

Class Relations in Java in the Nineteenth Century: A Weberian Perspective

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There has been no adequate analysis of class relations in Java in the nineteenth century, yet the Javanese case is extremely interesting because it deviates from the general pattern of European expansion overseas in a way that has been significant for the debate between the dualism (Boeke, 1953) and dependency (Frank, 1969) perspectives.¹ The present discussion emphasizes the effects of Dutch policy on the Javanese peasantry and seeks to clarify some of the underlying patterns characteristic of the watershed period from 1830 to 1870. In general the argument is that in nineteenth century Java a dualistic political and economic structure prevailed whereby the traditional agricultural sector was not encouraged to develop along the lines of free labor "possessive individualism" (MacPherson, 1968). Java did not undergo a process of proletarianization during the nineteenth century. The Netherlands East Indies government effectively prevented the full penetration of capitalist relations of production within the agricultural sector by maintaining a system of class relations essentially rooted in the traditional patrimonial-prebendal (Weber, 1978) political and economic structure. Nineteenth century Java can be characterized as a Southeast Asian region dominated by an outside colonial power through a system of indirect rule in which only a superficial layer of rational-legal administrative control was superimposed upon a pre-capitalist system (Bakker, 1978).²

What makes the Javanese case unique is not indirect rule as such, but indirect rule without the full penetration of capitalist relations of production. The Dutch actively discouraged proletarianization, whereas most colonial government in Southeast Asia promoted the modernization of relations of production in the agricultural sector. The British, for example, also utilized indirect rule in the Straits Settlements and Burma, as well as India, but they followed a policy premised on liberal laissez-faire notions of imperialist exploitation. For complex reasons related to the world system as a whole,³ the Ministry of Colonies in the Netherlands chose to follow a policy in Java, beginning around 1830, which reinforced traditional relations of production and promoted dualism.

1. Frank's critique concerns Boeke's later, more generalized approach (Wertheim *et al.*, 1966) and does not touch on Javanese dualism in the nineteenth century. Portes (1976) discusses dualism in the wider sense. Booth (1975) provides a useful critique of dependency theory as developed by Frank (1978) and Amin (1977).

2. For the period 1830-1870 the phrase "bureaucratization of patrimonialism" is somewhat misleading (Bakker, 1978) since rational-legal bureaucracy did not begin to affect the native officials until the 1880s (Djadininingrat, 1978; Chin, 1977; Schrieke, 1957).

3. The world-system approach (Wallerstein, 1976, 1979, 1980) has been utilized by Kahn (1980) to analyze the impact of the penetration of capitalism into Minangkabau society in West Sumatra.

I. RECENT HISTORICAL RESEARCH

When colonialism in Java is mentioned most sociologists think of Clifford Geertz's *Agricultural Innovation* (1963). In this path-breaking book, Geertz introduces the concept of "agricultural involution", a concept that is widely cited in the literature, but often as a mere synonym for complexity. The theoretical brilliance of the book is well deserved, but Geertz did not undertake any historical analysis of primary, archival sources. As a cultural anthropologist he was mainly interested in providing a theoretical interpretation of Java's recent past. These last years, however, a number of historians have provided more detailed, idiographic analysis of nineteenth century Java which have provided a more solid, empirical basis for sociological generalizations.

Many writers have commented on the effects of the so-called "cultivation system" in Java, but few have examined the concrete historical situation in any depth. In recent years the historical work of Robert Van Niel (1964, 1968, 1969, 1972, 1975) and Cees Fasseur (1975a, 1975b, 1977a, 1977b, 1978, 1980) has greatly increased our knowledge of conditions in Java during the period of the cultivation system. That painstaking, archival work has come after Geertz's important theoretical work, but does not utilize Geertz's sociological arguments.⁴

The only major sociological analysis of the Javanese case is the outstanding work of Sartono Kartodirdjo. His historically-detailed study of the peasant's revolt in Banten, West Java, in 1888 (1966) is a model contribution to the "autonomous history of Southeast Asia" (Smail, 1961). The present analysis seeks to broaden Sartono's insightful Weberian analysis of protest movements in rural Java to aspects of peasant conditions not discussed as fully by him in his more sociological and comparative work (1973).⁵

The historical evidence concerning Java has been neglected by English-speaking sociologists not acquainted with Dutch Archival collections. No one has done for Java what Scott (1976) and Popkin (1979) have done for aspects of Burmese and Vietnamese history. There has been no adequate analysis of class relations and subsistence in rural Java, in part because Geertz's thesis of agricultural involution has been taken as the definitive statement of the Javanese case.

For those interested in European expansion overseas and the capitalist world system, as well as those interested in imperialism, the Javanese situation is significant. The theoretical significance of the Javanese situation is that it constitutes a test of the general theory underlying Weber's framework.⁶

II. WEBER'S PATRIMONIAL-PREBENDALISM

The Weberian perspective used here is derived from *Economy and Society* (1978), where Weber develops a typology of domination which involves a significant distinction

4. Many others have contributed to the study of the cultivation system since the early 1950s, including: Bastin (1954, 1957, 1960), Benda (1972), Burger (1975), Reinsma (1955, 1959), and Westendorp Boerma (1950a, 1950b, 1956).

