on legal, social, and cultural structures capable of gradually dismantling older forms of authority and replacing them with forms of manufactured consensus. Within the context of traditional governance in Siantar, the kingdom formally continued to exist, but no longer functioned as an autonomous political power. Since the signing of the *Korte Verklaring*, the Dutch colonial government prohibited local rulers from establishing political relations with foreign powers. As a consequence, the lowland territories of the Kingdom of Siantar were rapidly transformed into large-scale plantation areas controlled by Dutch colonial interests, particularly following the introduction of *Hevea brasiliensis* rubber plantations by Harrison and Crosfield, alongside tea, sisal, coffee, and oil palm cultivation (Sidauruk et al., [2024](#)).

Karl J. Pelzer further observed that between 1910 and 1920, British and German capital played a significant role in the expansion of plantation enterprises surrounding the Kingdom of Siantar. British investment through the *Rubber Plantation Investment Trust (RPIT)* successfully obtained extensive concession areas from the rulers of Siantar and Tanah Jawa, followed by Dutch corporations such as *Handels Vereeniging Amsterdam (HVA)* in 1918. The enormous profits generated by these foreign plantation companies prompted the Dutch colonial government to intensify political and economic control over East Sumatra to secure foreign investment interests. The rapid expansion of plantations resulted in nearly one-third of the approximately 151,259 hectares surrounding the Kingdom of Siantar being converted into plantation estates. To support plantation transportation networks, the Dutch colonial administration constructed new roads connecting various regions of Siantar and Simalungun. Within this *cultural sphere*, local rulers also benefited economically, although not to the same extent as Malay sultans, receiving annual salaries of *f.6,720* and additional transportation-related income of *f.1,800*, while continuing to receive traditional tributes from local communities (Saragih, [2024](#)).

By 1920, increasing numbers of foreign investors from Britain, Germany, and the United States had entered East Sumatra within the framework of plantation expansion. During this period, the rulers of Siantar and Tanah Jawa continued to receive salaries and land-rental revenues from plantation concessions. This influx of wealth transformed many local rulers into affluent elites who adopted lifestyles and facilities commonly associated with European colonial society. Behind this appearance of prosperity, however, local farmers experienced increasing economic pressures due to the burden of *belasting* (taxation). Rural communities were also subjected to compulsory *saro* labour, a form of traditional *rodi* labour requiring 10 days of annual work on royal lands (*jumabolag*) in addition to labour obligations for the construction of colonial roads. The rapid expansion of *plantation enterprises* after 1910 also accelerated population growth in urban centres such as Pematangsiantar, Bandar, and Tanah Jawa, driven largely by the arrival of contract labourers from Java and China.

The Dutch colonial administration's prioritisation of the plantation economy following the *Korte Verklaring* of 1907 became the principal catalyst for socio-economic transformation within the Kingdom of Siantar, particularly in the *Partuanon Bandar* region. These developments stimulated large-scale migration, the establishment of modern communication infrastructure such as roads, telegraph systems, and telephone networks, limited educational facilities, and the growth of emerging urban centres, including Pematangsiantar and Perdagangan, all of which were closely connected to the interests of plantation enterprises. The resulting economic expansion produced significant changes in cultural patterns, social structures, and forms of social interaction throughout the Simalungun region. The region's demographic composition became increasingly heterogeneous and pluralistic due to the influx of migrant labour associated with plantation development. These transformations illustrate how Dutch colonialism systematically extended its administrative and economic control over territories surrounding the Kingdom of Siantar and across other regions of the Dutch East Indies.

