

THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE COLONIAL STATE AND RESISTANCE IN GORONTALO, 1908–1942

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Abstract

This article focuses on the study of the strengthening of the Dutch colonial state in Gorontalo, the accompanying dynamics of local conflict, and the forms of resistance carried out by nationalist movement groups during the period 1908–1942. The aim of this study is to explain why and how the process of colonial state consolidation took place in Gorontalo, while also analyzing the relationship between repressive colonial policies, local conflicts, and the emergence of resistance by nationalist movements within the context of Indonesia's national awakening. The method employed in this article is the historical method, which includes the stages of heuristics (source collection), source criticism, interpretation, and historiography, in order to analytically reconstruct colonial dynamics and the socio-political responses of Gorontalo society. The findings of this study indicate that the strengthening of the Dutch colonial state in Gorontalo occurred alongside the implementation of modern administrative systems, economic commercialization, and hegemonic colonial social stratification. These policies not only triggered local conflicts but also opened spaces for political mobilization and education, which were utilized by nationalist movement groups to build resistance, both through organizational activities and collective actions. These findings are significant because they demonstrate that local dynamics in Gorontalo constitute an integral part of Indonesia's national historical process. The resistance of nationalist movements in Gorontalo represents a local articulation of opposition to colonial hegemony, while simultaneously affirming Gorontalo's position in the history of the formation of national consciousness and the collapse of Dutch colonial rule.

Keywords: Strengthening of the Colonial State, Dynamics of Local Conflict, Nationalism, Resistance, National Movements.

INTRODUCTION

Gorontalo, as part of the eastern region of the Dutch East Indies, underwent complex historical dynamics between 1908 and 1942, during which its position within the colonial structure was considered crucial to the Dutch strategy for strengthening

administrative and economic hegemony in Sulawesi. This period also marked the rise of the Indonesian national movement, which penetrated Gorontalo's local socio-political networks. This paper aims to explore the relationship between the strengthening of the colonial state, the dynamics of local conflict, and the forms of resistance that emerged in response to colonial control.

The period from 1908 to 1942 was a crucial period for Gorontalo in confronting colonialism, marked by the growing hegemony of the Dutch colonial government, complex dynamics of local conflict, and the emergence of resistance from movement groups as a manifestation of the emergence of nationalism (I. Polontalo 1977, 7). Nationalism is a collective consciousness that grows from injustice, suffering, and the desire for independence (Kohn 1961, 11; Riter 1986, 294; Hayes 1955, 67; Goto 1998; J. Ingleson 1983; S. Kartodirdjo 1993; Soekanto and Lestarini 1988, 65–66; Turner 1978, 112–113). This spirit began to grow along with the emergence of national movement organizations in Gorontalo. As a strategic area, Gorontalo is located in the North of Sulawesi island, not free from the influence of Dutch colonialism, which implemented economic and social policies that oppressed the people (Rosenberg 1865, 25, 84, 89). Various forms of colonial oppression, such as forced labor, trade monopolies, and structural discrimination, created conditions that fostered local resistance.

Amidst colonial pressure, the people of Gorontalo managed to build a strong national identity. Movement leaders like Nani Wartabone and other figures led the resistance against Dutch colonial policies and actions (Wartabone 1968, 8; I. Polontalo 1977, 16). This movement was not merely a response to the people's suffering, but rather a manifestation of the nationalism that was growing strongly in the hearts and minds of the Gorontalo people. Movement leaders in Gorontalo not only confronted Dutch colonialism but also encountered the challenge of uniting local communities with diverse social and cultural backgrounds. This diversity was one aspect the Dutch took into account in order to quell resistance. The Dutch colonial government frequently arrested movement leaders, spread propaganda, and implemented strict surveillance. Therefore, this article analyzes the process of strengthening the Dutch colonial state in Gorontalo and its implications for the dynamics of local conflict, while also explaining the emergence of nationalist movement resistance as a historical response to the structural and hegemonic pressures of colonial power.

