

## TEGAL IN THE SHADOW OF COLONIAL INK: THE NARRATIVE BEHIND THE COLONIAL PRESS (1900-1942)

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### Abstract

This Study aims to analyze the Dutch colonial press in narrating Tegal between 1900 and 1942. It focuses on how Dutch newspapers shaped and framed reality for their colonial interests. This study highlights how narrative bias in the colonial press deliberately of colonial government policies, making the narrative of progress and social welfare in Dutch newspapers such as *De Locomotief* and *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*. This study uses a historical research method divided into four crucial stages: heuristics, verification, interpretation, and historiography. The findings of this study indicate that Tegal was narrated in the news as a vital area for the colonial economy. News about the development and improvement of infrastructure, such as railways and ports, was framed as an indicator of Tegal's progress and modernization. Furthermore, the social issue of the malaria epidemic emphasized the rescue efforts of the Dutch East Indies government. Meanwhile, the root of the problem, which stemmed from their economic policies, was ignored in the narrative. Coverage of community social activities served as a narrative frame for the news to divert attention from the health issues that were occurring in Tegal. In conclusion, in addition to its role as a transmitter of information, the colonial press also served a dual role in fulfilling the interests of the colonial government.

Keywords: Tegal; Colonial press; Narrative; Framing.

### INTRODUCTION

The press as one of the main pillars of communication has undergone significant development. The press itself includes various media, such as newspapers and newsletters that usually convey information, whether it is about an event, advertisements, and even political issues. The press came with the emergence of the printing press. Since the 17th century the printing press has been brought in by United Dutch East India Company (VOC) to the archipelago as a new symbol of the modern colonial era. At first, the VOC from the beginning used the printing press for the sake of administration and printing of the rule of law (Hidayat, 2019). In the colonial era, in 1744 the printing press was used for the purpose of publishing newspapers, starting with the publication of *Bataviasche News* during the time of the Governor-General Van Imhoff (1744-1746). Before the introduction of the printing press, all information was only in the hands of certain authorities, the policies and intricacies of the government were known only to those in power and other elites. With the publication of newspapers *Bataviasche News*, became the beginning of a new color for the development of the mass media in the Dutch East Indies, especially for newspapers that since then began to emerge even though most of them carried the interests of the government.

The press during the colonial period was categorized into three divisions based on its publication and ownership, namely: (1) Dutch East Indies newspapers, generally Dutch-language newspapers and published by Dutch people, (2) Chinese newspapers, generally Chinese-Mandarin or Malay-Chinese and managed by Chinese Peranakan and totok, and (3) Bumiputera newspapers, regional newspapers. The newspaper was in Malay, Arabic, Regional, and later Indonesian (Kosasih, 2013). In general, newspapers published in the Netherlands have a prominent characteristic that they are Dutch-speaking and their ownership is dominated by Europeans

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(Larasaty & Ilafi, 2023). Through these characteristics, the narrative of news in newspapers naturally tends to be pro-colonial. In other words, most of the news was more favorable to the Dutch East Indies government. The content of news about the community is raised in a context related to security, order, health or other social issues that are considered relevant to colonial interests.

News in newspapers or mass media has a crucial role in shaping historical narratives and public perceptions. During the Dutch East Indies rule, the mass media was used as a tool to convey information, news, and even propaganda, as well as a means of communication between fellow Europeans and with their colonizers (Kambang et al., 2020). The content of news written in newspapers is a statement (Kartodirjo, 2017). This means that news is not just a neutral fact but a narrative that reflects the actual position, interests and goals of the reporting party. Colonialism often prioritizes writing as legitimate and superior knowledge, thus creating a narrative that benefits colonial interests (Son, 2024)

Research that discusses regional narratives in colonial newspapers has so far been minimally explored, it can be said that it is rarely found. Most studies of the colonial press focus on the center of government and large cities such as Batavia, Surabaya, or Semarang. The focus on the local scale is often overlooked and leaves out an understanding of specific areas in the mass media. This indicates the urgency of research to understand how the mechanism of colonial narratives was manifested in Dutch newspaper reports about Tegal.