In constructing a modern colonial bureaucracy, the Dutch administration required a substantial number of trained personnel to manage increasingly complex governmental structures. Colonial authorities gradually recognised that reliance solely on European officials was insufficient to maintain effective local governance. The Dutch therefore recruited indigenous elites and influential local figures to function as intermediaries between the colonial administration, indigenous rulers, and local communities. This recruitment strategy was carefully based on the social influence and authority these individuals possessed within the indigenous society. By incorporating respected local elites into the colonial administrative structure, the Dutch sought to minimise resistance and expand colonial influence throughout the region. Consequently, the colonial government deliberately maintained traditional rulers within formal positions of authority, allowing the population of Pematangsiantar to remain nominally under the traditional governance of the Kingdom of Siantar even as Dutch colonial administration increasingly exercised actual political control.

### Local Elite Education and the Production of Colonial Subjects

Following the successful co-optation of political and administrative authority, the Dutch colonial government recognised the strategic importance of producing a new generation of local elites who were politically loyal and intellectually shaped within the framework of colonial ideology. To achieve this objective, the colonial administration established educational institutions, such as the *Hollandsch Inlandsche School (HIS)*, specifically intended for the children of kings, aristocrats, and indigenous elites. In Pematangsiantar, the school was constructed on land granted by the king and

members of the royal family, symbolising the growing integration of colonial influence into the traditional political sphere. This development marked a profound transformation in the role of the local authority, in which the palace, once regarded as the centre of indigenous cultural and political life, gradually lost its dominance to colonial educational institutions. The school consequently became an important instrument for reproducing colonial values and for forming indigenous elites aligned with Dutch interests.

The educational system introduced by the Dutch colonial administration extended far beyond the transfer of literacy and arithmetic skills. Colonial schools simultaneously functioned as mechanisms for disseminating European cultural values, administrative principles, and colonial modes of thought. The curriculum provided little or no space for regional languages, local histories, or indigenous customary values, thereby marginalising traditional systems of knowledge. Young members of the aristocracy were educated within a framework that emphasised colonial law, bureaucratic administration, and European political rationality. The broader objective of this educational policy was to produce indigenous administrators capable of serving Dutch colonial interests efficiently and in a disciplined manner. Education, therefore, became an essential instrument for sustaining colonial domination through intellectual and cultural transformation rather than direct coercion alone.

From Frantz Fanon's perspective, this educational process constituted a form of colonial alienation in which colonised individuals became detached from the cultural and social foundations of their own communities. Colonial education produced a generation of indigenous elites who increasingly perceived themselves as more "civilised" than the people from whom they originated. These educated elites gradually formed part of a colonial middle class that replaced the political role of earlier traditional rulers while simultaneously losing the deeper cultural legitimacy historically associated with indigenous authority. Antonio Gramsci similarly interpreted colonial education as an ideological apparatus designed to establish and maintain hegemony. Colonial schools functioned as institutions for producing consent by shaping individuals to perceive the prevailing colonial order as natural, legitimate, and unavoidable. Within the context of the Kingdom of Siantar, graduates of the *HIS* not only entered colonial administrative service but also occupied strategic positions in local governance, thereby serving as intermediaries between the colonial authority and indigenous society.

Socially, the colonial educational system generated significant cultural inequality within local society. Young aristocrats educated in colonial institutions increasingly developed lifestyles, attitudes, and modes of thought that differed substantially from those of ordinary people. Although they remained socially respected because of their noble lineage, they effectively became indigenous figures operating within the machinery of colonial domination. Fanon describes this condition as the colonisation of consciousness, a situation in which colonised subjects no longer recognise themselves as part of an oppressed community but instead become agents of the colonial system itself. At the same time, access to quality education remained highly restricted for the broader indigenous population, reinforcing social stratification between the aristocracy and common society. Colonial education, therefore, strengthened both the hierarchical structure of local society and the broader system of Dutch colonial domination by institutionalising cultural hegemony through educational apparatuses rather than relying solely upon military or bureaucratic force.