5. Kartodirdjo refers to the *kjai* as "traditional" without considering the extent to which Islamic influences are really "post-traditional", thereby committing the fallacy which Bendix (1967) and others have pointed out is involved in the polar contrast between tradition and modernity.

6. There is no rigid distinction made here between expansion and imperialism although some historians tend to view the year 1870 as a dividing line between the two concepts. The term "imperialism" is not used in the Leninist sense (Zeitlin, 1972) but in the more general sense (Fieldhouse, 1973).

between patrimonial-prebendal and patrimonial-feudal traditional domination.⁷ Weber is viewed here as less interested in super-structure (e.g. the protestant ethic) than in the analysis of class, a perspective that “crystallized in the course of his dialogue with Marxism” (Zeitlin, 1981: 127). Instead of the symbolic interactionist Weber of many introductory textbooks (Hagedorn, 1983; Ritzer, 1975), or the Parsonian version of Weber criticized by Cohen, Hazelrigg and Pope (1975), it is the Marxian Weber of *The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilizations* (1976) that is emphasized in this analysis. Weber is seen as developing some of his main insights concerning class phenomena in his critical debate with the legacy of Karl Marx. As Zeitlin states (1981: 159): “Weber’s highly sophisticated discussion [of class] may be regarded as an attempt to complete Marx’s final chapter [of *Capital*, volume III] in the light of twentieth-century conditions.” Moreover, Weber can be seen as completing Marx’s analysis of relations of production in pre-capitalist societies in the light of historical conditions.

Weber’s ideal type of patrimonial-prebendal political and economic organization is an important conceptual approach to the traditional situation in Java and other parts of Southeast Asia which were strongly influenced by Indianization. The political and economic ideas and relations of production implicit in Hinduism and Buddhism in the Indic states of Funan, Champa, Pagan, Kambuja, Srivijaya, Majapahit, and Bali, in the pre-colonial period are very important to understanding the effects of Western, colonial external forces. Marx’s sketchy ideas concerning the so-called Asiatic Mode of Production and Oriental Despotism (Turner, 1978; Dunn, 1982) only begin to provide a very general set of ideal types for analyzing pre-colonial, Indic Southeast Asia. Weber’s ideal type of patrimonial-prebendalism goes much further in clarifying the essential attributes of traditional political and economic relations of production in Southeast Asia, as well as many other parts of the world, occidental as well as oriental. Strictly speaking there is no such thing as Oriental Despotism; there is only patrimonial-prebendal rulership and its attendant patrimonial-prebendal set of relations of production. To think of the phenomenon as oriental or Asiatic is simply Eurocentrism.⁸

Stated briefly, the ideal type of patrimonial-prebendalism is centered around the concept of the patrimonial ruler, the patriarch who has an entire nation as his personal patrimony, not merely an extended family household or even a tribe. Patrimonial rulers are able to administer the large geographic unit which is their personal domain through prebendal officials. “The jurisdiction of the officials is determined entirely by the ruler’s personal discretion” and the “official’s allegiance to the ruler is purely personal” (Zeitlin, 1981: 168). A prebend is a subsistence allowance. Weber used the term, which is derived from the Latin and was used by the Roman Catholic Church to refer to a stipend paid from an endowment held by a cathedral or collegiate church, to indicate the significant difference between such officials and other types of local lords, particularly those who held a feudal right. The prebendary official is able to administer his district only as long as he continues to receive his legitimate authority from the patrimonial ruler. There are many examples in various historical empires of large numbers of prebendary officials being summarily executed by order of the patrimonial ruler on the basis of some ad hoc decision.

7. Despite the discussion of Weber’s concept of patrimonial-prebendalism by Bendix (1962), the ideal type of prebendalism has not been discussed widely, although Eisenstadt (1973) and Roth (1968) have indicated its continuing relevance for the study of Third World development.

8. Criticisms of the Asiatic Mode of Production have tended to be general (Dunn, 1982; Lichtheim, 1963) and not focused on particular historical situations.

The fundamental problem which the patrimonial state has to contend with is the possibility of local lords gaining power and thereby eventually weakening the centralizing power of the patrimonial ruler. In the patrimonial-feudal society the centrifugal forces are so powerful that the king is merely the first among equals and the barons have a certain degree of independent power, particularly if they band together in opposition to the king, as in the case of *Magna Carta* in England.⁹ But, in the patrimonial-prebendal society the patrimonial ruler is constantly on guard against the possibility of local officials obtaining local autonomy. Hence, the officials are not allowed to hold property in their own name and everything possible is done to provide disincentives. Political eunuchism, for example, was one solution used in the patrimonial-prebendal empires (Cosser, 1974). Celibacy is similar to eunuchism in that those who do not have legitimate heirs are less likely to rebel against the centralizing ruler. The Indic states of pre-colonial Java were characterized by a political and economic system that greatly approximates the patrimonial-prebendal ideal type. Indeed, all of the Hindu-Buddhist states of Southeast Asia tended to rely heavily on the concept of a divine ruler, who stood at the apex of the microcosm.¹⁰ Moreover, the same principle applies to many periods of Chinese history, except that the Chinese *mandarins* were somewhat more bureaucratized and political administration was regarded as somewhat less of a merely personal affair of the emperor.

