

UNIVERSITY OF LEIDEN

Becoming history. Taman Siswa and its influence on the Indonesian national education.

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15.08.2014

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Master Thesis: Research Master Area Studies: Asia and the Middle East

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Introduction

Op den 3den Juli 1922 werd de eerste Taman Siswa te Jogjakarta opgericht. Het was de tijd van den geweldigen drang naar onderwijs, waartegen het departement van onderwijs niet opgewassen bleek. Talloze kinderen, die toelating tot de scholen verzochten, moesten worden teleurgesteld. (Dewantara 1962: 29).

the reason the Indonesian Founding Fathers stressed the importance of education was to support the goal of building Indonesia as a nation that would be modern, democratic, prosperous, and socially just (Soedijarto 2009: 2).

Those two quotes set the frame of the research topic of my master thesis.

In the first citation Ki Hadjar Dewantara, the key figure of the *Taman Siswa* educational movement, describes his memories of the socio-political setting the founding of the first school of this movement was set in. Dewantara expresses the historic success of an alternative educational form, *Taman Siswa* (Pupil's Garden), seems to be. This success is even strengthened through the description of the colonial government (department van onderwijs) to not to be able to fulfil the need of the people for basic education. This statement was made in the magazine *Wasita* in 1938 (re-published in 1962) and is part of Dewantara's article on national education.

The second quote, provided by the Indonesian scholar Soedijarto in the *Journal of Indonesian Social Sciences and Humanities* in 2009, describes a today's view on national education and its importance for Indonesia. Soedijarto ascribes the principle aims of the national education with three major points (democratic, prosperous, and socially just) of the state philosophy *Pancasila*¹. This quote, just like his rather ideological shaped article, illustrates the importance of education as a vehicle and story of nation-building in Indonesia.

In this work I want to set these two quotes as a point of departure. On the one hand, I want to show how the alternative educational institution Taman Siswa is integrated in the upcoming national and nationalist consciousness and later the national state education in Indonesia. Furthermore, I want to ask, in how far the ideas of Taman Siswa have interacted with the nationalist movement. On the other hand, I also want to research in how far education has played a role in the process of nation-building in Indonesia and what the role of

¹ The *Pancasila* was introduced by Indonesia's first president Sukarno and is until now the state philosophy and ideology and one of the foundation pillars of the Indonesian nation. It contains five principles: 1. Believe in one god (*Ketuhanan*), 2. Believe in a just and civilized society (*Kemanusiaan*), 3. The unity of Indonesia (*Kebangsaan*), 4. Democracy guided by the wisdom of the representatives (*Kerakyatan*), 5. Social justice for the Indonesian people (*Keadilan sosial*). In Suharto's New Order system the *Pancasila* changed from a philosophy to a doctrine to follow and it is still the base to be a 'good' Indonesian citizen.

educational institutions was and is in the historiography of the Indonesian nation state until the 1960s.

Research Subject: Taman Siswa

In my work I draw the attention to one of the leading educational organization in the history of Indonesia, Taman Siswa. As Jusuf Tjetje (1969) and Benedict Anderson (1972) have described before, the institution is considered to be one of the founding ones of a national education system in Indonesia (Pluvier 1953: 52- 57; McVey 1967, Suswignyo 2012). It was founded by the publisher/journalist Soewardi Soerjaningrat², among others³, in the Javanese city of Yogyakarta in 1922. The institution was initiated to create a counterweight to the colonial and colonial-subsidized education in Indonesia (Tsuchiya 1987: 90). A further aim was to support and maintain Javanese culture and at the same time to create and invent an Indonesian national consciousness (Dewantara 1962: 524). Taman Siswa seems to be one of the organisations that survived the change from a colonized country to an independent state relatively unscathed. The impact of the changing political systems in times when Indonesia got independent on this organisation is not described in the literature yet. Most of the scholars either focus on pre- or on post-war Taman Siswa. The most influential work on pre-war Taman Siswa is by Kenji Tsuchiya's (1987) *Democracy and Leadership. The Rise of the Taman Siswa Movement in Indonesia*, in which he does an in-depth analysis of the roots and ideology of Taman Siswa especially in relation to Javanese mysticism until the Japanese occupation. The other major work on pre-war Taman Siswa is Ruth McVey's article 'Taman Siswa and the National Awakening' published in the journal *Indonesia* 1967. This article further researches the importance Taman Siswa had on the national movement and vice versa. She shows the similarities, but also the differences within the nationalist movement and its broader political and cultural context.

On post-war Taman Siswa I want to mention here the scholarly works that influenced me most. There is on the one hand Lee Kam Hing's article 'The Taman Siswa in Postwar Indonesia' published in *Indonesia* 1978 and Meijers' dissertation *De Taman Siswa en het*

² The name Soewardi Soerjaningrat can also be found, depending on the time and origin of the source, written as: Suwardi Suryaningrat, Surjaningrat, and Surya Ningrat. In 1928 Soewardi decided to abandon his noble name and the title *Raden Mas* and changed to *Ki Hadjar Dewantara* (in some publications also Dewontoro or Dewantoro). The *Ki* here is equivalent to *Kijai* and the *hadjar* equals the word *adjar* which translates to a pondok teacher. A lot of teachers followed his example and got rid of their noble titles and adopting a *Ki* in their names (Tsuchiya 1987: 64). In this work I will use both of his names, depending on which time I am referring to or which name is used in the literature.

