

Establishing Bandung as a Center of Nationalism: R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V's Political Policies Amidst the Independence Movement

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the political policies of R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V in establishing Bandung as a center of nationalism amidst Indonesia's independence movement. This research uses a literature study method with a historical approach to explore Wiranatakusumah V's role as the Regent of Bandung, including his response to significant events such as the founding of the Indonesian National Party (PNI) and Soekarno's trial by the Dutch Colonial Landraad. The findings indicate that R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V's policies successfully made Bandung a region that welcomed the national movement while maintaining harmony between indigenous and colonial groups. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of how inclusive and nationalist political policies can shape a city's identity as a center of the national movement. The study also offers lessons for the younger generation on the importance of leadership that can unite various societal elements in the struggle for independence.

Keywords: R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V, Bandung, nationalism, political policies, independence movement.

INTRODUCTION

The period of R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V's administration as the Regent of Bandung from 1921 to 1934 marked an important moment in Indonesia's political history. Under the dominance of Dutch colonialism, the local community in Bandung faced various social, economic, and political challenges. At that time, Bandung developed into a significant political and intellectual center in West Java. The wave of nationalism that grew after World War I further strengthened the independence movement in Indonesia, pushing local figures like Wiranatakusumah V to play key roles in responding to these dynamics. This social and political situation, including repressive colonial policies and growing public awareness, raises the research question of how R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V's political policies shaped Bandung as a center of nationalism (Kahin, 2013; Kartodirdjo, 1966; Yahya, 2010).

In the literature, studies on the colonial period in Indonesia often focus on national figures like Soekarno or Hatta, while the contributions of local leaders like Wiranatakusumah V are rarely highlighted. Previous studies, such

as those by Sartono Kartodirdjo (1966) and Kahin (2013), primarily focused on the overall development of the national movement without concentrating on the role of regional leaders in shaping nationalist awareness. This research differs from previous studies by specifically highlighting the political policies of Wiranatakusumah V in Bandung within a local context while also demonstrating its impact on the nationalist movement.

Other studies, like Bijl's (2018), emphasize the importance of colonial memory and violence in the context of Dutch colonialism, particularly how this violence is remembered or forgotten in Indonesia and the Netherlands. Although this study focuses more on colonial violence and collective memory, it does not explicitly cover the contributions of local leaders like Wiranatakusumah V, who were involved in regional political policies. In contrast, studies by Cribb (2010) and Neelakantan (2015) examine the historical roots of the New Order in Indonesia and the role of medicine in advancing science during the Soekarno era. However, once again, the main focus remains on national actors. Similarly, Palmier (1957) and Van Der Kroef (1958) focus on the political debates between Soekarno and Hatta, leaving a gap in the literature regarding the role of regional leaders like Wiranatakusumah V.

Thus, this research offers a fresh perspective by exploring the role of a local regent in shaping the regional political identity that contributed to Indonesia's independence movement. It also discusses the impact of local policies on shaping Bandung as a center of nationalism, a topic rarely discussed in previous literature.

This study aims to analyze the political policies of R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V during his tenure as the Regent of Bandung and their impact on shaping Bandung as a center of nationalism. Therefore, this research seeks to fill the gap in the literature regarding the role of local leaders in the nationalist movement.

We argue that the political policies implemented by R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V, particularly in the fields of education and social welfare, significantly contributed to the development of nationalist awareness in Bandung. Furthermore, Wiranatakusumah V's leadership in responding to national and local political movements demonstrates how local leaders could become key catalysts for the independence movement, even within the colonial government structure.

METHOD

In this research, we selected the subject of R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V's administration in Bandung between 1921 and 1934. The choice of this period and location was based on Wiranatakusumah V's strategic role in shaping local policies that significantly influenced the nationalist movement. This study focuses on the significant political events during his leadership, including the interactions between the Dutch colonial government and the local community in Bandung, as well as his contributions to advancing nationalist awareness at the regional level.