The colonial educational system for indigenous elites could function effectively only when local communities and traditional rulers accepted and supported the policy. This situation encouraged indigenous rulers and their officials to send their children to *HIS* institutions established by the colonial administration. During the initial phase, approximately thirty-two students were accommodated in dormitories constructed by the colonial government to support their education. After completing their studies, many graduates no longer experienced cultural estrangement upon returning to their regions because local communities continued to recognise them as descendants of royal families and legitimate social authorities. Their educational background even enhanced their prestige as future leaders within the indigenous society. Consequently, when they resumed positions within traditional governance structures, they were often perceived as more capable autonomous rulers than the previous generation represented by their fathers.

### **Institutionalization of Colonial Government: From the Kingdom to the *Gemeente***

Following the establishment of the *Afdeeling Simaloengoen en Karolanden* in 1906, the Dutch colonial administration reorganized the region's government by transforming the centre of the Kingdom of Siantar into a municipality (*gemeente*). This transformation was formalized through the Decree of the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies, J. van Limburg Stirum, published in *Staatsblad* No. 285 dated 27 June 1917, in Buitenzorg (Bogor). The decree took effect on 1 July 1917 and officially designated Pematangsiantar as a new autonomous municipality within the Residency

of East Sumatra. Through a notarial deed dated 18 December 1923, the municipal government of Pematangsiantar also obtained the right to administer assets donated by the King of Siantar, Waldemar Damanik, located within the officially measured municipal boundaries as stipulated in Measurement Letter No. 131 dated 27 October 1923. Areas allocated for government offices and lands already occupied by residents, however, remained excluded from the transfer arrangement.

The transformation of authority within the Kingdom of Siantar reached a decisive turning point when the Dutch colonial government officially converted the former royal capital into a *gemeente*. This policy represented the culmination of the institutionalisation of colonial power, converting the former centre of indigenous sovereignty into the nucleus of a modern colonial bureaucratic system. Under the *gemeente* structure, the city was administered directly by colonial officials, particularly Assistant Residents who simultaneously functioned as *burgemeester* (mayors). The municipal administration was granted authority over financial management, taxation, infrastructure development, and broader administrative affairs. Formally, the municipality operated as an autonomous administrative unit comparable to a district government, yet ideologically it functioned as a strategic instrument for consolidating colonial domination through bureaucratic mechanisms. The establishment of the *gemeente*, therefore, symbolised not only administrative modernization but also the systematic displacement of traditional political authority.

From Antonio Gramsci's perspective, the formation of the municipality and the establishment of the *Gemeenteraad* (City Council) represented an expansion of structural hegemony within the colonial system. The Dutch colonial government created institutions that outwardly appeared representative and participatory, although all council members were either appointed directly or approved by colonial authorities. The composition of the *Gemeenteraad* of Pematangsiantar, as reflected in *Staatsblad* No. 149 of 1916, clearly demonstrated colonial dominance: five Europeans (or their equivalent representatives), three indigenous members (*inlanders*), and one representative categorized as *Vreemde Oosterlingen* (Foreign Orientals). This composition illustrates what may be described as a form of manufactured or pseudo-consensus, in which local representation primarily legitimized colonial authority rather than genuinely representing indigenous political interests. Colonial governance thus maintained the appearance of inclusivity while preserving effective control in the hands of European officials.

Architecturally and spatially, the city of Pematangsiantar was reorganized according to a distinctly colonial urban pattern. European residential areas, government offices, healthcare facilities, and commercial centres were concentrated within the urban core. At the same time, indigenous communities occupied peripheral zones with significantly more limited access to infrastructure and services. This urban arrangement constituted a form of colonial segregation that divided social space according to ethnicity and class while simultaneously reinforcing symbolic hierarchies of power. The transformation shifted the city's meaning, from a centre of royal sovereignty to a centre of colonial administration and control. Frantz Fanon argues that the regulation of physical space, including urban space, formed an essential component of colonial domination because the reorganization of settlements and movement patterns weakened the symbolic relationship between indigenous communities and traditional authority. Within this framework, the colonial city functioned not merely as a physical environment but also as a political space designed to institutionalize structural submission.