³ The founding members of Taman Siswa are further described in Chapter 1.

Regeringsonderwijs. Ontwikkelingen in het Indonesische onderwijs vanaf 1945. Whereas Meijers predominantly describes and analyses Taman Siswa's relation to the different cabinets in Indonesia until the beginning of the New Order system, Lee Kam Hing, on the other hand, focuses on the relation of Taman Siswa with the other groups and parties in the new independent Indonesia. He draws special attention to the relation and interaction with the Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI*) and the impact this had on the inner structure of Taman Siswa.

In contrast to those studies I ask how far Taman Siswa as an organization changed during the times and if and how far they developed from a non- and even anti-governmental organization to, more or less, an organization that supported the state. In this thesis I aim to show and clarify that Taman Siswa was a non-state actor during Dutch colonial rule over Indonesia, but was significantly involved in the establishment of a first independent state national educational program. I am not only interested in the rulers' perspective on Taman Siswa, but also in how far that non-state actor developed different ideas or even shaped the nation's official position on education.

Background

Over the last century Indonesia has seen different educational systems and diverse ideological approaches to it just as it has seen different political systems. Therefore understanding to what extent the Dutch colonialists and their Indonesian 'pribumi' counterparts were involved in educational concepts, as well as the different stakeholders in the Indonesian regimes is important not only for the political, but also cultural history of the last hundred years. Given that my study will focus on the time from 1910 until the 1960s, the change from a colonial state towards an independent nation is the meta-story of my thesis. From the Dutch Colonial rule until 1942, over the Japanese Occupation until 1945 and the different political systems since the Indonesian independence, all systems had their different approaches to the socio-political life, and to one of the base layers of a functioning society: education.

In the late Dutch colonial rule until 1942 was characterized by the uprising national consciousness in the colony. The Dutch Ethical Policy provided for the first time codetermination of Indonesians. The so-called *Volksraad* (People's Council) was established to give advice to the government and had mostly a representative character (Elson 2008: 7).

The Ethical Policy, as will be explained in the later chapters, also made formal education, at least to a certain extent, possible for the indigenous population (Suwignyo 2012: 27).

In the years between 1942 and 1945 the German occupied Netherlands had to hand over the power on the colony to the Axis country: Japan. This time is characterised by a rigorous internment and on the other hand with a strengthening of nationalist and general publications in Indonesian. Education on the other hand was only allowed in the ‘formal’ (the former subsidized and governmental schools) educational institutions, so that national and more independent schooling came to a hold.

Following the immediate independent phase a parliamentary democracy was introduced in 1950 and lasted until the implementation of the so-called Guided Democracy in 1959. In the period of time from 1959 until 1965 Sukarno introduced a phase called ‘Guided Democracy’, an authoritarian regime that based on Sukarno’s ideas of the *NASAKOM* (*nasionalisme, agama, komunisme*)⁴ (Nuryatno 2006: 36). Sukarno “...presided over an unstable balance between the warring, mass-based sociopolitical forces, without attempting to fundamentally alter the political landscape.” (Aspinall 2013: 32). This political tumultuous phase will be the chronological end point of my thesis.

I agree with Bjork, who argues that: “Indonesia’s tumultuous political situation in the years after independence exerted an unusually direct and cogent influence on the structure of the school system.” (Bjork 2013: 55). These continuities and differences of a distinctive access to education and the idea of a colonial or national education reflect the history of (basic) education in Indonesia.

The decentralization of the, until 1998, predominantly central state finally reached the public education and also until today, the local governments are held responsible for it, even though the school curricula is still developed by the national ministries. As I will describe in this work, the educational system that was developed under the New Order has had its roots in the ideas of Taman Siswa, had reached remarkable quota in the enrolment for basic education (Kristiansen and Pratikno 2005: 515). Nevertheless, according to some scholars, the educational system lacks quality: “The weight of evidence indicates that the quality of education in Indonesia is very poor.” (Suryadarma and Jones 2013: 5)

⁴ NASAKOM stands for a synthesis of nationalism, religion and an Indonesian style communism.