This research is a qualitative study that uses data from document analysis (Lune & Berg, 2017; Rahim & Dilawati, 2022; Supriatna et al., 2024). We used data from government archives, historical documents, books, scholarly articles, and journals discussing colonial politics and the role of Wiranatakusumah V. These data were collected from various credible sources, including books by Sartono Kartodirdjo and Taufik Abdullah, as well as articles in historical and political science journals. This data provides a comprehensive historical and political framework regarding the political events in Bandung during that period.

The primary sources of information for this study come from literature documenting the various policies and political actions of R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V. As part of the literature review, and the research participants are the authors and historians whose works are the main references for analyzing this period. This research does not involve direct respondents or informants, as it focuses on document and historical literature analysis.

The research process began with data collection from relevant sources. The first stage involved searching archival documents, books, and articles related to the research period. Afterward, we selected the most relevant data to ensure the validity and accuracy of the information. We collected data through literature searches in libraries and academic journal databases related to Indonesia's colonial politics.

We then analyzed the data using qualitative data analysis techniques, starting with data reduction to filter the relevant information from the entire set of sources (Miles & Huberman, 2013). The reduced data was then interpreted through a historical approach, focusing on Wiranatakusumah V's political policies and their impact on the nationalist movement. Conclusions were drawn based on the relationship between the political events and Wiranatakusumah V's responses during his administration.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Biography of R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V

R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V, or Radén Aria Adipati Wiranatakusumah V, was born in Bandung on August 8, 1888, although his birth certificate was registered on November 23, 1888 (Bandung City Government, n.d.). Raden Tumenggung Kusumadilaga (1874-1893), the ninth regent of Bandung, known as Dalem Marhum, was his father,

and his mother was Raden Ayu Sukarsih. R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V, often called Moeharam, was an only child, though he had been raised since the age of five (Gunseikanbu Tjabang I, 1944).

Bloodline was the most important component affecting a person's social status. R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V was born into a noble family, being the son and grandson of previous Bandung regents. The *menak* (nobles) were the elite group in the social structure of West Java. His grandfather was Raden Adipati Wiranatakusuma III (1821-1846), the seventh regent of Bandung, with the title Dalem Karanganyar, and his father was Raden Adipati Wiranatakusumah IV (1846-1874), the eighth regent of Bandung, with the title Dalem Bintang.

After his father's death, Moeharam was raised by his mother and grandmother. However, his guardianship was handed over to R. A. A. Martanegara, Raden Ardinegara, a prosecutor in Bandung, and Raden Soeryadiningrat, the district head of Cilokotot (Cimahi) (Chambert-Loir, 2013, p. 552). Moeharam also received guardianship from influential Europeans, including Adams, Snouck Hurgronje, and G. A. J. Hazeu (Yahya, 2010b, p. 28).

In the early 20th century, the colonial government reformed the education system, bringing opportunities for indigenous children, including those from the *bumi putera* (native) class, to access better education. This reform sparked the emergence of two new social groups: *menak pangreh praja* (nobles working as colonial bureaucrats) and *menak* nationalists (Satiti, 2018, p. 35). The *menak pangreh praja* were educated by the Dutch government and later recruited to work as government bureaucrats. In contrast, the nationalist *menak* did not become bureaucrats after completing their education but instead became active in nationalist movements (Satiti, 2018).

R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V was fortunate to be part of the colonial education reform, enabling him to attend Dutch schools. Moeharam began his formal education at the age of seven at ELS (*Europeesche Lagere School*) while under the care of his mother and grandmother (Lubis, 2011, p. 8). Despite studying at a European school, Moeharam, thanks to his upbringing, grew up with a deep love for Sundanese arts and developed a keen interest in traditional puppet shows (*wayang*) (Satiti, 2018).

At nine, Moeharam's guardianship was transferred to the Adams family, ensuring his immersion in Western education (Yahya, 2011, p. 1). Despite being raised and educated in a Western setting, R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V remained devoted to his religious identity. He regularly attended Islamic lessons with his teacher, Haji Anwar, once a week and visited his grandmother's house during the Eid al-Fitr celebrations following his father's passing. These visits became a tradition on the night before Eid al-Fitr (Chambert-Loir, 2013).