The institutionalisation of colonial government through the *gemeente* system, therefore, represented not only administrative restructuring but also the symbolic erosion of indigenous sovereignty. The city of Siantar, once regarded as the heart of customary authority, was transformed into a strategic node of colonial power under the rhetoric of modernization, efficiency, and urban development. Behind this discourse, however, lay a broader hegemonic agenda aimed at establishing Dutch control over politics, economics, culture, and spatial organization within the former territory of the Kingdom of Siantar. Although the municipality of Siantar during the period 1917–1918 already possessed technical officials such as Corps Secretary J.G.H. Soodt, Director of Public Works P.A. den Hartog, and Regional Treasurer Hasan Soetan Pane, the municipal administration initially encountered substantial obstacles in implementing urban governance. The primary challenge concerned the unresolved status of land tenure within the city boundaries, particularly because the municipality could not legally administer or distribute land rights prior to their formal transfer from the Kingdom of Siantar.

Riah Kadim Waldemar Damanik ultimately carried out the transfer of royal land to the Dutch colonial administration. Waldemar signed a government land grant authorizing the expansion of the *gemeente*, although several specific areas remained excluded from the transfer agreement. This transfer was formally recorded in a notarial deed

dated 12 December 1923, in Pematangsiantar, with the Dutch colonial government represented by Jacob Bosch, *Controleur* for Internal Affairs, Hermanus Evert, Karel Ezerman as chairman of the *Gemeenteraad* of Pematangsiantar, and Westenberg as Governor of East Sumatra (Asmiralda et al., 2024). Ironically, shortly after the transfer of royal lands to the municipality in 1923, the Dutch colonial administration removed Waldemar from his position as King of Siantar. He was accused of incompetence in governance and alleged involvement in corruption related to the kingdom's treasury. In 1924, authority over the Kingdom of Siantar was transferred from the Bandar district to Sawadim Damanik, revealing that Waldemar's appointment had largely served as a political strategy to legitimize the transfer of royal lands for the expansion of the *gemeente* (Roswandi et al., 2024).

The Assistant Residents who administered the *Afdeeling Simaloengoen en Karolanden* between 1906 and 1942 included V.J.C. Westenberg (1906–1908), W.C. van Gelder (1909–1911), H.E.C. Quast (1911–1913), P.E. Moolenburg (1914–1916), Jan Tideman (1916–1922), H.E.K. Ezerman (1922–1926), Beeuwkes (1927–1929), J.C.C. Haar (1930–1933), M. van Rhijn (1934–1936), G.W. Meindersma (1936–1938), and Van Dirks (1938–1942) (Sitopu et al., 2025). Urban development in Pematangsiantar continued to expand under their administrations, becoming one of the principal responsibilities of Assistant Residents, who also served as mayors. During the administration of M. van Rhijn, for example, new personnel regulations were introduced that established remuneration schemes for municipal employees and proposed reductions of up to 25% in land rental costs (Nabila & Harnum, 2024). Such policies reflected broader colonial attempts to modernize administrative governance while strengthening institutional control over urban society. Municipal governance thus evolved into a central mechanism for implementing colonial administrative efficiency at the local level.

Infrastructure development also became an important component of colonial urban administration in Pematangsiantar. Concerns about declining access to clean water prompted the colonial government to propose improvements to drinking water supply systems. The renewal and expansion of electricity networks were also put out to tender because electricity provision in the city had previously depended almost entirely on the company *NV. Ijs Fabriek Siantar*. Projects involving the construction of water pipelines, the modernization of power plants, and the implementation of new tariff systems were expected to be completed rapidly to support urban and plantation development. As an autonomous urban institution, the municipal government possessed administrative authority and responsibilities comparable to those of district-level governments. The establishment of municipal governance structures represented a new bureaucratic model in the Indonesian colonial context, as such administrative systems had not existed in earlier traditional kingdoms.