A relevant study that is close to the focus of this research is an article (Larasaty & Ilafi, 2023) entitled " Dutch Newspaper News During the Colonial Period About Widuri Village in Pemalang Regency". This article specifically discusses a small village in Pemalang in a colonial newspaper. Geographically, at that time the Pemalang area was under the Tegal residency and was an area hinterland (inland areas). This study by Larasaty and Ilafi shows that small areas can also get news subjects in colonial newspapers, this provides insight into how local historical representations are constructed. This study became an important basis for my research in exploring the narrative of news about Tegal.

In the context of the Tegal region, the narrative of colonial news can be seen in various news reports on government policies, economic, social, health and other issues related to society. Propaganda strategies in the colonial press media in Tegal included various methods, such as framing news that presented the colonial government in a positive image and restricting access to alternative information. More than that, the Dutch media often carried news that tended to be too exaggerated about Tegal, be it in terms of beauty, urban order, and so on, this could be part of the legitimacy of the colonial power.

Thus, this research is expected to be a contribution to local historiography, especially in filling the gap in insight into how the identity, problems and lives of the Tegal people are framed through the lens of colonial print media. This can enrich the understanding of colonial narratives at the regional level, especially Tegal, which is sometimes overlooked in large historical narratives. Through the identification and analysis of colonial news narratives about Tegal, this research is expected to enrich the treasure of studies on Indonesian media and historiography by presenting evidence that colonial narratives also operate effectively at the local level. Thus, this research can enrich the understanding of press historiography, especially related to the role of colonial media in the Tegal area.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study uses historical research methods to analyze and find out how the narrative of tegal news in colonial newspapers is. Just as history as a science requires a method. According to Gilbert J. the historical method is a systematic set of principles and rules designed to help effectively in collecting historical sources, assessing them critically, and then presenting a written synthesis of the results achieved (Daliman, 2012).

In its implementation, it is carried out in four (4) stages of historical research methods, namely: collection of sources (heuristic), verification (source criticism), interpretation, and writing (historiography).

First, collection of resources (Heuristic). This stage involves the process of searching for and collecting historical sources, data, and information about the theme taken, both in written and unwritten form for the research. Sources in history are divided into 2 (two) categories, namely: primary sources and secondary sources (Kuntowijoyo, 2013). In this study, the primary source collection used by the researcher is a Dutch newspaper published between 1900-1942 and contains news about Tegal, such as *The Locomotive*, *Bataviaasch Nieuwblad*. This source is accessed by researchers through Delpher. As for secondary sources, it includes reference books, scientific journals, and other articles related to the history of the colonial press, the history of Tegal and the social context at that time.

Second, source assessment or verification, this stage focuses on critical testing of all previously collected sources. The researcher cross-checked the sources obtained, mainly in Dutch newspapers. Verification needs to be carried out in order to find out whether the sources that have been obtained can be used or not, through this stage the researcher gets credible historical sources.

The next stage of research is interpretation. According to Kuntowijoyo, interpretation is divided into two processes, namely analysis and synthesis (Kuntowijoyo, 2013). Interpretation has the purpose of interpreting sources and establishing the meaning of verified historical sources. In the analysis stage, the researcher describes the sources that have been obtained to understand the context, content and motive behind the news. Furthermore, in the synthesis stage, the researcher relates one by one the facts that have been analyzed to build a coherent unity so that an understanding of the colonial news narrative about Tegal is obtained.