Moeharam completed his primary education at 13 and then continued his studies at OSVIA (*Opleidingsschool voor Inlandsche Ambtenaren*) in Bandung for three years (Lubis, 2011). During his time at OSVIA, R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V was focused on developing his artistic skills, such as *keroncong* music and playing the violin and guitar. However, based on a recommendation from Dr. Snouck Hurgronje, who saw great potential in Moeharam, he was transferred to HBS (*Hogere Burger School*) (Chambert-Loir, 2013). This transfer initially challenged Moeharam as he had to catch up in learning Dutch, French, and mathematics (Lubis, 1998, pp. 105–106).

To overcome these challenges, Moeharam received additional lessons on his days off from Snouck Hurgronje (Yahya, 2011). He spent five years at HBS, residing with his school inspector, Hellwig, in Batavia. Unfortunately, during this period, R. Adinegara, one of Moeharam's guardians, passed away, and his guardianship was transferred to Snouck Hurgronje. However, this did not last long, as Snouck returned to the Netherlands, and G. A. J. Hazeu replaced him (Satiti, 2018). R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V completed his education at HBS in 1910 (Gunseikanbu Tjabang I, 1944).

R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V's political career began as early as 1893 when the Regency of Sumedang faced a vacancy following the death of Raden Tumenggung Kusumadilaga. Although R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V was supposed to take over the position, his young age prevented him from doing so. As a result, his guardian, R. A. A. Martanegara, assumed the position of Regent of Sumedang (Mangle, 1990, p. 40). R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V officially started his political career after graduating from HBS.

As a *bumi putera* who had received formal education in Dutch schools, R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V belonged to the *menak pangreh praja* group. His first position was as a clerk for the district head of Tanjung Sari, following the decision of the Priangan Resident number 9465/8, with a salary of f. 30 (Gunseikanbu Tjabang I, 1944). His political career progressed rapidly. Five months later, he was appointed as a Police Officer in Cibadak, Cihaleuang, Sukabumi (Besluit Dated January 18, 1911, Number 829/8., 1911). A month later, he was transferred to Sukapura,

Tasikmalaya, as a Police Officer and district head. A year later, he was promoted to Assistant District Head of Cibeureum, Sukapura Tasikmalaya (Lubis, 1998). His political career continued to rise, and in 1912, he became the Regent of Cianjur, with his first salary being f. 1,200 (Yahya, 2011).

Political Events That Shaped the Leadership of R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V ***The Establishment of the Indonesian National Party (PNI)***

The idea to establish the Indonesian National Party originated when Ir. Soekarno met with Douwwe Dekker and Tjipto Mangunkusumo. From this meeting, as well as discussions with Ki Hadjar Dewantara, Soekarno realized that nationalism did not need to be tied to Islam, class struggle theory, or any formal connection to specific ethnicities (Kristiyanto et al., 2023). In November 1925, Ir. Soekarno founded the Algemeene Studie Club, which initially began as a study group and evolved into a politically oriented organization, with anti-colonialism as its movement and Indonesia's independence as its goal (Soekarno, 1964, pp. 73–76). Soekarno concluded that the most important aspect was unity, as there were no significant differences between ideologies (Ricklefs, 2007, p. 392; Soekarno, 1964).

By avoiding participation in the intense struggle at that time, the Algemeene Studie Club maintained good relations with other groups (Nugroho, 2020). The collapse of communism and the rise of Islam as a political force opened new avenues for nationalism (Trang & Huy, 2021). On June 4, 1927, Soekarno and the Algemeene Studie Club founded the *Indonesische Nationale Unie-partij*, which later changed its name to the Indonesian National Union (PNI) in May 1928, with Soekarno as its leader. The PNI became the first political party led by an ethnic Indonesian, with a regional perspective, defining Indonesia's borders based on Dutch colonial policy and embracing a "secular" ideology (Ricklefs, 2007). The PNI fought for Indonesia's complete independence, both economically and politically, under a democratically elected government that would be accountable to the entire Indonesian people (Kahin, 2013).

In 1927, Soekarno initiated a united front of major Indonesian political organizations. Sarekat Islam, Budi Utomo, the Surabaya Study Club, and other major regional and Christian organizations joined the PNI in a forum known as PPPKI (Indonesian National Political Consensus). The PPPKI aimed to achieve the following objectives: First, align the national legal framework and strengthen it by improving the organization through collaboration among its members. Second, resolve internal conflicts, which could only be addressed through national action.