Prior to the colonial period, governance in the Kingdom of Siantar did not recognise a municipal bureaucracy separate from royal authority. The Dutch-style municipal government, therefore, represented a fundamentally new political structure that did not genuinely accommodate popular participation because its primary objective was to strengthen colonial domination over indigenous power structures. Members of the *Gemeenteraad* were appointed according to colonial interests rather than to represent local society. Before the arrival of Dutch colonialism, the term "city" referred only to the centre of royal authority or the location of the royal palace. Pematangsiantar at that time functioned solely as the political centre of the Kingdom of Siantar, particularly the royal palace area known as the *pematang*. The transformation of Pematangsiantar into a municipality, therefore, represented a profound redefinition of urban space under colonial rule.

Before the Dutch colonial era, Pematangsiantar did not exist as a separate autonomous administrative entity outside the political structure of the Kingdom of Siantar. The kingdom itself maintained several *vassal* territories, including Bandar, Sidamanik, and Sipolha, all of which remained integrated within the traditional political system. During the colonial period, however, the position of Pematangsiantar changed significantly as it gradually evolved into both a centre of indigenous governance and a centre of colonial administration. This transformation supports Purnawan Basundoro's argument that the Dutch colonial administrative structure in Indonesia largely adapted and replicated earlier indigenous governmental frameworks. The colonial administration frequently utilised pre-existing royal urban centres as regional capitals within the colonial bureaucratic hierarchy. In the case of Pematangsiantar, colonial urbanisation thus emerged not through the creation of entirely new political spaces, but through the reconfiguration and appropriation of traditional centres of indigenous authority.

## CONCLUSION

The study of colonialism in the Kingdom of Siantar demonstrates that Dutch colonial domination operated through multidimensional mechanisms extending far beyond military conquest and territorial expansion. Colonial power was systematically institutionalised through elite co-optation, administrative restructuring, legal formalisation, colonial education, and the reorganisation of urban space, all of which reflected the operation of hegemonic domination as conceptualised by Antonio Gramsci. The implementation of *the besluit*, the abolition of traditional economic rights, the transformation of the royal palace into a colonial administrative centre, and the establishment of *gemeente* and *gemeenteraad* institutions collectively illustrate how colonial authority embedded itself within local socio-political structures. At the same time, Sang Nauluh's resistance represents a significant manifestation of anti-colonial consciousness, reflecting Frantz Fanon's notion of resistance against psychological and ideological subjugation. The experience of the Siantar Kingdom ultimately reveals that modern colonialism functioned not only through coercive force and economic exploitation but also through the control of consciousness, legitimacy, and cultural representation.

This study remains limited by the availability and dominance of colonial archival sources, many of which were produced from the perspective of the Dutch colonial administration. Such conditions create challenges in reconstructing indigenous perspectives in a fully balanced manner, particularly regarding the experiences and responses of ordinary local communities outside the royal elite. The analysis primarily focuses on political, administrative, and ideological transformations within the Kingdom of Siantar. In contrast, social dimensions such as gender relations, religious transformation, and everyday cultural resistance have not yet been comprehensively explored. In addition, archaeological and oral historical evidence related to the Kingdom of Siantar remains relatively limited and fragmented. These limitations indicate the need for broader interdisciplinary approaches that integrate historical, anthropological, cultural, and archaeological perspectives to produce a more comprehensive understanding of colonial transformation in local kingdoms.

Future studies are recommended to examine the long-term social and cultural impacts of Dutch colonialism on postcolonial governance, collective memory, and identity formation within Simalungun society. Comparative studies involving other traditional kingdoms in East Sumatra and different regions of the Dutch East Indies would also contribute to a broader understanding of the variations and patterns of colonial hegemony in local political systems. Further research may explore the role of education, religion, and indigenous intellectual networks in shaping both colonial adaptation and anti-colonial resistance movements. Oral history approaches and local community narratives should be strengthened to recover indigenous voices that have often been marginalised within colonial historiography. Such research would contribute not only to enriching postcolonial historical studies but also to contemporary reflections on the enduring legacy of colonial structures in modern Indonesian society.

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