Weber (1978: 1006ff.) characterizes patrimonial-prebendal structure in terms of the following ideal type characteristics:

1. One ruler retains political domination over all others; the ruler is the master or patriarch of the patrimonial state and economy and no individual or even group of individuals can effectively oppose him, except by overthrowing him and claiming to be the legitimate patrimonial ruler.
2. Patrimonial-prebendal office holders (e.g. eunuchs, priests, tax farmers, *mandarins*, and *prijaji*) retain their offices at the personal discretion of the ruler. Often they are attached directly to the ruler's court or have to make periodic (e.g. annual) visits to the court. There is no independent source of political or economic power for these prebendal officials. The ruler can demand anything of them that he wishes, even death.
3. The ruler has the right to make ad hoc decisions on any matter at any time. All regulations are purely discretionary and subjective; decisions made by the ruler are not regulated by a body of laws, although they may be circumscribed by tradition. Administration is regarded as the personal affair of the ruler. There is no separation of the private from the public sphere.
4. All land is nominally owned by the ruler and all lands are royal domains. Subjects are royal *coloni*. There are few, if any, free and independent land owners. There is no baronial land owning class. There are no "free cities".
5. Associations are held collectively liable for the political and economic liabilities owed to the ruler. Villagers, for example, are collectively liable for labor obligations and percentages of crop yields, which often results in hereditary attachment to a village (*serfdom*). The subject is viewed as existing for the ruler and is required to belong to associations which owe the ruler tribute. One type of collective liability is liturgical associations.

9. Holt (1969) points out that *Magna Carta* was actually a *series* of agreements between the baronial, landed aristocracy and the king.

10. The classical statement of this concept of Indic rulership is by Heine-Geldern, 1942. Riggs (1966, 1969) discusses a similar view in terms of "bureaucratic polity" in Thailand.

6. Subjects are required to render military service, *corvee*, and other forms of customary labor service. They do not have discretion over their own labor. They are neither vassals, who render voluntary homage, nor free laborers.

That ideal type model of the patrimonial-prebendal system is a close approximation of the pre-colonial Indic civilizations of Southeast Asia. The pre-colonial situation in Java can be understood in ideal typical terms as an oscillation between the centripetal forces of the patrimonial-prebendal structure and the centrifugal forces of incipient patrimonial-feudal structures, with prebendalism as the ideological ideal.

III. CULTIVATION SYSTEM

During the period 1811-1816, under a British interregnum, there was some attempt at liberalization of colonial policy in Java, but *laissez-faire* principles were not put into practice. When Governor-General Johannes van den Bosch came to Java in 1830 he had a mandate to return to some of the older principles of colonial rule. For example, rather than attempt to undercut the power of the local prebendal officials (*prijaji*), van den Bosch reinstated them. In so far as the cultivation system was a system at all rather than a series of local arrangements left to the discretion of the local Dutch residents—it was a political-economic system. In effect, it was a return to the principles of mercantilist indirect rule that had guided the Dutch East Indies Company in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In other words, the cultivation system encouraged the continuation of the exploitation of Java through indirect rule and the maintenance of traditional relations of production, except with an expansion of production of commercial export crops like coffee, sugar, tobacco, indigo, tea, pepper, cinchona and cinnamon. The crops were introduced on a large scale in the 1830s, with varied success. A symbiotic ecological relationship emerged between rice and sugar cane in the tropical, irrigated paddy lands which Geertz considers “injurious to Indonesian economic vitality” and the principal example of agricultural involution (Geertz, 1963:55), although it was the perennial crop coffee which at first provided the greater economic returns.

Geertz points out that although the cultivation system “never encompassed more than about six percent of Java’s cultivated land or about a quarter of her people in any one year,” it was decisive in establishing the dual economy pattern and “prevented the effects of Javanese peasantry and gentry [i.e. prebendary officials] alike of an enormously deeper Western penetration into their life from leading to autochthonous agricultural modernization at the point it could most easily have occurred” (Geertz, 1963: 53). In that assessment Geertz is both right and wrong. The cultivation system was decisive in many ways, but Western (capitalist) penetration would not have led to *autochthonous* agriculture modernization. It would have led to proletarianization. What Dutch colonial policy in Java in 1830-1870 tended to do was to inhibit the penetration of private capital in favor of a “state plantation” system. The pre-colonial structure was greatly expanded but there was no structural transformation within Javanese society along capitalist lines. Java became a dual society.¹¹

11. While nineteenth century Java became a dual society, it does not follow that nineteenth century Indonesia as a whole was similarly affected, as Resink (1968) and others have pointed out. Also, the situation in Java after 1900 was quite different in certain key respects.