Studies on the colonial state, local conflict, and resistance have attracted considerable scholarly attention. Putra Hidayatullah (2022, 132–147) examines peasant resistance in Southeast Asia, demonstrating how colonial economic transformation disrupted traditional agrarian systems and generated various forms of rural resistance, while also revealing the ambivalent role of local elites within colonial power structures. Similarly, Eni Sugiarti et al. (2024, 439–460) analyze state–indigenous relations in the Indonesia–Timor Leste borderlands, showing how claims of state sovereignty often clash with indigenous rights, thereby producing local conflicts and resistance to state authority. These studies underscore the structural tensions inherent in colonial and postcolonial governance.

Other scholars have expanded the discussion of resistance beyond classical colonial settings. Nazaruddin et al. (2023, 1–8) explore labor resistance in contemporary plantation capitalism in Aceh Tamiang, identifying the “ninja” phenomenon as a form of collective resistance against exploitative corporate practices. Meanwhile, Pasqa and Putri (2024) examine resistance to digital coloniality in the Global South, arguing that technological innovation can become a tool for social transformation and counter-hegemonic practices. Although these works differ in temporal and thematic focus, they collectively emphasize resistance as a response to structural domination and unequal power relations.

Despite the richness of these studies, existing scholarship largely treats colonial state formation, local conflict, and resistance either in agrarian, borderland, or contemporary contexts, or at the level of general Indonesian nationalism. There remains a significant gap in historical analyses that integrate these three dimensions within a specific local setting over a long duration period. In particular, Gorontalo—despite its strategic position and distinctive local dynamics—has received limited attention as a site where colonial state consolidation, local conflicts, and nationalist resistance intersected between the early twentieth century and the end of Dutch colonial rule.

This article addresses this research gap by examining how the strengthening of the Dutch colonial state in Gorontalo simultaneously generated local conflicts and enabled the emergence of nationalist resistance during the period 1908–1942. The novelty of this study lies in its integrated analytical framework, which connects colonial state formation with local socio-political dynamics and nationalist mobilization at the regional level. By situating Gorontalo within the broader trajectory of Indonesian national history, this article contributes to the state of the art by demonstrating that local resistance was not merely a peripheral reaction to colonial rule, but a constitutive element of the national awakening and the eventual collapse of colonial power.

METHOD

This study employs the historical method as formulated by (S. Kartodirdjo 1993, 30–53; H. Sulasman 2014, 93–147; Daliman 2012, 51–99. Helius Sjamsudin 1994, 69; 2007, 85–155), which consists of four interrelated stages: heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. This method is applied to reconstruct and analyze the process of colonial state formation, local conflict, and nationalist resistance in Gorontalo during the period 1908–1942.

The heuristic stage involves the systematic collection of primary and secondary sources relevant to the research topic. Primary sources used in this study include colonial government documents, official reports, colonial regulations, archival records, newspapers, and contemporary writings produced during the late colonial period. These materials provide direct evidence of colonial policies, administrative practices, and responses to political mobilization in Gorontalo. Secondary sources consisted of scholarly

books, journal articles, and historical studies related to colonial state formation, local conflict, and nationalist movements in Indonesia, which serve to contextualize and support the analysis.

Following source collection, this study applies source criticism, which includes both external and internal criticism. External criticism is conducted to assess the authenticity, origin, authorship, and temporal context of the sources, particularly colonial archival materials and official documents. Internal criticism is then employed to evaluate the credibility, intent, and bias of the sources, especially in colonial narratives that often reflect the hegemonic perspective of the colonial state. Through this critical process, the reliability and limitations of each source are carefully assessed before being used in the analysis.

The interpretation stages involved analyzing and synthesizing the critically evaluated sources to identify patterns, causal relationships, and historical meanings. In this stage, colonial policies, local conflicts, and forms of resistance are interpreted not as isolated events but as interconnected processes shaped by structural power relations and local socio-political dynamics. Interpretation allows the study to move beyond descriptive narration toward analytical explanation.

The final stage, historiography, consists of organizing and presenting the interpreted findings in a coherent and systematic historical narrative. In this stage, the empirical data and analytical insights are integrated to construct a historical account that explains the strengthening of the Dutch colonial state in Gorontalo and the emergence of nationalist resistance as part of broader Indonesian historical developments.