Education and the Nation-State

The Brazilian philosopher of education Moacir Gadotti (2011: 18) states, that education is the foundation and the basic right to gain access to other social and human rights, or at least to become able to fight for them. Furthermore, he (2011: 12) states, that there is a direct connection between illiteracy and citizenship and/or participation in civil society. Thus, education is the "sine qua non" to access civil rights and the rights and duties of a citizen and citizenship. It can be used as a tool to produce knowledge, and according to Michel Foucault, knowledge produces power. Following this definition, education is not only important for the individual or a social group, but just as for the state. In other words, education is a highly competitive and contested market. The scholar on education policy Joel Spring explained that especially basic schools build the basis for a state to create national citizens ergo its legitimization (Spring 2004: 3). Education "... supports the political needs of the nation-state through educating and disciplining a loyal, patriotic citizenry imbued with nationalism and acceptant of the legitimacy of the state." (Spring 2004: 3). According to this, education is one of the basic pillars to create a person who is seen as a 'good citizen'. This is especially true for Indonesia. In all curricula for primary and basic and higher secondary school, *Pancasila* education is as obligatory as science. The *Pancasila* is used to create a point of origin for a collective identity. The unifying moment is not what a single person experienced or remembers about a particular incident, but that the individual accepts that there is a common remembrance of an event and experiences with others; it forms a 'collective identity' (Huttunen and Murphy 2012: 142). This collective identity is not an active act of affiliation, it is sufficient to accept to be part of this collective. It is assumed in academic debates, that an effective national education system is necessary to maintain the nation-state; to create human resources and the citizen as constitutive subject of the nation (Suwignyo 2012: 7; Nuryatno 2006: 41). Education is one of the main tools of a state to be able to propagate its views with more or less 'soft power'. In this relation between state national education and the nation-state also the importance of Taman Siswa for the independent Indonesian nation is rooted. So did Jusuf Tjetje state in his eulogy on the Taman Siswa founder Ki Hadjar Dewantara in 1969:

"We are of the opinion that in the development of the Nation, every citizen of the country should act as a complete patriot, which is very essential in the implementation of a systematic National Education." (Tjetje 1969: 2).

However, a state is not necessarily able to or may even have no interest in educating equally all of the groups it contains and to give all people the possibility to act conscious of their citizen rights. Additionally, some groups that are subsumed within a nation-state do not

want to be educated by it, for example due to religious reasons or ideological ones (free schools).⁵

Therefore if we take a closer look at this, schools are not a closed system but interact with other institutions and actors. The state holds the monopoly and the power on education (so to speak the state inherits the necessary resources to produce and define knowledge) and through the definition of school curricula the state also distributes and limits the discourse the (re)producing of knowledge is set in. According to Rauno Huttunen and Mark Murphy (2012) the curriculum is used to express a hegemonic norm that defines this norms as factual knowledge. Those factual norms are used to create and exercise power (Huttunen and Murphy 2012: 140). Based on this, the question is how the state interacts with non-state actors, and how a non-state actor like Taman Siswa can become an important player in the changing state.

In this work I want to take a closer look at the pillars that helped to install the *Pancasila* education and other methods of disciplining the ideal citizen. In my eyes this pillars can be located in Taman Siswa's educational ideology that was initially defined against the colonial state. In how far can Taman Siswa be understood as one of the key institutions to implement that national philosophy?

⁵ This does not necessarily mean a total antithesis against the content of the state curricula, but can vary from subsidized schools with independent providers to completely autonomous and even anti-government schools.

Sources and Literature

The modern history of Indonesia and the Dutch East Indies is a topic that has interested numerous scholars from various disciplines and perspectives. A very good overview of the history of the 'idea' Indonesia and the later manifestation of this idea in the Indonesian nation-state, the ideas of the Indonesian nationalist movement, their origins and entanglements offers, in my eyes, Robert Edward Elson in his 2008 published book *The Idea of Indonesia: A History*. On historiography in Indonesia they by the Indonesian historian Soedjatmako in 2007 published book edition *An Introduction to Indonesian Historiography* is to mention, that offers an overview on the different discussions and approaches how history was written in Indonesia.

More detailed and focused on the surroundings of my research topic, Taman Siswa, in terms of geography and people, is the work of Benedict Anderson *Java in a Time of Revolution; Occupation and Resistance, 1944-1946*. Even though the main focus on just a few years, he offers a detailed insight in the different actors on the stage of the Indonesian nationalism and Javanism. It also shows the entanglement of the various actors in Taman Siswa during that time. Another important background work is the 1953 book published by J.M Pluvier *Overzicht van de Ontwikkeling der Nationalistische Beweging in Indonesië in de Jaren 1930 tot 1942*. Who offers a detailed description of the different wings of the nationalist movement.

On the history of education in Indonesia are numerous works available, most of them with a different focus. The book edition of Daniel Suryadama and Gavin W. Jones (ed.) *Education in Indonesia* (2013) is mostly concerned with educational topics in current Indonesia, from the New Order regime until now, with a strong focus not only on qualitative but also quantitative results. The in 2012 online published dissertation by Agus Suwignyo *The breach in the dike : regime change and the standardization of public primary-school teacher training in Indonesia, 1893-1969*, on the other hand, describes thoroughly the development of teacher education in the Dutch East Indies and Indonesia. In this work, the entanglement and involvement of many Javanese aristocrats, that also played a vital role in Taman Siswa and/or the surroundings is impressively researched. Again another view on educational topics in Indonesia offers Meijers in his 1973 published dissertation *De Taman Siswa en het Regeringsonderwijs: Ontwikkelingen in het Indonesische onderwijs vanaf 1945*. This work offers a very close analysis of the similarities and differences of the educational development

in the Taman Siswa organization and the newly- independent Indonesia. Because of the certain similarities in the approach, I read his work and the point of view it was written on with great interest. Whereas Muhammad Agus Nuryatno's dissertation *Education and Social Transformation. Investigating the influence and reception of Paolo Freire in Indonesia* published in 2007, is more concerned with the more recent discourses on critical education in Indonesia. In his works he is reading and searching the history of education in Indonesia for traces of Freire's educational ideas. For an overview and background reading on the entanglement of (mostly Javanese) educational and political activists with theosophical ideas the dissertation (1996) by H.A.O. de Tollenaere *The Politics of Divine Wisdom. Theosophy and labour, national, and women's movements in Indonesia and South Asia 1875-1947* was used.