IV. CORVEE LABOR SERVICES

We can examine the effects of the maintenance of a modified form of the traditional patrimonial-prebendalism encouraged by the Dutch system of indirect rule during the cultivation system by briefly reviewing the five major types of corvee labor services. The *corvee* imposed on the peasant was: 1) cultivation services; 2) seigneurial services (or, *herendiensten*); 3) services which substituted for payment of tribute; 4) penal servitude; and 5) cooperative village work. As a group, all of these services were referred to as "work by command."¹²

Cultivation services were invented by Governor-General van den Bosch. Work on cultivation products for export was not entirely original with van den Bosch, of course, since it had been integral to the eighteenth century exploitation of those parts of Java under the Dutch East Indies Company. Van den Bosch argued that cultivation services had a basis in customary law (*adat*). However, that is stretching a point. Forced cultivation of export crops for European markets is simply not an aspect of traditional relations of production in Java!¹³ However, this introduction of outside, capitalist economic forces was accomplished in a very indirect way. The peasant was given an option, at least in theory, between paying traditional tribute, undertaking to cultivate government-owned export crops on one-fifth of his fields, or, alternatively, working sixty-six days a year on government-owned estates or other projects (Geertz, 1963: 53). In practice there was no choice. Farmers were often forced to grow crops like indigo which they did not want to grow on land that represented more than one-fifth of their known fields. Sometimes peasants had to grow cultivation crops like sugar cane and *also* contribute labor services on government-estates, such as tea estates. The system of cultivation services were not disadvantageous to all of the peasants in all areas, however. At times the price paid for government crops may have been relatively good. The wealthy peasants were the most likely to benefit; but, the landless peasants sometimes too benefited, due to the need for their labor and the pressure on communal obligations among established villagers with traditional land use rights. (The land use rights also entailed customary obligations; if there were not enough people in the village to fulfill the obligations then landless people could be incorporated and given partial land rights.) While liberal opponents of the cultivation system denounced the system because of the exploitative nature of cultivation services, the general effect on the peasantry, especially after around 1834, does not seem to have been quite as black as polemical writers tended to argue. However, there were abuses, and some peasants suffered hardships and even famine.¹⁴

Seigneurial services are customary labor services which peasants carried out for the aristocratic elite and the prebendal officials. These services could be performed by *peasants* for *prijaji*, but they could also be performed by *prijaji* for the aristocratic *elite*;¹⁵ they were

12. The Malay terms were used by the Dutch administrators in correspondence with native officials (*prijaji*), even though the native language of the officials was not old Malay but Javanese. See Geertz (1964: 248-260) on Javanese linguistic etiquette. The Dutch preferred to use the simpler Malay language. Today the national language of Indonesia is called Bahasa Indonesia.

13. The pre-colonial customs of Java are not well known. As de Josselin de Jonge (1948) points out, the concept of customary law is a fiction which was created by the Dutch directly as a result of the need for uniform regulations rather than rapidly changing customs.

14. The extent of famine was limited, but dramatic; therefore, liberal writers like Day ([1904] 1966) tended to emphasize such hardships in their criticisms of the cultivation system.

15. The elite was divided into five estates. The officials were drawn largely from the second and third levels (Berg, 1902) but can all be called *prijaji* (Palmier, 1960).

part of a patron-client hierarchy. The Dutch term *herendiensten* (literally services for gentlemen) was used very loosely in nineteenth century documents as any type of taxation in work. Labor services for members of the native administration were continued longer than labor services for European officials, perhaps because European officials could afford to hire servants. There were many abuses of labor services for native officials. The famous Dutch novel *Max Havelaar* by Eduard Douwes Dekker (1967) is concerned with such abuses in a regency in West Java. It was an *Uncle Tom's Cabin* of liberal opposition to the cultivation system; but, ironically, the regency was so poor that it was not subject to cultivation services and was not—strictly speaking—a part of the cultivation system at all.¹⁶

Services done in lieu of tribute are known in Malay as “work done for the realm, for the state.” We have mentioned that van den Bosch’s original scheme included the possibility of sixty-six days labor a year. Peasants who did not have use rights to land could not grow export crops, of course, and so such landless peasants might choose to do service in labor such as construction and maintenance of roads, irrigation works, guard houses and other public buildings, or storage barns. They might also be put to work doing guard duty, keeping watch at night, carrying goods to market, and so on. All of the services would normally be performed near the peasant’s own village, but occasionally peasants were forced to work far away from their home village for more than sixty-six days at a time.