To strengthen the historical analysis, this study employs a socio-political approach. This approach enables the examination of interactions between colonial authority, local elites, and social groups within the framework of power relations and political mobilization. Specifically, the study draws on the Theory of Collective Behavior proposed by Neil J. Smelser (1962, 1–47) to analyze forms of collective action and resistance emerging in response to colonial pressures. In addition, Sartono Kartodirdjo's (1993, 1–32 50–78) multidisciplinary approach is utilized to integrate social, political, and economic dimensions, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of local resistance as a historically grounded and structurally conditioned phenomenon.

DISCUSSION

A. Strengthening the Colonial State

In the early 19th century, the Dutch colonial government in Gorontalo implemented a series of economic, social, and political policies that systematically produced poverty and structural suffering among the indigenous population. Poverty in Gorontalo during the colonial period can be identified through several key indicators, including loss of access to productive land, exploitative labor relations, excessive taxation, declining subsistence capacity, and increasing dependency on the colonial economy.

One of the primary indicators of poverty was the alienation of indigenous land. Colonial reports indicate that fertile lands in Gorontalo were placed under direct control

of the colonial administration and used for the cultivation of export-oriented commodities such as coffee, cocoa, and coconuts (*Politiek Verslage van Residentie Manado Over the Jaar* 1864, Manado bundel No. 9). Local inhabitants were either dispossessed of their land or compelled to work on plantations owned or supervised by the colonial government. These labor arrangements were characterized by very low wages or, in some cases, the absence of remuneration altogether, severely limiting the ability of indigenous households to secure basic subsistence. As noted by Lindblad and Clemen, the commercialization of agriculture primarily benefited the colonial state and European trading interests, while indigenous producers remained trapped in poverty and economic inequality (*Politiek Verslage van Residentie Manado over het Jaar* 1864, Manado bundel No. 9; J. Th. Lindblad and A.H.P. Clemen 1986, 4–6; Dick 2002, 82–83).

Another crucial indicator of poverty was the heavy and regressive taxation system imposed on the indigenous population. Colonial sources reveal that taxes were levied not only on agricultural production but also in the form of head taxes applied uniformly to households regardless of their economic (B.J. Haga 1981, 45; Th. A. Musa 1980, 93–94; *Politiek Verslage van Residentie Manado over the Jaar* 1866, Bundel Manado; *Koloniaal Verslag over the Jaar* 1868–1869, 24).

According to Haga and Musa, this tax burden significantly reduced household income and prevented the accumulation of capital among indigenous communities, thereby reinforcing long-term economic dependency on the colonial system (B.J. Haga 1981, 45; Th. A. Musa 1980, 93–94). The inability to meet tax obligations often forced villagers to sell labor or assets, further deepening poverty.

Forced labor (*heerendiensten*) constituted another indicator of structural impoverishment. Colonial records document that the people of Gorontalo were required to perform unpaid labor on infrastructure projects such as roads, ports, and military fortifications serving colonial interests (*Koloniaal Verslag over het Jaar* 1888, 18). This labor system deprived households of productive labor time, separated workers from their families and agricultural activities, and contributed to declining food production. The prolonged duration and lack of clear limits on forced labor resulted in physical exhaustion and deteriorating living conditions, reinforcing cycles of poverty and vulnerability.

The persistence of these conditions—land dispossession, exploitative labor, excessive taxation, and forced labor—produced widespread economic and social inequality. These realities were acknowledged even within Dutch intellectual circles. In 1899, van Deventer published his influential article “*Een Ereschuld*” in *De Gids*, arguing that Dutch prosperity had been achieved through the exploitation of colonial subjects in the Indies. He contended that the Netherlands owed a moral debt to the indigenous population, which should be repaid through improvements in welfare via irrigation, emigration, and education—later known as the Ethical Policy (Bosch 1941, 64; Niel 1984, 54)..