The last stage is historiography. In this stage, the researcher writes down the results of his interpretation or interpretation that has previously been carried out, based on facts and emphasizing on chronological aspects or based on the sequence of events (Sunandar, 2021).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The Existence of Tegal in the Colonial Period

Tegal is a strategic area located on the north coast of Java Island, precisely in Central Java Province. Geographically, Tegal is bordered by Cirebon Residency to the west, Pekalongan Residency to the east, and Banyumas Residency to the south. The natural boundaries of the Tegal region are in the form of the Losari River in the western part, the Ulujami River in the east, Mount Slamet in the south and the Java Sea in the north (Eysinga, 1850). This strategic position is further strengthened by the presence of Tegal on the north coast supported by the presence of postal highways and *Steam tram* (train) Semarang-Cirebon (Kurniawan, 2016). With Tegal's geographical position which is located on the North Coast (Pantura) route, this area has a strategic position as a center of economic, commercial and socio-cultural activities that have been important since the Dutch colonial period. These factors make the Tegal area more developed because the Pantura route is a route that connects national and regional crosses from the three provincial capitals of Java Island, namely Jakarta, Semarang, and Surabaya (A'yunina & Wijayati, 2023).

Tegal is also surrounded by a fairly fertile plain with a tropical climate that supports agricultural and plantation activities. Moreover, this non-coastal area has a type of soil *Regosol* and *Andosol* (type of volcanic soil) which is suitable to support the cultivation of sugarcane, coffee and rubber commodities. In the administrative history of the colonial period, Tegal was transformed 4 (four) times as an important area at that time, namely: *Regentschap* (district), *Residentie* (residence), *Afdeling* (sub-division of residence), and *Gemeente* (township) (Rachmawati et al., 2023). Tegal's status as the capital of the residency was established in 1824 (Putri & Ardiyanto, 2024). By *Official journal* number 52 of 1871, Tegal became the capital of the residency (*residentie*) which oversaw 3 (three) *regentschap*, namely Brebes, Pemalang, and Tegal (*Official Gazette of the*

*Dutch East Indies* No. 52 of 1871). As time went by, the Dutch East Indies government began to increase control by reforming the administrative area. Tegal, which was originally an independent residence, was then merged into one region with Pekalongan. The merger of the two regions was written in *Staatsblad* number 334 of 1900 and took effect on January 1, 1901. (*Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indie* no. 334 of 1900).

Tegal is known as a strategic economic and administrative center as well as a meeting area of various ethnicities due to international trade activities. Dr. Bleeker in the newspaper *The Locomotive* In 1935, it was estimated that the population of Tegal in 1845 reached 29,536 people. Through this, the Tegal area is also inhabited by ethnicities other than Javanese (Pradita, Hardiana, & Pitana, 2023). There are several other ethnicities that participate in dominating the Tegal area, including Europeans (Dutch), Chinese, and Arabs (Uras Siahaan and Hartanto Budi Yuwono, 2017). Even though it consists of several ethnicities, in its life there is still a social stratification that colors life in Tegal. The top group is ethnic Europeans who hold a central role and hold keys in various sectors, considering that Tegal is under the rule of the Dutch East Indies government.

At the next level, there are ethnic Chinese and Arabs who are dominant in trade and services. Ethnic Chinese proficiency in trade was needed to turn the wheels of the colonial economy. Moreover, ethnic Chinese were also ordered to be officers in collecting taxes for the Dutch East Indies government (Kustedja, 2012). The placement of ethnic Chinese was placed under the direct control of ethnic Europeans based on the policy set by the Dutch East Indies government in 1743 to prevent the recurrence of riots. Furthermore, the Dutch East Indies government also did not want ethnic Chinese to ally with the indigenous people who could endanger the company's position in the East Indies (Wibowo, P., 2013). Furthermore, at the bottom position, namely ethnic Javanese or indigenous people who play the role of garden workers and farmers (Rahardjo, 2007). With this stratification is formed a complex social dynamic in Tegal.