As bad as that was, penal servitude was even worse. While all of the types of forced labor were coercive, penal servitude was often accompanied by extreme use of force. The sentences handed down against peasants for relatively minor infringements often involved five years of living in exile in another part of Java, isolated from family and community. Forced robbery could result in a sentence of fifteen years of hard labor in chains; minor misdemeanors, like insubordination, might result in three months forced labor, without chains and in an area not too remote from the peasant’s home village. Soldiers received severe punishments for lack of discipline. Banishment, forced labor in chains, whipping and even branding were fairly common. The state wielded an iron glove when it came to disciplining the native peasantry in the 1850s.

Finally, the oppressiveness of the penal servitude can be contrasted with voluntary, cooperative work for the hamlet, irrigation society, or village cluster. Emphasis on this type of work was traditionally very strong and public pressure to insure that all villagers carry the heavy burden together must have been very great. For example, several villagers might cooperate to build a masque, an irrigation ditch, or a small public building. Each peasant cultivator owed labor according to his share in the common lands, although rich peasants could hire landless peasants to do their work for them. The village head (*lurah*) and his staff would probably decide which projects needed to be undertaken, so there may have been inequalities and abuses in this form of customary labor obligation as well. If a peasant head of household was not cooperative it was said that he was not *gotongrojang*. Even in contemporary Indonesia the concept of *gotongrojang* is widely praised and villagers are encouraged to provide voluntary labor contributions to the construction of public buildings.

The five types of labor obligations discussed are all quite different. Tribute-, penal-, and cooperative services are ignored in almost all discussions of the cultivation system and yet they constitute an important part of the overall picture. Cultivation services and seigneurial services were often abused, but we do not have an overall assessment of

16. Surprisingly, Eduard Douwes Dekker, the author, was not liberal in his politics. According to Conley (1960), Dekker was basically a political conservative.

the extent to which the average peasant suffered from such abuses. In general, however, customary labor obligations must have been oppressive for the common peasant cultivator, who had few if any possessions and was close to subsistence, tending perhaps one fourth hectare of land or less. The amount of time and energy required to fulfill often arbitrary labor obligations must have made life more difficult. Labor difficulties were no doubt assigned in an inverse relation to power; labor duties were a regressive form of taxation. In areas where the crop payments were low relative to the land rent assessment the cultivation services were oppressive. When new crops were being introduced in the 1830s there were many instances of extreme hardship due to crop failures and soil depletion (for example indigo in Cheribon regency). All of the work was forced rather than free. The peasant therefore was not able to sell his labor; it was appropriated and he had absolutely no choice in the matter. Colonial officials rationalized this by claiming that the Javanese were naturally lazy (Alatas, 1977: 61-69) and needed to be taught the value of hard work. There is no doubt that the accumulation of constant capital in Java in the nineteenth century depended on exploitation of forced labor and, generally,—outside of cities and some sugar factories—had little to do with wage labor and market prices.

V. DUAL SOCIETY

The term “dualism” has been used in the literature on development as a general theoretical term. However, when Julius Herman Boeke advanced the notion of dualism he was mainly concerned with the situation in the Netherlands Indies. His dissertation on “The Problem of Tropical Colonial Economy” (1910) was written under the supervision of van Vollenhoven, the “discoverer” of customary law (*adat*). Boeke’s dualism thesis initially held that Dutch colonialism had created a dual economic and political structure. The economic and political order of Java remained relatively isolated from the outside capitalist world, Boeke argues, while the top layer of foreign imports and exports continued to expand. Boeke’s main point was similar to that of some German historicist authors who were critical of British political economy. The British approach had been seen by leading liberal thinkers in Holland, like N.G. Pierson (1877), as a science of universally applicable laws. Boeke’s thesis was essentially: in Java the laws of capitalist political economics do not hold for the indigenous society because capitalism has not really penetrated into Javanese society. Two separate socio-economic and political systems exist side by side, meeting only in certain respects.

What is confusing is that later on, particularly after World War II in English translation (Boeke, 1953), there was a tendency to universalize the thesis of dualism. However, we can restrict our attention to the early Boeke and the historically-specific version of dualism that emphasizes the differences between the Netherlands and Java as a way of reminding economists that the assumptions of classical or neo-classical economics may not be applicable to societies where relations of production are pre-capitalist. The Dutch were merely a capitalist enclave on Javanese soil, particularly during the nineteenth century, and the Javanese peasants were left to continue their traditional, subsistence economy largely outside of the world capitalist system, except in so far as they were forced to increase their production of agricultural commodities other than rice, commodities which could serve as cash crops. The export of those cultivation crops did not benefit the Javanese peasants, but simply made life harder for them in many parts of Java, without introducing social change of an evolutionary nature. The historical details of the situation which Geertz

sketched as involution indicate that class relations in Java in the nineteenth century were patrimonial-prebendal, just as they had been in pre-colonial times, except that the superimposition of a dualistic, capitalist export sector tended to exacerbate aspect of village stratification which has been less systematic. The evidence available from a government survey of 1867-68 and scattered archival sources allows us to examine some of the historically-specific details of that prebendalism in the village sphere.¹⁷