As the federation's tool to achieve its common goals, the "Consultative Forum" was formed, consisting of a chairperson, writer, proofreader, and staff. Dr. Sutomo and Ir. Anwari oversaw day-to-day operations (Pringgodido, 1970, p. 68). The PPPKI held several meetings, assemblies, and congresses, which resulted in decisions related to the movement during the colonial period. This eventually led to the PNI's rapid growth, transforming it into a major nationalist organization in Indonesia (Kahin, 2013).

The Arrest of Soekarno at Banceuy and Sukamiskin Prisons

Over time, the movement led by Ir. Soekarno and his comrades in PNI began gaining support from the public, which worried the colonial government and prompted stricter surveillance by Gobeè. Shortly after, the Dutch colonial government issued a warning to PNI through the *Dewan Ra'ayat* on the 9th of the month (Pringgodido, 1970), urging PNI to restrain its propaganda (Suhartono, 1994, p. 70).

After receiving an unfavorable response from the colonial government regarding their offer to cooperate and their request for the release of those exiled to Digul, the PPPKI front took action on May 1, 1929, opposing the penal law on revolutionary sedition and calling for strikes in major cities. Additionally, they established the Fonds Nasional, known as the Indonesian Association, to fund propaganda both domestically and abroad, as well as to support national schools. The Indonesian Association grew into the leading guard (in Europe) for Indonesia's nationalist movement (Pringgodido, 1970).

The colonial government viewed these actions and the formation of the Indonesian Association as increasingly provocative. This led the colonial authorities to conduct raids, feeling pressured, and they arrested PNI leaders on December 24, 1929. The PNI leaders were arrested separately, including Gatot, Maskun, Supriadintata, and Soekarno. However, Soekarno and his comrades' cases were not brought to court until nine months after their detention (Suhartono, 1994).

Soekarno, Gatot, Maskun, and Supriadintata received different court sentences. Gatot Mangku Praja was sentenced to 2 years in prison, Maskun to 1 year and eight months, Supriadintata to 1 year and three months, and Soekarno received the heaviest sentence of three years in prison (Suhartono, 1994). They were all accused of "participating in an organization with the aim of committing crimes, publicly expressing matters that disrupted public order, and advocating for the overthrow of the Dutch East Indies government" (Kahin, 2013).

After receiving their sentences, the four PNI leaders were placed in different cells. At that time, Sukamiskin Prison was designated for high-class Dutch law offenders, divided into three classes: prisoners sentenced to one year in prison, such as Gatot, Maskun, and Supriadintata; prisoners sentenced up to 10 years, like Soekarno; and a large group serving more than ten years (Adams, 2017, p. 133). Based on his sentence, Soekarno was placed in a separate cell, numbered 233, measuring 1½ by 2¼ meters, dark and damp. His cell was located right next to the prison director's room.

On top of that, during his daily activities in prison, Soekarno was isolated from other native prisoners and treated like livestock, with only six minutes allotted for eating and bathing. He worked in the printing section during his imprisonment. His daily task involved drawing lines on paper, which would later be bound into notebooks (Adams, 2017).

Soekarno's prison life was made more isolating by a ban on reading political books. As a result, the Governor-General eventually reduced his sentence to two years. Finally, on December 31, 1931, Soekarno was able to wear civilian clothes again after spending two years in prison (Adams, 2017).

Soekarno Before the Colonial Landraad Court

Soekarno and three other PNI leaders were arrested and imprisoned in a well-planned manner. This operation was carefully organized, even down to their detention cells. After being arrested in Yogyakarta, Soekarno and Gatot, along with their driver Suhadi, were interrogated at the police station. Suhadi was soon released, but his name was recorded because, according to the authorities, he was considered as dangerous as a high-class criminal (Adams, 2017). This was deliberately done to avoid controversy. The group then headed to Bandung. The journey was short, and Soekarno and Gatot barely realized their bodies were trembling as they arrived at their new home. The sign read: Banceuy Detention House (Adams, 2017).