An important source for this work was also S.L. Van der Wal edition of source materials *Het Onderwijsbeleid in Nederlands-Indië 1900-1940*. published in 1963. The collection holds the majority of documents of colonial clerks and civil servants on education in Indonesia.

Most of the works that had Taman Siswa as a immediate research topic, have either been interested in the relation of Taman Siswa to the national movement (McVey), the educational matters (Meijers), or the development of the ideas (Tsuchiya). I will touch upon all of those topics, but will also have a main focus on the development of the role that Taman Siswa played during the different systems. (Tsuchiya, Hing, McVey, Meijers). Especially the work of Tsuchiya could be used as a source, because he had the possibility to analyze primary sources that is unfortunately unavailable in the Netherlands.⁶

The thesis is based on two different kinds of primary sources and material to show the stress ratio between Taman Siswa - as a representative for the educational non-state sector - and the colonial state on the one side, and the nationalist movement and the later independent Indonesian government, on the other side. The first sources consist of primary and original sources. These sources can, on the one hand, be divided in the communication of the colonial clerks on, with, and about their relation to Taman Siswa and the so-called 'Wild Schools', as a synonym for unsubsidized schools, as well as the Dutch installed and subsidized educational

⁶ For example the first editions of the Taman Siswa magazine *Pusara*, where some of the main articles on the ideology and on the 'Wild School' ordinance are published, are unfortunately not available at the KITLV and no other location is listed in the Netherlands.

system. The most important sources on education in the Netherlands- Indies can be found in the source edition on the educational policy *Het Onderwijsbeleid in Nederlands-Indië 1900-1940* by Wal published in 1963. The Nationaal Archief in The Hague also has sources used in its inventory.

On the other hand I analyzed primary sources by Taman Siswa, predominantly published in the Taman Siswa publication *Pusara* and the manifold writings of Ki Hadjar Dewantara on Taman Siswa's self-conception. The second kind of source consists of contemporary literature published in the described time periods and predominantly concerned with the Dutch educational system and the beginning phase of the Indonesian National Movement and nationalistic thought in Indonesia.

Structure

The time frame I am concentrating on in my thesis spans (roughly) the late colonial period (beginning in the 1910s) and ends with the regime change to the so-called New Order in 1966. The initial chapter will introduce into the research subject of this thesis: Taman Siswa.

The following chapters are in chronologically order of the different regimes, all concentrating on the different relations Taman Siswa was set in. The main focus of the first chapter will be the genesis of Taman Siswa. What were the ideas that led to the foundation of the institution? Which role models and other social groups and movements influenced the founders of Taman Siswa, and how was the reaction of the colonial society to the establishment of a different form of school, which was neither connected to religion nor the colonial state. This chapter is the one that is most concerned with Taman Siswa itself, their ideas and inner structure, and less with its relations.

The second chapter will cover the late colonial time in Indonesia and will describe and analyze the relation between the colonial state and Taman Siswa. I will concentrate on the late stage of the colonialism when the first educational structure was introduced and the colonial state was more and more challenged by the Indonesian national awakening.

The third chapter will deal with nearly the same time period, including the Japanese occupation in the Second World War from 1942-1945 but have a different focus in terms of context. It deals with the interrelation between Taman Siswa and the emerging nationalist movement in Indonesia. What role did Taman Siswa play in the movement? Could the

development of ideas within Taman Siswa be compared with the distinctive groups and persons involved in the nationalist movement? What were the similarities and what were the differences in the aims and basic ideas?

The fourth chapter will cover the time from the Indonesian revolution and war of independence in 1945 until the transition of the so-called Guided Democracy to the so-called New Order system in the mid 1960s. The first president of the independent Indonesia was Sukarno who ruled the country until 1965, the end of the time frame of this work. Under his regency Indonesia experienced different political systems and ideas. The first years after the declaration of independence on August the 18th in 1945 and until the recognition of independence by the Dutch in 1949, were shaped by the war of independence against the Dutch and the establishment and the manifestation of the idea of an Indonesian state. The aim of an independent Indonesia was the main goal during this time, but the conflicts between the different social, political, and religious groups were already tangible (Aspinall 2013: 32). Conflicts, as I will show there, which also affected the inner and outer structure of Taman Siswa. I am interested in the question in how far non-state actors had an important influence on the development of the Indonesian educational system, exemplarily analyzed with the Taman Siswa case study. How has the relation between the different actors shaped the system? Further on I will research how the non-state actor Taman Siswa emerged to become a state supporting agent.