VI. THE ROLE OF THE LURAH

Each village cluster had a head. He was variously called the *lurah* or any of a number of other names (*petinggi, koewo, djaro, bekel*, etc.). The cultivation system reinforced the *lurah's* role by making him the key intermediary between the lowest level officials of the European and Javan administrations, on the one hand, and the heads of households of the many hamlets that made up the village cluster, on the other. The *lurah* had several volunteer staff members, including the watchman, scribe, messengers and religious official. All of those men were members of the village elite who owned use rights to land which they or their ancestors had cleared and made into paddy. The village head and his staff controlled the flow of goods and cash out of and into the village cluster. For collecting the crops which were required by the cultivation system the *lurah* received a collection fee et approximately eight percent of the value of the crops before shipment. The *lurah* would divide that collection fee among members of his village staff.

Typically the procedure would probably have been somewhat as follows. The lowest level officials of the European and Javanese administration (or one of the two separately) would go and visit the *lurah's* house. A family member might take them to a paddy field where the *lurah* might be supervising the harvest on his own lands. The work of harvesting the crop would probably be carried out by landless peasants. The group would return to the *lurah's* house and a large meal would be prepared. Eventually they would discuss the harvest and estimate the yield. Prices to be paid would be discussed on the basis of earlier prices paid in the region. If the assessment of land rent in the village cluster is high then the richer land owners (including the *lurah* and his staff) will probably be better off, unless they could not afford to pay landless peasants to work the land, in which case they might have to sell off some of their land rights, or resort to village redistribution to equalize the labor burden. Naturally the *lurah* would try to under-represent the actual crop yield. If labor was plentiful, however, he would be less prone to misrepresent the actual yield because he could then benefit by receiving a higher collection fee (*procento*).

The situation is comparable to that in other closed corporate communities (Wolf, 1957) like those reported by Popkin (1979: 88-109) for Tonkin and Annam (Vietnam). The village was not egalitarian and notables within the village benefited from ways of evading collective labor demands.¹⁸ The head of the village cluster in Java, however, did not have the same aspirations as the village chief in Tonkin, because Javanese *lurah* could not be promoted to *prijaji* status in the same way as Vietnamese village chiefs

17. The survey of 1867-68 proved that common land holding and individual use right existed side by side. Bakker (1983) has interpreted this on Weberian lines as based on the compulsory cultivations and heavy demand for tribute and taxes.

18. Lopreato (1965) and Bailey (1971) have commented on the lack of egalitarianism in the peasant village without necessarily ascribing profit maximizing rationality of peasant farmers in the way Popkin (1979) tries to do.

apparently could be promoted to *mandarin*-like positions. Moreover, the *lurah* was already the head of the village notables, while the nineteenth century Vietnamese village chief aspired to membership in the council of notables (Popkin, 1970: 95). The *lurah* was a link between the village cluster and the colonial administrative apparatus. There was no council of notables composed of a set number of members (for example twelve in Tonkin).

VII. THE SUPRA-VILLAGE SPHERE

Outside of the village cluster there is a complex hierarchy. During the Dutch cultivation system period the administration was divided between the native administration and the European administration. The officials who composed the native branch of the Dutch colonial administration were paid officials who also received a percentage of the crop value (the *procentos*). From 1830 to 1837 all administrative personnel received a *procento*; after 1837 all the native officials, except the highest ranking one, the regent, received a fixed maximum percentage. The significance of the native officials for the cultivation system cannot be stressed enough. There could not have been a system of indirect rule without the cooperation of that class. The native officials were hired, promoted, demoted, fired, and even banished, at the discretion of the European officials, particularly the Dutch resident. Between 1839 and 1848 at least twelve regents were dismissed (Arsip Nasional, 1973: xv-xxv). The Dutch resident was regarded as the Javanese regent's "older brother" and the same kind of paternalistic subordination occurs at each level of the hierarchy.¹⁹ All of the native officials were considered to be *prijaji*; many of them actually were descendants of pre-colonial *prijaji*, although some had been elevated to that status.

The Javanese *prijaji* were a special elite, an administrative aristocracy bolstered by the Dutch. In Java the peasantry are a ruled class of illiterates and the gentry are the *prijaji*, a ruling class of literates. But the Javanese gentry were never a baronial landed gentry; they did not work serfs or semi-serfs on large estates (Geertz, 1964: 229). When Geertz studied "Modjokuto" in the 1950s he saw *prijaji* who were basically bureaucrats, clerks, and teachers—white collar nobles. But the *prijaji* of the 1850s were men who could trace their ancestry back to pre-colonial prebendal officials and even court nobles. "The Javanese aristocracy lacked the land-linked system of feudal obligation of Western Europe with its fief-holding agricultural gentry, ..." as Geertz (1964: 231) says, but not because they were urban rather than rural. The pre-colonial gentry were patrimonial-prebendal officials, some of whom were attached to the court but many of whom lived out in rural areas as district-level administrators.²⁰ The *prijaji* in pre-colonial times used military terror to uphold their rule, but in Dutch colonial times the original *prijaji* (and those accorded *prijaji* status by the Dutch because of the need for more officials) emphasized charismatic religious influence. However, it must be underlined that *prijaji* were not the highest level officials; above them were members of the royal family and the upper aristocracy as well as some higher level functionaries closely tied to the court.