Banceuy was a low-class prison. The prison conditions were filthy, rundown, and old. It consisted of two types of cells – one for political prisoners and the other for petty criminals. The cell block where Soekarno and the three other PNI officials were housed was guarded individually by wardens whose primary duty was to keep an eye on them. Sariko, one of the guards, was the first to break the ice by distributing cigarettes and books and informing Soekarno that Iskaq, the PNI treasurer, had also been imprisoned, as Sariko believed it was the only way to serve his nation. Soekarno was aided not only by native prison wardens who smuggled books or publications but also by some Dutch prison wardens who believed that Soekarno and his colleagues did not deserve to be accused of crimes. These Dutch wardens also valued freedom and sympathized with him. They were from the lowest social class and were willing to sacrifice their dignity for a bottle of beer (Adams, 2017).

After spending considerable time in Banceuy prison, Soekarno and his three colleagues' case files were brought before the Landraad on June 16, 1930. Soekarno had already known about this development and had informed his colleague, Sartono, who was also one of his three lawyers in the Landraad trial. Soekarno personally chose these defenders, and they all paid for their lodging out of their own pockets because there was no money at the time. In addition to these three individuals, Soekarno also wrote his legal defense, which later became known as *"Indonesia Menggugat"* (Indonesia Accuses). This small book detailed the suffering of the Indonesian people due to exploitation during the three and a half centuries of Dutch colonialism (Adams, 2017).

In the introduction to his defense, Soekarno stated that the charges against him and his three colleagues were akin to rubber. The written indictment said: *"Your Honors, we are being accused here of committing acts that heavily rely on subjective opinions, namely opinions that are far from neutral. We are accused of violating Article 169, which in its written form contains allegations of violations of articles regarding the rebellion, Article 161 bis, and Article 171 of the Criminal Code. We are accused of committing acts that are worded in a way that opens the door to subjectivity – subjectivity regarding the question of what is considered 'sarcasm,' what is considered a promise,' what is considered 'coded words,' – subjectivity regarding the question of what is called 'public order,' what is considered 'violating,' – what is considered 'inciting disorder,' subjectivity regarding the question of what is considered 'false news,' what is called 'the economic life of society,' and so on. Particularly Articles 161 bis and 153 bis are open to subjective interpretation. We, Indonesian politicians, have never ceased protesting these articles since their inception. We regard these articles as major obstacles to exercising 'the right of association and assembly,' which had already been severely threatened by the existence of 'haatzai artikelen' (hate speech articles), the 'exile law,' and so on. If the 'haatzai artikelen' are already infamous as 'rubber laws that are excessively*

elastic, 'what should we call Article 153 bis? It's not surprising that Mr. Mendels, in the Tweede Kamer of the States-General, in the general view of the Dutch East Indies budget of 1926, referred to this article as a criminal law article that raises one's hackles,' which he 'had never encountered in recent years.' He said: 'But if that's the case, then don't say that we have the rule of law here,' he said: 'This is tyranny with the use of law as a weapon'" (Notosoetandjo, 1963, pp. 243–244).

The Landraad trial ended on December 22, 1930. The Landraad of Bandung found Soekarno, Gatot Mangkupraja, Maskun, and Soepriadinata guilty. Soekarno was sentenced to four years in prison; Gatot Mangkupraja to two years; Maskun to one year and eight months; and Soepriadinata to one year and three months (Notosoetandjo, 1963).

The Policies of R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V as Regent from 1921-1934

R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V's political career advanced rapidly. At just 24 years old, he had already secured the position of regent. His success in establishing Cianjur as the rice granary of West Java and eradicating malaria made him a highly admired leader. As a result, the Dutch colonial government, under the decision of the Governor-General, transferred him to serve as the Regent of Bandung (Yahya, 2010).

R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V's inauguration as the Regent of Bandung took place on Monday, April 12, 1920. The people of Bandung warmly welcomed this event. The inauguration ceremony began with a battalion band procession around noon from his mother's house in Kaoem (Kaoem Moeda, 1920b, p. 2). Acting Resident Hillen led the reading of the oath. In his speech, R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah emphasized that the regency was not about personal wealth and power but about the strong bond between the people and the regent. He believed that through this bond, collective prosperity and wealth could be achieved (Kaoem Moeda, 1920a, p. 5).