During the chapters I will show what influence Taman Siswa had on the Indonesian educational landscape on the one hand, and how the institution changed its role and position from a non-state actor to an institution with state- forming character. To be able to research the changes and the discourses Taman Siswa was embedded during that time, this work will discuss the strings to the governance and educational "schools" multiperspectively rather than unilaterally. One aim of this work will be to combine these strings and subsequent discuss the changes of the organization itself and to connect those outcomes to the relation to the nation-state.

1. The Genesis and Ideology of Taman Siswa

“There is no education if there is no social life, and conversely no uneducated society.”⁷ (Soewandhi 1935: 152). This statement that Soewandhi⁸ published in the Taman Siswa organ Poesara (also known as Pusara) describes one of the basic understandings of society and its relation to education by Taman Siswa. Before Taman Siswa was established, already other non-governmental organisations as Budi Utomo⁹, Pasundan¹⁰, Sarekat Islam¹¹ and Muhammadiyah¹² all had set up schools since 1908.

Taman Siswa was founded by a group of Javanese activists around Soewardi Surjaningrat in Yogyakarta in 1922 (Tsuchiya 1987: x). It was together with those other religious and nationalist organisations one of the groups concerned with *indigenous* non-governmental education during the colonial times (Hadiwinata 2003: 14-15; 90) and set up different schools throughout the country. One of the key figures of Taman Siswa, Ki Hadjar Dewantara, sees three main points that are according to him essential for these schools: 1. They all had the pre-condition that the education offered by the government was inadequate and lacking in quantity; 2. The newly set up schools tried to provide the same education/instructions like the government; 3. The schools were still dependent on government subsidies (Dewantara 1967: 156-157). Even though some schools already offered lessons in for example Javanese, they mostly stuck to the colonial government instructions. Not one of the schools, according to Dewantara’s opinion, dared yet to formulate a national Indonesian education curriculum (Dewantara 1967: 157).¹³

⁷ Indonesian original: “Tidak ada pendidikan djika tidak ada pergaoelan hidoep, dan sebaliknja tidak ada masjarakat jang tak berpendidikan” (Soewandhi 1935: 152).

⁸ Soewandhi was also appointed member of the PUTERA central management responsible for the cultural department in 1943 (NL-HaNA, Proc.-Gen. Hooggerechtshof Ned.-Ind., 2.10.17, inv.nr. 725).

⁹ Budi Utomo (BU) was a group mostly active in Java or at least amongst Javanese and is often considered to be one of the first nationalistic groups in Indonesia (Elson 2008: 10 et seq.).

¹⁰ Pasundan can be described as reacting group to Budi Utomo to support and to "strengthen the identity of the Sudanese of West Java..." instead of the central Javanese people. (ibid)

¹¹ Sarekat Islam was the first nationalistic mass organization in Indonesia (Ufen 2002: 45). It was founded as an Islamic trade organization to fight the real or perceived Chinese dominance in the trade of Batik. In 1919 it already had a half million of members. Also the early communist party of Indonesia (PKI) was a fission product of the Sarekat Islam (ibid.).

¹² The Muhammadiyah is an Islamic mass organization in Indonesia. It was founded in 1912 as a social and educational organization (Kaptein 2004: 120).

¹³ Dewantara excludes a certain circle inside Budi Utomo from his accusations. However, this exclusion has to be viewed critically, because the group that is excluded consist of later Taman Siswa co-founders and Selasa Kliwon members (Ras Maden Sutatmo, Surjokusomo, Ras Sumarsono, Ras Sutopo, Ras Abdulrachman) (Dewantara 1967: 157).

Meijers differentiates between three distinctive interests in education during the colonial time from non-governmental protagonists:

1. A fast and target-orientated education in (and by) Dutch to be able to partake in Western education and later in the colonial system;
2. The cultural-nationalists who wanted to highlight their own (regional and ‘national’) culture and went completely against Western education; and
3. The nationalists, who aspired towards a national education and saw education as a tool to set up and achieve a modern nation-state, de facto their approach was a mixture of the first (‘Western’ content) and the second (taught in vernacular languages) group (Meijers 1973: 2).

Where the second group had a strong interest in educating the elite and maintaining their status, the third group wanted to focus on education for the people (ibid.). However, despite their differences they worked together in the colonial time and Dewantara was one of the persons who made that cooperation possible (Meijers 1973: 2-3). According to Meijers Taman Siswa is associated and located in the second group. Agreeing to that, in the following subchapters I will focus on the ideological peculiarities of Taman Siswa, its historiography and what role the ideas of Dewantara played.

1.1 The Founding Father: Ki Hadjar Dewantara

“Geen subsidie, vrijheid, zelf doen” (NL-HaNA, Asbeck, van, 2.21.183.03, inv.nr. 68).

The above quoted notes van Asbeck wrote in his Java diary, are the first words to describe his impressions of Soewardi, whom he met during his stay in Java. As we will see those three words do not only characterize the appearance of Soewardi quite appropriate, but are also a fitting description of Taman Siswa’s stance towards the government, on particularly the colonial, but also the Indonesian government.