However, while the Ethical Policy was initially framed as a moral commitment to improve indigenous welfare, in practice it often generated deeper suffering among the colonized population. Rather than dismantling exploitative structures, the policy was appropriated by the Dutch colonial administration as a strategic instrument to consolidate and deepen its hegemonic control over the colony. Programs of irrigation, education, and population resettlement were designed primarily to increase agricultural productivity, supply disciplined labor, and produce a bureaucratic and educated indigenous elite loyal to colonial interests. In Gorontalo, these measures failed to address the structural roots of poverty and instead reinforced economic dependency, administrative surveillance, and political subordination, thereby perpetuating the very conditions of inequality that the Ethical Policy ostensibly sought to resolve.

Ultimately, the accumulation of these economic pressures fostered a growing collective awareness among the people of Gorontalo that their poverty was not accidental but structurally produced by colonial domination. This awareness became a crucial foundation for the emergence of resistance and political mobilization in the early twentieth century, as indigenous society increasingly recognized that meaningful improvement in living conditions was unattainable under colonial rule.

Table. Indicators of Poverty among the People of Gorontalo during the Dutch Colonial Period

No.	Proverty Indicators	Concret Form in Gorontalo	Impact on the People	Primary Sorces
1.	Loss of access to productive land	Fertile land was placed under the control of the colonial government for the cultivation of export crops (coconut, coffee, and cocoa), leading to the reduction of customary land	Farmers lost their means of production and were forced to become laborers or tenants	<i>Politiek Verslag van de Residentie Manado over het Jaar 1864</i> , bundel Manado, No.9
2.	Forced labor (heerendiensten)	Obligatory unpaid labor for the construction of roads, ports, and military facilities	Loss of agricultural labor time, physical exhaustion, and a decline in food production	<i>Koloniaal Verslag over het Jaar 1888</i> , 18
3.	Very low wages / unpaid labor	Plantation laborers and those subjected to compulsory labor did not receive fair compensation	The inability to fulfill basic subsistence needs.	<i>Politiek Verslag Residentie Manado</i> , 1864; 1866
4.	Poll tax (hoofdelijke belasting)	The tax was levied equally without regard to individuals' economic capacity.	Declining household income resulted in the sale of assets and increased poverty	<i>Koloniaal Verslag over de Jaren 1868-1869</i> ,. 24

5.	Tax on agricultural output.	Mandatory delivery of agricultural produce and cash	Economic dependence on the colonial system	<i>Politiek Verslag Residentie Manado</i> , 1866
6.	A decline in subsistence capacity	Local food production decreased due to forced labor and the conversion of agricultural land	Widespread food insecurity and chronic poverty	<i>Koloniaal Verslag over de Jaren 1868-1869</i> ,. 29
7.	Structural economic dependence.	Local communities were compelled to enter the colonial cash economy	The loss of local economic self-sufficiency	<i>Politiek Verslag Residentie Manado</i> , 1870
8.	Forced migration and rural impoverishment	The displacement of labor due to taxation and compulsory labor	Rural social disintegration	<i>Koloniaal Verslag over de Jaren 1897</i> .
9.	The acknowledgment of colonial exploitation	An acknowledgment that the prosperity of the Netherlands was constructed upon the suffering of indigenous peoples	The moral legitimization of structural poverty	van Deventer, “ <i>Een Ereschuld</i> ”, <i>De Gids</i> , 1899