During R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V's leadership, the Regency of Bandung flourished in Sundanese literary culture. Leadership instructions were no longer delivered using formal language but were enhanced with literary interpretations. As a communication medium between government officials and the regent, R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V published the newspaper *Obor*. Government policies featured in this publication were written in the form of *dangding* or *pupuh*. Responses from village officials were also presented in the same format. This journal began its circulation on October 15, 1921, and ended with its December 1924 edition (Yahya, 2010; 2011). Using the regional language in interactions with the community was considered important. It was not only a way to preserve regional culture but also R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V's expression of pride in being Sundanese. His goal was to connect with the people more easily and touch their hearts.

R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V's love for the arts has been evident since his childhood. During his tenure as Regent of Bandung, he staged the *Loetoeng Kasarung* film, accompanied by *degung*, *renteng*, *angklung*, *tarawangsa*, and *celempung* instruments, alternately enlivening the Java Institute Congress on June 18, 1921, at 9 PM. This performance attracted audiences from all walks of life. The film, a collaboration between R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V, Kartabrata, D. K. Ardiwinata, and Yudadibrata, entertained both Dutch and indigenous officials alike (Yahya, 2011), and it was well-received by them (Ardjo, 2011, introduction). Other revived arts included *wayang wong* (human puppetry), *wayang kulit* (shadow puppetry), *wayang golek* (wooden puppetry), and traditional martial arts (Sundalana, 2004, p. 55).

In 1921, R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V, the Regent of Bandung and a representative of the regents' organization throughout the Dutch East Indies, became a member of the Volksraad. His status grew even stronger when he was elected chairman of the Volksraad in 1936, a position he held until the capitulation in 1942. R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah also served in the Provincial Council after its establishment in 1926 (Gunseikanbu Tjabang I, 1944). He visited the Netherlands and traveled through Europe to study cooperative systems or people's credit banks. This trip, funded by the Dutch East Indies government, lasted from September 1927 to August 1928 (Gunseikanbu Tjabang I, 1944).

Upon returning to his homeland, he applied his knowledge by establishing several institutions, including the *Bank Himpunan Saudara*, which native Sundanese people managed. This was a practical implementation of his knowledge about cooperative banks, particularly the *Bank Pinjaman Petani* (Farmers' Loan Bank), which played a key role in empowering indigenous populations and uniting traders. R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V also founded the *Blindenhuis* (Institute for the Blind), the *Doofmute Institute* (Institute for the Deaf and Mute), the *Bandung Vooruit Institute*, a zoo, and *Yaarbeurs* (annual fairs). His efforts spurred rapid growth in the city of Bandung, eventually earning him the title *aria*, making his full name Raden Adipati Aria Wiranatakusumah V (Rozaal, 2013, p. 91).

R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V's Response to Political Events

R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V was an important figure during his tenure as Regent of Bandung from 1920 to 1934. He encouraged the growth of resistance movements against colonialism and the preparation for Indonesia's independence, led by Sukarno and his allies at the time. Wiranatakusumah was known as a leader who could garner sympathy and trust from both sides, especially the Indigenous community and the colonial government, without causing conflict between these two groups.

Wiranatakusumah's relationship with Sukarno began when Sukarno had just graduated from the Technical School, which was then located in the area governed by Wiranatakusumah. Wiranatakusumah purchased the blueprint for the building from Sukarno for twice the offered price to renovate the Great Mosque (Tini Kartini & Taram, 2000, p. 18). However, for reasons unknown, this design was not adopted. Wiranatakusumah's relationship with Sukarno later continued through various movements, which became evident in Wiranatakusumah's responses and involvement in the political events initiated by Sukarno and his movement. He provided housing for Sukarno and his group in South Bandung, then known as *Regentschaap Bandoeng*, in a government house known as the Rumah Adat Sunda (Suganda, 2015, pp. 54–55). Wiranatakusumah did this to observe the extent of Sukarno and his colleagues' struggle against the colonial government while simultaneously considering the policies needed to meet the public's needs and support the emerging movements in the area.