With all the potential that Tegal has, starting from its geography, economy, and social dynamics, Tegal is an important strategic node for colonial interests. Starting from its economic sector which is rich in plantation commodities such as sugarcane, coffee and rubber, and supported by adequate infrastructure, making Tegal a vital contributor to colonialism. Furthermore, it is further strengthened by the existence of a port which is used as a distribution center for important export commodities from inland areas (Cahyono, 2001). Tegal, which at that time had been included in the Pekalongan residency, was recorded as having a sugar industry that supported the colonial economy, including the Adiwerna, Pangka and Dukuwaringin sugar factories (Larasaty & Savitri, 2021). The presence of the sugar industry at that time and even today still affects the social and economic dynamics in a region (Krisprantono, 2020). The existence of multiethnicity in Tegal was also a special concern of the colonial government. With complex social dynamics coupled with high mobility at the port of Tegal, this area is vulnerable to health problems (Surya, 2022).

### **Tegal Narrative in Dutch Newspapers (1900-1942)**

Along with the rapid development of the press in the Dutch East Indies in the 20th century, the mass media, especially newspapers, also had a function other than as a provider of information. Newspapers also transformed as one of the instruments in reflecting, shaping and directing colonial views on colonial society. The wave of mass media, which initially only appeared in big cities such as Batavia, Surabaya, and Semarang, began to spread to various regions, especially on the island of Java. This study specifically focuses on the crucial period 1900-1942 which was marked by ethical political policies, rapid economic development, and the emergence of challenges in colonial stability addressed by the narrative of control and surveillance in the Dutch press. As one of the regions that has a strategic position and supports the vital economy of plantation and port commodities, Tegal naturally became the focus of attention of the colonial government. His form of attention was reflected in policy and physical development and reflected in the narratives constructed by the Dutch press such as *De Locomotief*, or *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*.

In order to understand the Tegal narrated in the Dutch colonial press, the analysis is then grouped based on themes that consistently appear in the news. The grouping of themes aims to

reveal the patterns and priorities of information that are considered important by Dutch newspapers. In the economic aspect, the discussion included plantation activities, as well as industries that supported the colonial government's economic wheels, then infrastructure was directed in the development narrative such as railways, port facilities that support economic distribution. In the social aspect, society includes health issues and social activities of the community.

1. Economics.

Tegal's economic sector played a vital role in supporting the wheels of the colonial economy. As an area that has strategic access to the northern coast and its rich agriculture, Tegal plays an important role as a producer of export commodities to the global market through ports that continue to be developed. With plantations such as sugarcane, coffee, rubber, cotton from the interior and the presence of a sugar factory industry, Tegal became the backbone of the colonial economy. Dutch newspapers consistently reviewed information about plantation crops and exploitation neatly wrapped up with the narrative of plantation expansion that brought prosperity.

From the beginning of the research period, colonial newspapers began to show their focus on news containing the potential of agriculture and the expansion of plantation land in Tegal. In the newspaper *De Locomotief* on February 11, 1909, it was reported about the expansion of sugarcane cultivation on residential leased land. The land expansion aims to maximize production and optimize economic value so that it is even bigger. Coupled with *the statement of De Locomotief* on March 2, 1927, which highlighted the plantation harvest and sugar production in Tegal which remained consistent from 1906 to 1907 with recapitulation under Cirebon but above Pekalongan.

The importance of Tegal as a distribution center for export commodities, especially sugar, was highlighted in the colonial press narrative. *De Locomotief* on January 8, 1936, contained a narrative with the title Tegal Sugar Ship (*Suikerafscheep Tegal*) which reported details of the volume of sugar shipments from Tegal within a month, the Dutch East Indies Trading Bank company was recorded to have sent 952 tons more followed by the Dutch Trading Company which sent 5,770 tons of sugar. The narrative further emphasizes the importance of Tegal as a chain of sugar suppliers to the global market, coupled with news headlines that confirm the image of Tegal as a warehouse of sugar, will greatly benefit Dutch economic interests, without delving into large-scale production, this will have an impact on the local community. Furthermore, *De Locomotief* on July 29, 1939 also described the agricultural crops of Tegal such as rice, soybeans, and tobacco which were very good and satisfactory. News like this clearly illustrates the image of Tegal as a fertile, prosperous and productive area which is the result of the government's policy system such as land expansion.