B. Dynamics of Local Conflict and Movement Groups

Socioeconomic changes resulting from colonial policies triggered conflicts at the local level, both between groups and between the people and pro-colonial local elites (see Hardjana 1994, 9; Fatah, 1994: 43–55). Local elites who collaborated with the Dutch were often considered traitors, while marginalized groups launched forms of resistance. This local conflict was strengthened by the difference in interests between parties who exploited colonial relations to strengthen personal power and parties who wanted change for the benefit of the people (see the patronage pattern of H. A. Putra 1996, 32; T. S. Pappas, 2009, 315–334; Hilman 2013, 337–363; Ufomba 2024, 1–26; Cahyati and Y. H. L. Lopo 2019 169–196; H. A. Muhammad and M. Yusuf 2020, 375–390; S. Handayani et.al. 2024, 18–27; Nordholf 2004, 166–180; Scott 1972, 91–113; Vlekke 1968, 193–226; A. Tauchid 1981, 59–100; M.C. Ricklefs 2008, 221–278; R. Cribb 2000; R.E. Elson 2008, 45–84; T.M. Amal 1998, 66–130). Factually, the dynamics of local conflicts that occurred in Gorontalo included those in Suwawa, 1849 (Th. A. Musa 1980, 100), Atinggola, 1858 (M.H. Liputo 1949, 13), Limboto, 1864 (B.J. Haga, 1981, 7–8), Panipi, 1872 (Th. A. Musa 1980, 93) Olabu and Tamuu, 1899 (Th. A. Musa 1980, 96), Jami' mosque, 1931, 1932 (I. MoO 1976, 30–31), WSG, 1932 (I. MoO 1976, 33), and its peak in 1942.



Figure. Photograph of a European School in Gorontalo, circa 1910
Source: *Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde*

The establishment of the *ELS* school in 1910, *HCS, de Scholen der Tweede Klasse* or *second-class school*, *HIS* 1916, *MULO* in Gorontalo, and *OSVIA* in Tondano, Makassar, and Surabaya (I. Polontalo 1977, 8–9; B.J. Haga 1981, 21; S. Nasution 2008, 72–124) initiated by the Dutch government in the early 20th century, gave rise to the birth of a movement that gained access to western education. Nani Wartabone, after completing her education at *HIS* Gorontalo, continued her education at *MULO* Tomohon, then moved to *MULO* Surabaya (I. Polontalo 1977, 8–9, 11). Likewise, those who continued to *OSVIA* Makassar included Ismail Datau, Syam Biya, Abdullah Amu, and Anyone Hadju (Th. A. Musa 1980, 37). Those who studied in schools, both in Gorontalo and outside the region, such as Java, raised awareness of injustice. Education created a new awareness, which then became a pioneer in the struggle to defend people's rights. Educated people played a very strategic role in uniting the people's aspirations for liberation from Dutch colonial hegemony (see A. Gramsci's theory of hegemony 1971, 12–13).

The awareness of those who received an education became a new chapter in the struggle against colonialism. In other words, people who were familiar with the world of education were not surprised by the emergence of various socio-religious and political organizations. In fact, they quickly responded to these organizations, marked by the development of movement organizations around the 1920s, both as expansions and developments of organizations based in Java and those emerging in Gorontalo itself. These organizations received great sympathy from the community, and their influence spread throughout the Gorontalo region.

The movement members present in Gorontalo generally came from the nobility or, at the very least, from prominent and respected families. The movement in Gorontalo is divided into two groups: first, the government ruling elite, or formal elite; second, the non-government ruling elite, or informal leadership group (Keller 1984). For example, Zakaria Wartabone gained his position in society through his political power. This group did not need the masses to implement political policies, as they possessed the political power to take actions deemed beneficial to the communities they led. In contrast, Nani

Wartabone and R.M. Koesno Danoepojo used the masses as a crucial instrument to strengthen their positions, as their presence in society was determined by mass support.

In many cases, non-government groups wielded not only political influence but also socio-cultural influence on the communities they led. Over time, the movement succeeded in managing and mobilizing masses from various sectors to resist the Dutch colonial government. In fact, in early 1942, Nani Wartabone, R.M. Koesno Danoepojo, and other colleagues successfully capitalized on key moments to develop a power strategy.

Intellectuals were the key driving force behind various movements. The presence of intellectuals backfired on the Dutch colonial system, as they learned the secrets of European power and superiority through school, and also because they were faced with the reality that preference was given only to the Dutch and Indo-Europeans. Their awareness of the conditions they experienced was then manifested in various forms, including the formation of organizations, newspaper publications, study groups, strikes, and political parties (Scherer 1985, 52). Over time, this form of struggle experienced rapid growth in the first half of the 20th century, thus marking a new chapter for the Gorontalo people in their resistance to Dutch colonialism.