The complexities of the *prijaji* class need not concern us,²¹ except in so far as it is important to understand the native officials in relation to the village notables. Everything

19. There was an extensive discussion of the native bureaucracy at the turn of the century (e.g. Filet, 1895; Davelaar, 1891).

20. The concentric zones of influence, with increasingly greater centrifugal forces in the peripheral zones, are discussed by Moertono (1963) and Seloosoemardjan (1962) for the Later Mataram Period (16th to 19th centuries).

21. Sutherland (1975) has analyzed the family ties of the *prijaji* class.

that happened at the village level was a result of the link between the village notables, particularly the *lurah*, and the native officials. Many of the peasants probably did not know that there was any significant difference in rulership; they considered their own *prijaji* and the higher level nobles whom they represented to be their true leaders. Many peasants probably did not know that most of the true power was held by the Dutch colonial government, centered on the Governor-General in Batavia and Buitenzorg (modern Jakarta and Bogor). The ordering of the political and economic spheres was much as it had been before and the same *prijaji* ideology of refinement was still operative. A relatively small handful of Dutch colonial officials managed to maintain legitimacy through traditional Hindu-Buddhist conceptions of patrimonial rulership.

VIII. PEASANT REVOLTS AND THE KJAI

The manner in which Dutch colonialism in Java in the nineteenth century was based on a re-patrimonialization or re-prebendalization of authority (Peacock, 1973: 43-46) is brought out clearly when we contrast the role of the *prijaji*, traditional Hindu-Buddhist administrative elite of officials with the role of the *kjai* religious elite. Whereas the *prijaji* were co-opted by the Dutch, the *kjai* remained closer to the peasantry. The *prijaji* prebendal elite—superficially tied into the rational-legal aspects of Dutch colonial bureaucracy—became estranged from the bulk of the peasantry. The religious elite, through its ability to establish village Islamic religious schools and Sufi-type mystical brotherhoods could control village communities to a large extent. That is the basic thesis developed by Sartono Kartodirdjo (1973) with respect to the early twentieth century and it seems to be true during the height of the cultivation system period as well.

The *kjai* were Islamic religious teachers. As *guru* they required absolute obedience from their pupils. The loyalty which disciples felt for their *kjai-guru* established a group solidarity which could cut across the limits imposed by kinship ties and local loyalties (Kartodirdjo, 1973: 7). Hence, the religious elite provided the leadership required for local uprisings and peasant revolts. They were not a traditional elite since their elite status only derived from the acceptance of Islam in the sixteenth century; but, the traditional *prijaji* elite became discredited, to some extent, by its collaboration with the colonial government and the religious teachers remained outside of the colonial government to a far greater degree. Moreover, the Islam they taught was not pure Islam but was a syncretic mixture of Islamic doctrine and local, mystical beliefs. The adolescent students absorbed the knowledge which their teacher, the *kjai*, had recorded in notebooks:

Emphasized in these notes is the notion of . . . Lord-Servant. Of Hindu-Javanese origin, this image of the bond between Lord and servant is taken as a metaphor for the relationship between God and man. Even more fundamental, however, is the self, the "I", to which all existence, including God, reduces. Contemplation of the self through mystical meditation was all important (Peacock, 1973: 25).

The education received at the village schools was central to the lives of many Javanese since it involved not only formal education in reading the *Koran* and other Arabic-script holy books but also involved mystical practices related to Sufism.²²

22. There are different interpretations made by Binder (1969), Drewes (1968), and Johns (1961) of the role of the *kjai* and the importance of Sufism. Most of the activities of the village schools and Sufi brotherhoods were highly secretive.

Many of the religious teachers were *haji* who had been to Mecca. Some had gone for extended stays and had learned about the wider Islamic world. In Central and East Java there were messianic movements which tended to express themselves in the Just King ideology and the notion of a *jihad* or Holy War. The strategic location of *haji* and *kjai* in the villages made them effective instigators of small-scale revolts which had popular Islamic as well as non-Islamic characteristics.