Analysis from several newspapers about the economy in Tegal further strengthens the existence of exploitation wrapped in the news narrative. Government policies such as land expansion that can increase production yields also contribute to health problems, especially being a breeding ground for mosquitoes that result in malaria outbreaks in Tegal. It is clear that the interests of the colonial economy are still far above the welfare of the community, in suppressing public opinion regarding the hidden impact of policies that have been implemented for economic interests, the colonial government clearly lures the community which is then stated in the press narrative that the policy of expanding production land can improve the standard of living and prosper the local community.

2. Infrastructure

#### *Railway Line*

Infrastructure development in the Dutch East Indies, including Tegal, is inseparable from the modernization wave. The existence of modernization makes human work more organized, easily controlled and structured. This phenomenon originated in European countries in the middle of the 19th century which then transmitted the modernization flow

to their colonies. In the Dutch East Indies, modernization is also supported by the Agrarian Law which adds to the factor that the Dutch East Indies is undergoing a transformation that requires infrastructure development as a support for the running of the economy. The railway emerged and became a crucial element as the lifeblood of the colonial economy that connected the inland and port areas as the center of the distribution of commodities in the Dutch East Indies economy. The purpose of building a railway line was more for the economic interests of the Dutch East Indies government than for the interests of the community.

This statement was strengthened by the publication of the *Bataviasch Nieuwsblad* newspaper on Monday, January 28, 1935 which published an application for permits for the expansion of the Soemberhardjo and Kemantran sugar factories and the construction of a 9-kilometer railway. The news also added that residents who are around the area and fall into poverty can be overcome by the expansion of factories and the construction of railways. Through the narrative of the news, it is explained that the real purpose of the construction of the railway is for factory needs such as transporting crops and distribution to the port. Solutions for the welfare of the community are only used as narrative sweeteners in newspaper reports. Coupled with the newspaper *De Locomotief* on September 5, 1939, which also participated in reporting on the authorization of the construction of industrial lines in the form of permanent railway construction. This line stretches from the N.V. company's extinguisher line in Poerbajasa village to Kali Pah in Djatikampir village, Pangka and Adiwerna Districts, Tegal Regency. In several news narratives about railway construction infrastructure, there is a common goal, namely for sugar mill companies. This directly confirms the true function of infrastructure development that serves the interests of production and distribution for the colonial economy.

#### Port

In addition to the railway as the mainland artery of the economy in Tegal, there is also a port that functions as a support for export and import distributors of economic commodities. The Dutch East Indies government showed great attention to the function of the port of Tegal. Some of its attention is highlighted in the news of Dutch newspapers that often report their efforts in maintaining and increasing their capacity because they consider the function of the port of Tegal as a means of shipping commodity products to the global market and a place for imported goods from outside.

The newspaper *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* on August 13, 1901, reported on the poor condition of the port of Tegal, starting from the lack of sufficient shelter and insufficient dredging materials which resulted in the absence of boats carrying goods leaving or entering the port without bearing the risk of running aground or goods being destroyed into pieces. This newspaper also added that regarding the request for an investigation into the condition of the port of Tegal because there are export and import activities of merchandise that increase every year, starting from the production of coffee, wine, copra, leather, nuts, and sulfur has been exported as much as fifty-one million eighteen thousand three hundred and twenty kilograms and this number is increasing due to the expansion of plantations. The last point in the newspaper can be used as the main factor why checks are needed related to port conditions, if there are problems in the port, the distribution of commodities for the wheels of the colonial economy can be reduced.

With the increase in production brought to the port, the colonial government automatically paid special attention to the condition of the port of Tegal, recorded in the newspaper *De Locomotief* on October 26, 1927 which reviewed the proposal to expand the port in Tegal due to the lack of space for the storage of increasing sugar transportation.