C. Organized Resistance and Political Articulation

Resistance to Dutch colonial rule in Gorontalo was not manifested solely through physical confrontation, but also through organized intellectual, social, religious, and political channels. Access to modern education created opportunities for the people of Gorontalo to develop critical consciousness, which was subsequently expressed through various movement organizations. Through these organizations, political and social interests were articulated systematically as responses to colonial domination.

One of the earliest organizations to play a significant role was Sinar Budi, founded in 1912 through the initiatives of Husain Katili, Saleha Mina, and Patihedu Monoarfa (I. MoO 1976, 27). Sinar Budi functioned as a forum for fostering national consciousness through educational activities, intellectual discussions, and socio-economic initiatives. The organization is often regarded as a symbol of intellectual resistance in Gorontalo, aiming to instill national awareness and critique colonial injustice. Its existence did not escape the attention of the colonial government, which monitored its activities through local administrative apparatuses, considering the organization potentially capable of nurturing non-cooperative attitudes toward Dutch authority.

In addition to *Sinar Budi*, *Sarekat Islam* (SI) emerged as an organization that significantly consolidated national consciousness and social solidarity, particularly among indigenous traders and Muslim communities who experienced economic injustice due to colonial domination and the economic control of non-indigenous ethnic groups. SI's activities in Gorontalo initially focused on economic empowerment but gradually expanded into the political realm by articulating criticism of the colonial system. This

development prompted the colonial government to impose strict surveillance on SI, including restrictions on public meetings and political sermons.

The transformation of SI into the Sarekat Islam Party (PSI) further accentuated its political character and triggered repressive responses from the colonial authorities. Clashes between colonial officials and SI leaders at the Grand Mosque of Gorontalo in 1931 and 1932 resulted from political speeches deemed to violate colonial prohibitions on indigenous political activities (I. MoO 1976, 31). The colonial government implemented policies banning assemblies, censoring political discourse, and threatening arrests under the pretext of maintaining public order. The visit of H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto to Gorontalo in 1923, aimed at raising public political awareness (Th. A. Musa 1980, 104), was likewise placed under close surveillance due to fears of ideological influence.

Another form of resistance was expressed through Muhammadiyah, which adopted da'wah, education, and social services as its primary strategies in confronting colonialism. By establishing schools, mosques, and health institutions, Muhammadiyah in Gorontalo developed a strong social base and indirectly challenged colonial domination through the formation of an educated and nationally conscious society. As it did not openly engage in practical politics, Muhammadiyah enjoyed relatively greater organizational space compared to more radical political groups. Nevertheless, the colonial government continued to exercise administrative supervision over its activities, particularly with regard to educational curricula and organizational networks.

Another Islamic organization, Nahdatussyafiyah, founded in 1935 on the initiative of Salim Bin Djindan (I. Polontalo 1977, 23), also played an important role in preserving Islamic identity and Gorontalo's local culture. Focusing on religious education and the propagation of *Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah* according to the Shafi'i school of thought, the organization adopted a non-confrontational approach. From the perspective of the colonial government, such an approach was considered politically less threatening and therefore did not provoke direct repression. Substantively, however, the strengthening of religious identity and social solidarity promoted by Nahdatussyafiyah constituted a form of cultural resistance against colonial hegemony.

In the sphere of modern politics, the emergence of the Indonesian National Party (PNI) and subsequently Partindo marked a more explicit phase of resistance. Founded by Sukarno in 1927 and introduced to Gorontalo by Nani Wartabone in 1928 (Th. A. Musa 1980, 109), PNI quickly became the target of strict colonial surveillance. Its political activities were closely monitored by colonial intelligence, and its dissolution in 1929 reflected Dutch repressive strategies to suppress non-cooperative movements. Partindo, which emerged as a continuation of PNI, faced even harsher pressure, including the arrest of activists and severe restrictions on organizational activities.