Wiranatakusumah's leadership style resulted from the Western education he received, which shaped him into a democratic leader with a strong sense of nationalism (Tini Kartini & Taram, 2000). Although he did not directly participate in the national movement organized by Sukarno and his colleagues, Wiranatakusumah offered psychological support and actively contributed to the development of nationalism. However, his actions during this period were tailored to his role as a regent.

He was a vocal leader in various forums, starting from the annual meeting of the *Persatuan Pegawai Bestuur Pribumi* (PPBB) in Jakarta from October 8-11, 1932. In his speech, he emphasized that the style of struggle he experienced as a regent was very similar to the struggles of Sukarno and his colleagues. Wiranatakusumah used this platform to instill nationalism in the community and the state apparatus. He not only participated in this conference but also in Volksraad meetings, where he represented the *Nederlandsch Indische Vrijzinnige Bond* (NIVB) or the Liberal Association of the Dutch East Indies (Sutherland, 1983, p. 164).

In 1929, Wiranatakusumah was elected as the chairman of the *Perhimpunan Pegawai Bestuur Bumiputra* (PPBB). With the addition of eight new regencies, the PPBB gained six seats in the Volksraad. In this forum, Wiranatakusumah fought for the rights of indigenous civil servants and was appointed Chairman of the Civil Servants' Fraction for Java and surrounding areas from 1921 to 1931 (Mangle, 1993). In 1931, he was appointed a member of the *Collage van Gedelgeerden* (Working Body) in the Volksraad, based in Batavia, after successfully sponsoring the establishment of a people's cooperative upon his return from the Netherlands. His involvement in the national movement caused his duties as regent to be neglected, which led to a reprimand from the Resident of Priangan. His duties as regent were then handed over to Raden Tumenggung Hasan Sumadipraja, but in 1935, Wiranatakusumah resumed his role as Regent of Bandung until March 1942 (Mangle, 1993).

The initial response of the colonial government to Wiranatakusumah's support for Sukarno's movement was neither oppositional nor prohibitive, as his activities were focused on socio-economic, cultural, and educational matters. As an *ambtenaar* (civil servant), Wiranatakusumah understood that the key to fostering nationalism was through improving education and the economy. He was well aware of the political agitation tactics employed by the Dutch colonial government, which is why he took a socio-cultural and economic approach to developing nationalism.

Wiranatakusumah's response to the political events during his tenure showed that he became a leader who provided significant moral support to movement figures, particularly Sukarno and his allies. He became a discussion partner for these figures, especially for Sukarno. Their relationship went beyond political interests as they grew as close as brothers. This closeness was evidenced by Sukarno's nickname for Wiranatakusumah, "*Akang*," which in Sundanese means "elder brother." However, in terms of direct political involvement, Wiranatakusumah could not do much, as the position of regent at that time was still under the shadow of the Dutch colonial administration.

CONCLUSION

This research presents key findings about R. A. A. Wiranatakusumah V's political role, particularly his ability to navigate between the indigenous population and the colonial government without causing conflict. Unlike previous studies that focused primarily on national leaders, this study highlights Wiranatakusumah's significant influence as a regional leader who supported the nationalist movement. His role in events such as the establishment of PNI, the arrest and imprisonment of Sukarno, and the Landraad trial in Bandung showcases his dual support for colonial governance and the nationalist cause, marking a new contribution to understanding local leadership during Indonesia's pre-independence period.

The research offers a methodological contribution by analyzing Wiranatakusumah's leadership through a socio-political lens, emphasizing his use of media, cultural integration, and strategic diplomacy to foster nationalism. His approach, shaped by both indigenous and European education, allowed him to implement policies that bridged traditional values with colonial expectations, contributing to the development of nationalist sentiment among government officials and the broader community.

However, the study has limitations in its focus on Wiranatakusumah's political activities, particularly within the constraints of colonial administration. Future research could explore his contributions to social and economic development in more depth, as well as the broader impact of regional leadership on Indonesia's independence movement. Additional studies could also examine other regional leaders and their interactions with the nationalist movement to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the political dynamics during the colonial era.

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