The colonial press consistently began to report on the response of the Dutch East Indies government in facing the challenges of making efforts to improve the port. The attention of the Dutch East Indies government in responding to reports related to the

condition of the port of Tegal was highlighted in the narrative of the *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* newspaper of January 13, 1932, which reviewed the condition of the port of Tegal covered with mud due to the storm, so that it needed to be repaired for at least fourteen days. Continued with information from *De Locomotief* on April 28, 1936, which also reported on the construction of a bamboo dam to reduce the problem of mud in the port under the leadership of Ir. Van Vloten. In the news, there is also a narrative of various efforts from the Dutch East Indies government to prevent the siltation of the port as much as possible. The news directly corroborated the attention of the Dutch East Indies government which prioritized the port of Tegal as an important component in the export and import of commodity goods of the colonial economy. Coupled with the August 4, 1936 edition of the newspaper *De Locomotief* which reported on the improvement and widening of the port, starting from moving the lighthouse further inward which was initially on top of the port dam so that the pier could be moved, then *Westerdam* (Breakwater Embankment) which was also extended by 40 m.

### 3. Social

Developments that occurred in an area during the Dutch East Indies period resulted in the emergence of new problems related to health problems (Primaditya, 2022). In Tegal, the surge in activity and population mobilization at the port has caused unhealthy environmental conditions. In fact, before the 1880s, Tegal had an unhealthy reputation even though this had been overcome by the accumulation of swamps around Fort Kaloran or Fort Pasar Pagi which made the situation significantly improve, although not optimal.

Entering the 20th century, namely in the 1920s, the problem of malaria epidemic was increasingly high in Tegal. Tegal was visited by colonial medical teams precisely during the outbreak of malaria and other infectious diseases. The colonial health team visited houses, especially those located around the port of Tegal in 1922 (Adji & Priyatmoko, 2021). The area around the port is a top priority considering the humid port conditions and the high mobility of people and goods. This reflects the efforts of the colonial government in maintaining regional stability and productivity. It was recorded that in 1925 the death rate due to the malaria outbreak reached its peak of 141 per thousand population. If it is taken into account, around 115 to 120 people die every year. Cases related to this epidemic began to be reported in the colonial press. *The Locomotive*, on January 25, 1929 specifically explained that in the village of Sawodjajar, a very famous fishing hamlet west of Tegal, malaria was infected with malaria which resulted in six to seven deaths every day, the newspaper highlighted more the visit of the local government doctor, Dr. Rosier who then asked that Tegal be brought in by a malaria mantri as an epidemic control.

The handling of the malaria epidemic in Tegal became a serious concern for the Dutch East Indies government, whose response was reflected in the colonial press reports. On March 16, 1934, *De Locomotief* published a news about the cost of malaria treatment in Tegal which was so expensive that in 1926, the government had to issue a subsidy of 350,000 guilders, and if it was described per capita the population would get 10 guilders. In addition to the financial aspect, the Dutch East Indies government also carried out handling efforts including research on doctors and mantri as well as prevention. This can be seen in the news of *De Locomotief* on March 3, 1937 which provided a report on malaria control research in the Dutch East Indies by Dr. J. G Overbeek in Tegalsari which found that the initial results of the source of the disease were in fish ponds. As an initial form of prevention, starting by distributing Kina tablets, then the pond entrepreneurs were given directions to drain the ponds, after which they were ordered to pile seaweed at the bottom of the ponds. The newspaper also noted that additional mantri was sent from Batavia to Tegal to trace the source of malaria further. News like this shows the attitude and response of the Dutch East Indies government who cares about the people affected by the outbreak. Almost the entire narrative of the news related to the malaria outbreak highlights the efforts made by the Dutch East Indies government in dealing with this health problem. The causal relationship

of the malaria outbreak is only narrated in the category of unhealthy environment, the source of the malaria outbreak related to government policies such as plantation expansion is not highlighted in the news and is almost never narrated. In fact, *the Anopheles* mosquito vector can also be created from the expansion of sugarcane plantations so that malaria outbreaks occur in Tegal. This condition further strengthens the statement that the colonial government prefers to be narrated as a savior rather than as the cause of the presence of the malaria outbreak caused by policies that have been implemented for the benefit of the colonial economy.