Beyond movement organizations and political parties, the press and cultural expressions also functioned as arenas of resistance. Newspapers such as Sinar Gorontalo or Sinar Merdeka served as platforms for social criticism of colonial policies (Ministry of Information 1953, 548–550). The colonial government responded to press activities by imposing censorship, banning publications, and conducting strict monitoring of content.

Outside the realm of print media, the oral tradition of *tanggomo* functioned as Gorontalo's "traditional press" (Tuloli 1990, 6). Through satirical and symbolic verses, *tanggomo* conveyed veiled criticism of colonial injustice, making it relatively difficult to suppress through formal censorship.

On the eve of World War II, global developments influenced the escalation of local resistance. News of the Dutch defeat by Germany, received through radio broadcasts, encouraged Gorontalo activists to intensify political consolidation. The colonial government responded by implementing a scorched earth policy, which instead provoked open resistance. The "Sawo Manila" meeting became a strategic moment for movement leaders to formulate concrete actions against colonial rule, culminating in the seizure of Dutch colonial power in Gorontalo in 1942 (Gelora Revolusi brochure 1942; Ministry of Information 1953, 201–203).

Thus, the response of the Dutch colonial government in Gorontalo to various forms of resistance extended beyond administrative surveillance to include repressive policies, political restrictions, press censorship, and coercive measures. The dialectical relationship between Gorontalo society's resistance and colonial strategies of control shaped local political dynamics and reinforced the character of resistance as an integral part of Indonesia's national struggle.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the strengthening of the Dutch colonial state in Gorontalo between 1908 and 1942 did not merely represent an administrative expansion or economic intensification, but constituted a structural process that simultaneously produced poverty, generated local conflicts, and catalyzed the emergence of organized nationalist resistance. By integrating the analysis of colonial state formation, local socio-political conflict, and resistance within a single regional framework, this article fills a significant gap in existing historiography, which has largely treated these dimensions separately or at a generalized national level.

What can be learned from this study is that colonial domination in Gorontalo operated through interconnected mechanisms—land dispossession, exploitative labor regimes, regressive taxation, and administrative surveillance—that systematically marginalized indigenous society while reshaping local power relations. These structural pressures fostered not passive compliance, but a growing collective awareness among the Gorontalo people that their suffering was historically produced rather than accidental. Local conflicts, often involving pro-colonial elites and marginalized communities, should therefore be understood not as isolated disturbances but as integral expressions of resistance embedded within the colonial order itself. Nationalist resistance in Gorontalo emerged through a gradual process of political learning, facilitated by modern education, religious reform, and organizational networks, rather than through spontaneous rebellion alone.

The final message of this study is that local resistance was not a peripheral or derivative phenomenon of Indonesian nationalism, but a constitutive element of it. Gorontalo illustrates how regional actors actively interpreted, adapted, and articulated

nationalist ideas in response to specific local conditions of colonial exploitation and repression. Resistance manifested not only in overt political confrontation but also through cultural expression, religious organization, education, and the press, revealing a plural and layered struggle against colonial hegemony. This underscores the importance of viewing nationalism as a dynamic process rooted in local experiences, rather than as a monolithic movement emanating solely from colonial centers such as Java.

The importance of this study lies in its contribution to the historiography of Indonesian nationalism and colonial state formation by foregrounding the regional dimension of resistance. By situating Gorontalo within a long duration analysis of colonial consolidation and socio-political conflict, this research challenges center-oriented narratives and highlights the agency of local societies in shaping the trajectory of national history. Methodologically, the integrated socio-political approach employed here demonstrates the value of combining structural analysis with local historical context to better understand the complexity of colonial domination and resistance. Substantively, this study affirms that the collapse of colonial power in 1942 was not merely the result of global wartime dynamics, but also the culmination of sustained local struggles that had been developing for decades.

RECOMMENDATION

Indonesian history writing should better accommodate local perspectives to build an inclusive and diverse national narrative. Therefore, further studies on local archives, newspapers, and oral accounts from the colonial period in Gorontalo are indispensable for uncovering details of the unrevealed social and cultural history. Furthermore, history education in the regions needs to strengthen local identity as an integral part of national history, including highlighting local figures and events in the curriculum.

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