In the nineteenth century there were popular uprisings in locations all over Java (Kartodirdjo, 1973: 6-66). The most famous revolt was the Java War of 1825-1830, which involved Dipanegara as the messianic leader.²³ The development of Sufi mystical brotherhoods in Java goes back to the sixteenth century, if not earlier (Kraemer, 1921, cited by Kartodirdjo, 1973: 72), and they were expanding rapidly in the nineteenth century (Kartodirdjo, 1966: 140-17). The village *kjai* was regarded as a holy man and he commanded a total commitment from disciples. Often the *kjai* was also a traditional healer, and the mystical teachings may have been strengthened through the use of traditional herbs. (*Kjai* sometimes distributed a sacred drink as part of the preparation for revolt.) In the twentieth century the incidence of popular uprisings increased, no doubt due in part to the increased penetration of capitalism after 1870, and particularly after 1900, when Dutch colonial policy changed dramatically toward *laissez-faire* and proletarianization.²⁴

Even during the nineteenth century, however, there were revolts and they tended to be led by *kjai*. Religious leaders taught "a hostile and aggressive attitude towards both the foreigners and the *prijaji*" (Kartodirdjo, 1973: 12). The prebendal officials—who were bureaucrats in the wider sense—became a target of popular hostility because they had made common cause with the Dutch. The *kjai* mobilized members of the village schools and sufi brotherhoods in movements of resistance to the Dutch and the *prijaji* in part because "they feared the loss of their own privileges, their status and their hold upon the rural population" (Kartodirdjo, 1973: 75). *Kjai* "condemned the authorities, the *prijaji*, who through their service to the colonial oppressors, had fallen into sinful ways. They regarded the infidel rulers and their agents as inherently impure..." (Kartodirdjo, 1973: 108). Not only the Dutch but also the *prijaji* were classified as infidels, even though—of course—some *prijaji* were also interested in mysticism and all were nominally Islamic. The Sufi brotherhoods' movements were also hostile to the official leadership of Islam in colonial Java because the top Islamic leadership was supported by the colonial government as well. The *kjai* who led revolts urged the peasants to obey revealed law rather than the *prijaji*, who were not better than dogs or pigs (Kartodirdjo, 1973: 121). In general, during the course of the nineteenth century the *prijaji* became more and more associated with the Dutch rather than with the traditional Hindu-Buddhist and Islamic courts. They became alienated from the common people. Where that process went furthest the *kjai* stepped in to fill the void. The *prijaji* lost prestige as the Dutch role became more evident. However, during the early nineteenth century the role of the Dutch was largely hidden, due to indirect rule.

23. Carey (1972) refers to Dipanegara as the "Javanese Messiah" and examines the autochthonous history of the Java War in great detail (Carey, 1974a; 1974b).

24. This analysis is somewhat contrary to that found in Breman (1963) and Coolhass (1955); it borrows from Wertheim's Weberian-Marxian perspective (1959, 1978).

IX. CONCLUSION

In general the situation in Java in the nineteenth century can be described as colonial indirect rule involving the co-optation of the traditional prebendal class, the *prijaji*. The small core of European officials worked according to a rational-legal bureaucratic administrative system, but that layer of Western bureaucracy was precariously balanced on top of a broad patrimonial-prebendal system that dated back at least to the fourteenth century Hindu-Buddhist state of Majapahit and that had remained essentially unaltered by Islamization. When the Dutch first became active in dealing with the Central Javanese court of Mataram in the sixteenth century the Sultan of Mataram behaved in terms of the patrimonial-prebendal system of rulership, even though his power was somewhat circumscribed by the existence of separate principalities along the northern coast of Java (which were semi-autonomous and somewhat less centralized internally).

Nineteenth century Java was not being modernized. The mercantilist-based policies advocated by Governor-General van den Bosch and followed haphazardly throughout the island actively discouraged proletarianization and capitalist penetration up until the late 1870s. During a crucial watershed period in Central Java's history it was left to "tread water" and merely enlarge on the precapitalist model, with only a superficial layer of capitalist trade added at the top of the hierarchy. A dualistic situation arose which is relatively unique in the history of colonialism in the nineteenth century, particularly in Southeast Asia. While the export economy of rural Java was handled by the Netherlands East Indies administration—with little encouragement to private capitalists—the peasantry was tied to the export of cash crops only indirectly. The traditional system of patrimonial-prebendal domination and legitimation was used to re-introduce a system which translated into exploitative relations of production. In that system the *prijaji* were the comprador elite. It was only toward the end of the nineteenth century—comparatively late in the history of capitalist expansion—that rational capitalism began to make itself felt in the village sphere.²⁵

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25. The impact of the cultivation system period (1830-1870) can be compared to the impact of the Civil War in the United States. It is a significant watershed, but many other historical factors should also be taken into consideration for an analysis of the contemporary situation. Significant analysis of current trends in Indonesia which take the historical background into consideration are those by Emmerson (1976), Fagg (1958), Hainsworth (1982), Jackson (1978), Lyon (1970), White (1973, 1974) and Ihalauw and Utami (1975). None of those writers, however, specifically considers the impact of colonialization in terms of reinforcement of prebendalism. Moreover, Weber's theoretical analysis is not utilized by Indonesia scholars, other than Wertheim (1959).

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