The Dutch press also regularly features news about local competitions such as football matches, horse races, and inter-regional races that at first glance are neutral. Through the lens of analysis, news like this can also be used as the front cover of a region so that it looks orderly, advanced and the society is happy and productive under colonial rule. Moreover, with the enactment of ethical politics which increasingly makes the Dutch East Indies government want to have a positive image.

In Tegal, news highlighting local competitions often emerged as a form of equality that indigenous people also deserved to participate in activities with Europeans in general. As in *De Locomotief* February 28, 1927, highlighting the presence of people who participated in enlivening football competitions. Five months later, on July 26, 1927, *De Locomotief* again announced a new registration for a youth association that planned to hold an equestrian festival. The newspaper also noted that the Tegal sports association was considered to be very deserving of the full support of the local residents, this became a narrative that affirmed the legitimacy of the event as a developed region.

Furthermore, the news about local competitions can also be used as a diversion of issues related to health problems, namely the malaria outbreak that occurred in Tegal at that time. *De Locomotief* on August 22, 1928 again reviewed the football competition, organized by the Chinese Football Association in collaboration with the Tegal Football Association. In those years, Tegal was experiencing a surge in health problems related to the malaria epidemic. Indirectly, this adds to the strengthening of the control of public opinion in telling that Tegal is in good condition as evidenced by its people actively participating in an event. News like this is a step taken by the Dutch East Indies government in building its authority through press narratives so that it can be seen that the areas under their control are still conducive and the community remains productive in the midst of health problems that hit Tegal.

Phenomena related to news that often appear, such as local competition news, can be used as a diversion of social issues which are then neatly framed to reduce the problem of the malaria outbreak that hit Tegal, this is also clear evidence that the press has a function more than just an informant but also as a means to fulfill the interests of the colonial government in building a positive image in front of the public.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis of the narrative of Dutch newspaper news reports that alluded to Tegal in the period 1900-1942, it can be concluded that the existence of the colonial press had a dual role as a provider of information and a control of public views for colonial interests. This study reveals in depth how narrative strategies in newspapers operate outside the administrative center of the Dutch East Indies government. Through the analysis of the content of Dutch press reports for the period 1900-1942, this research succeeded in dismantling the hidden narrative built by the colonial government. The narratives that are built are packaged in the framework of economic progress, infrastructure development and health problems to disguise exploitation and negative consequences that impact society. There are several points produced from this research, namely: First, the Tegal Region is a vital part of the colonial economy because of the wealth of its agricultural commodities and infrastructure as a complementary combination of economic runs. Newspaper narratives that discuss the economy of Tegal, such as information on crop yields and

the expansion of sugarcane land, are frames of resource exploitation which then results in negative risks for the local community. Second, the existence of infrastructure development is narrated as one part of the modernization flow. There was a real hidden purpose for the production and distribution of the colonial economy. The narrative built in the news is then sweetened by adding that development policies are a solution for the welfare of the community. Third, social issues that include health and community activities are built in the news narrative to build a positive image of the Dutch East Indies government by highlighting rescue efforts in the malaria epidemic outbreak that at that time hit Tegal. The factors that cause the outbreak that arise due to government policies are not highlighted in the news narrative. On the other hand, the government also diverts issues to create an impression of stability, order, productivity and happiness of the community in the midst of health problems that occur. Based on the findings of this study, there are several suggestions suggested for further research, namely comparative analysis between colonial media and Bumiputera or Chinese press and further research can explore further related to press narratives in other regions.

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- 268 | **Juspi (Jurnal Sejarah Peradaban Islam), 9(1) 2025**

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