To understand the history of Taman Siswa, I think it is firstly necessary to have a closer look at some biographical details on Soewardi Soerjaningrat alias Ki Hadjar Dewantara, who may be seen as the most influential founding member of that organisation and whose writings are highly important for my thesis. Dewantara presented the official voice of Taman Siswa, but also inside the institution he was the leading thinker. S. Mangoensarkoro also described him as the father of Taman Siswa (1938: 596). It is also important to give an insight in his involvement in the ‘national awakening’ in Indonesia to be able to understand

the role Taman Siswa should later play and why Dewantara could function as such a unifying factor among the different groups as he seems to be (Meijers 1973: 2-3).

Dewantara was born under the name Ras Maden Soewardi Surjaningrat in Yogyakarta on May 8, 1889. Being a member of the Paku Alam royal family of Yogyakarta, he had the possibility to join an ELS (*Europeesche Lagere School*) and later the medical school STOVIA in Batavia (Anderson 1972: 416). In his early years he worked as a journalist only becoming active as an educator around the 1920s. Since the rising of the nationalist groups in Indonesia Soewardi/Dewantara was involved in some of these groups and organisations and gave ideologist guidance and impetus through his articles. Since the founding 1908 in Jakarta Soewardi was part of Budi Utomo where his “political, social and cultural consciousness were sharpened out of the debate that erupted [there].” (Scherer 1975: 57). He later joined the Sarekat Islam as chairman and founded together with Douwes Dekker¹⁴ and Tjipto Mangunkusumo the *Indische Partij*¹⁵, which, even though influential for the emerging nationalism and the first party build on nationalist and not on ethnic or religious pillars (Ufen 2002: 45), only lasted one year (Meijers 1973: 5). His work as a journalist, especially the article ‘*Als ik een Nederlander was*’ published in 1913, was written in the context of the party and against the Dutch colonial rule. The activities of Dewantara and his both co-founders of the party led to the exile of the three. It was based on a ban because the colonial government alleged that they formed a threat for the colonial power and the power balance in the Dutch East Indies. During his six years in exile in the Netherlands Soewardi remained active in the Indonesian community and wrote for several journals and newspapers. Furthermore he received an educational degree in The Hague in 1917 (Tjetje 1969: 21). Eventually, Soewardi used his exile as an opportunity to establish himself in the educational sector and because he succeeded in establishing ties to local contacts, he was also asked to be a guest speaker at a conference on colonial education held in The Hague in 1916 (Tsuchiya 1987: 34). According to Tsuchiya he was inspired by the current educational debates on international level:

“Soewardi was most influenced by the ideas of Tagore, winner of the nobel prize of literature in 1913, the year Soewardi landed in Holland, and especially his educational theories, which were bearing fruit at his ashram.” (Tsuchiya 1987: 41).¹⁶

¹⁴ Douwe Dekker changed his name to Setiabudhi Danudirdja after the proclamation of independence on 1945 (Tjetje 1969: 14).

¹⁵ One motto of the *Indische Partij* (IP) was ‘Hindia for Hindia’, Hindia being one term Indonesia was referred to in colonial times. The IP spread its ideas mostly through its organ *De Express* (Juliastuti 2010: 84).

¹⁶ On the same page (1987: 41) Tsuchiya wrongly states that Tagore died in 1914. Instead of 1914 Tagore died indeed in 1941 and Dewantara wrote about him in the Taman Siswa magazine Pusara.

His educational ideas were influenced by the current discussions on education in the Netherlands, as a part of a broader, global discourse, mentioning Rabindranath Tagore and Maria Montessori as the most influencing on the discussion and the development of his ideas (Dewantara 1962: 133). Furthermore, he also came in contact with the theosophical ideas of Rudolf Steiner and Maria Montessori, and other leading thinkers of the time who went against the already established Western educational system and ideology (Rheeden 1986: 256-257).

Dewantara and the nationalist movement

However, Soewardi did not only develop his educational ideas during his time in the Netherlands. He was also involved in debates on the upcoming nationalist movement in Indonesia as *De Telegraaf* reports in his article ‘Openbare debat-vergadering Soewardi contra Sneevliet.’ (04.05.1919). Soewardi was further active in the *Indische Vereeniging* (Indies Association) an association of Indonesian students in the Netherlands.¹⁷ This association did not only influence Soewardi’s development of ideas, but vice versa as Ingleson describes:

“Likewise, the second period in the Indische Vereeniging’s development followed from the growth of the Indische Partij (Indies Party) and the subsequent exile from the Indies in 1913 of the party’s leader, Tjipto Mangunkusumo, Douwe Dekker and Suwardi Surianingrat (later Ki Hadjar Dewantoro) because of Governor-General Idenburg’s fear of their revolutionary ideas.” (Ingleson 1974: 16).

Thus, Soewardi took with him a bunch of educational and political experiences, when he returned to Indonesia in 1919 (*De Telegraaf* 05.09.1919). According to a newspaper article Soewardi was again arrested in 1920 because of a *sprekdelict* and *opruiende redevoering* (*Bataviaasch nieuwsblad* 28.05.1920)

The enormous importance that Dewantara played in the Indonesian national thought is pointed up with his nomination as honorary doctor of the University Gadjah Madah in Yogyakarta in 1956. This is especially mentionable because he was the third person to receive those honours, preceded only by the founding figures of the Indonesian nation, President Sukarno and Vice-president Mohammad Hatta (Meijers 1973: 6). In his laudatio Sardjito, the universities president, assembles several reasons why Dewantara (and his project Taman Siswa) were important for the Indonesian nation:

¹⁷ The establishment of the association is often compared to the establishment of Budi Utomo at the same time in Indonesia (Ingleson 1974: 12). However, contrary to Budi Utomo the *Indische Vereeniging* was not drawn together by a focus on Java and Javanese nationalism but on their descent from the Dutch East Indies and thereby an Indonesian nationalism (Elson 2005: 150).

1. Dewantara managed to expand the Taman Siswa schools and ideals, despite the hindrance of the colonial government;
2. Taman Siswa influenced the community and people's organizations in the national struggle;
3. Many 'nationalist' fighters during the revolution were taught or influenced by Taman Siswa (Tjetje 1969: vi).

In this speech Taman Siswa, and especially Dewantara, were ascribed as state establishing and supporting figures.

As I will show in further chapters, Dewantara had held an undisputed influence on the national movement and the educational landscape in Indonesia. He often was post mortem stylized as the perfect reincarnation of the Indonesian ideals and morals. Tjetje for example conventionalizes Dewantara as the saviour of the Indonesian people, a people he helped to create. He describes Dewantara as humble, with self-respect, full of honesty and simplicity, bearing all the ideals of the perfect Indonesian citizen (Tjetje 1969: 5-6). Consequential he was announced as one of Indonesia's national heroes.

1.2 Founding structures and principle ideas Taman Siswa

Selasa Kliwon Society

The predecessor of Taman Siswa can be found in the Selasa Kliwon society, a group that thought of it to be responsible for the assumed necessary spiritual training of the people to achieve political goals (Fakih 2012: 424). The nine teachers involved in the Selasa Kliwon group almost all became later Taman Siswa teachers'. Among others were Soewardi, Soetatmo Soeriokoesomo¹⁸, Soerjopoetro¹⁹, and Ki Ageng Soerjomentaram²⁰ who functioned as the group's chairman part of the whole society (Tsuchiya 1987: 56). However, the Selasa Kliwon group was not the only one that functioned as a meeting point for the later Taman

¹⁸ Soetatmo Soeriokoesomo is like Soewardi part of the Paku Alam royal house. He founded the Committee for Javanese Nationalism (Fakih 2012: 424). Unlike Soewardi and many of his fellows Soetatmo favoured "the natural leadership" (ibid.) of the Javanese aristocracy over democratic and more leftist views. For a discussion of Soetatmo's views see Farabi Fakih's article 'Conservative corporatist: Nationalist thoughts of aristocrats: The ideas of Soetatmo Soeriokoesomo and Noto Soeroto' published in *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde* in 2012.

¹⁹ Soerjopoetro is a Sola aristocrat who is known for his opposition against 'mixed' (European and Indonesian) marriages, because in his opinion the Indonesian blood should remain 'pure' (Klinken 2003: 92).

²⁰ On Ki Ageng Soerjomentaram, as well as Soewardi's, teachings and ideas on Javanese mysticism see Niels Mulder (2005) *Mysticism in Java. Ideology in Indonesia*.

Siswa activists; nearly all of the founding members also had connections to the profound national organisation Budi Utomo and to the royal houses of Yogyakarta (Tsuchiya 1987: 55-56). Tsuchiya describes the Selasa Kliwon gatherings and their importance as following:

“The meetings of Selasa Kliwon resulted in a decision to institute educational facilities for the younger generation and offer educational activities for adults [...] in order to foster a spirit of independence through education,” (Tsuchiya 1987: 56).

This analysis makes it evident that one of the reasons, why Taman Siswa was founded, was the pursuit for a nation state that should and could be reached through education (Ingleson 1974: 8). In the context of the then ruling colonialism this statement is as a matter of course a challenge against the colonial state and the society that it had developed and maintained. Even more, if we take the Ethical Policy into account that on the one hand helped to establish young Indonesian scholars, who often went to the Netherlands for their higher education because of the lack of facilities in the colony itself and had been politicized at the same time, but on the other hand could not fulfill in any extent the demand for education (Ingleson 1974: 14). I agree with Agus Suwignyo that one of the crucial issues on education in Indonesia respectively the Netherlands Indies was the lack of (qualified) teachers (Suwignyo 2012: 12).²¹

Principles of the Institution Taman Siswa

The Taman Siswa establishment based on seven following principles which were proclaimed at the constituent meeting in Yogyakarta on July the 3rd 1922²²:

1. The highest aim of Taman Siswa is to create *orde en rust* (Dewantara 1975: 5). Further on should “Education (*pendidikan dan pengadjaran*) in any nation [...] aim to nurture the seeds passed down from earlier generations so that the nation could grow both spiritually and physically.” (Tsuchiya 1987: 56). The development of the body and spirit of the pupil should be nurtured through the *Among* system (Dewantara 1938: 5).
2. The *Among*-system²³ should enable the children and pupil to become a “zelfstandig-voelend, -denkend en –handelnd wezen.” (Dewantara 1975: 5).

²¹ He, nevertheless, only refers to the first three decades, but I would argue, but recent literature like Suryadama’s and Jones’ compilation *Education In Indonesia*. (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2013) show the same, that the lack of qualified teachers is an ongoing and recurring problem in Indonesia’s education landscape.

²² I use the re-print of the *Beginselverklaring* that was published in the booklet *Nationale Opvoeding* by the Majelis Luhur Persatuan Taman Siswa in 1975.

3. Due to the colonial influence “verkeren wij als Volk in een toestand van verwarring.” (Dewantara 1975: 6). To overcome this state of confusion, the people should stop to follow the wrong ideals and start again to rely on their own culture (ibid.).
4. An educational system should be affordable and accessible by all layers of society. The power of the state should be the sum of the power of the people that is why Taman Siswa aspires a national education for the people. An increase in the niveau of the education should not be on the expense of the quantitative expansion (Dewantara 1975: 6).
5. Necessary to the success of any new foundation is autonomy. Therefore, Taman Siswa wants do receive no subsidies or help from third parties that are likely to create dependency (ibid.).
6. A national educational system should lead to independence and because of that should be set up completely independent without any ‘foreign’ assistance. The establishing a self-supporting system should make other subsidies unnecessary (Dewantara 1975: 7).
7. “ Vrij van banden, rein van gemoed, naderen wij het Kind. Wij vragen geen rechten, maar geven ons en dienen het Kind” (ibid). The personal feelings and rights of the teacher are placed back to help the pupil to achieve the tranquility between body and spirit.

What is striking for the first principles is the biologicistic language used when it comes to the ‘soul’, ‘the body’ and ‘spirit’ of the people. This naturalistic concept indicates the belief in an essential culture that the Indonesian people would inherit and a conception of an assumed bound to ‘nature’ Furthermore we have to keep in mind, the consistently represented ‘among’ system, a concept of education often described as leading from behind, was also understood as the ideal way of living in order to become a national citizen (Tjetje 1969: 10).

In this basic principles are ideas of various origin combined. In my eyes there are two main strands identifiable. One major point is the compatibility of an education for body and soul. These points are on the one hand influenced by theosophical and reformist educational ideas, Tagore and Montessori are explicitly mentioned, and on the other hand rooted in a Javanese tradition of teaching. Therefore, the new educational thoughts, with a focus on independence and idealism and especially ideas that are in accordance with Javanese

²³ In the article by S. Mangoensarkoro ‘Leidende Gedachten bij het z.g. Amongstysteem van de Taman Siswa-Scholen’ published in *Koloniale Studien* in 1938 the *among*-system is defined as “leidend dienend” (Mangoensarkoro 1938: 595).

principles of leading children, as well as the balance that has to be kept between soul and body, should be regarded in a new educational system. (Tsuchiya 1987: 57).

The other major strand is the anti-colonial style that views education as an instrument to further oppress the indigenous people. Even though, the colonial state is not directly mentioned the allusions made in point three to six, show the displeasure with the colonial influence on the society and the disapproval of the colonial education. Autonomy and independence, and reflect on the 'own' culture. A view that was and is common in a colonial/post-colonial context or with a distinct hegemonic elite like Antonio Gramsci, Paolo Freire and Frantz Fanon also argue (Friedman et al 2011: 2). This point is also the one that links Taman Siswa to the national movement in Indonesia and lays the pillar stone to the ongoing importance as a national template.

Thus, one special critic was formulated against the 'nationalizing' of the school curriculum by Taman Siswa, which was interpreted as "lowering the educational standard and setting us back decades!" (Dewantara 1967: 157). A critique that was answered by Taman Siswa in stating that it was indeed their aim to go back in decades and try to take another path (ibid.). The 'looking' back to a pre-colonial time was also important for the later history writing Indonesia that was concerned with re-writing a hegemonic history (Kartodirjo 20: 13).

Nevertheless, regarding to the wider context of a changing political system from a colony to an independent state, the first seven essentials were changed to the so-called Panca Dharma²⁴ (Five Principles) in 1947:

1. God's divinity;
2. Independence;
3. Future;
4. Nationalism;
5. Humanism (Tjetje 1969: vi).

In how far those are the 'real' principles of Taman Siswa and not a belated edited form of the principles according to the *Pancasila* remains unclear. As stated in the Introduction the *Pancasila* was used more as a doctrine than a state philosophy, and the five points mentioned by Tjetje assemble the five points of the *Pancasila* a lot: believe in one good, believe in a just and civilized society, the unity of Indonesia, democracy guided by the wisdom of the

²⁴ Depending which spelling is used, the principles are also known as *Pantja Dharma* or *Pancadharma*.

representatives, social justice for the Indonesian people. This either means that the ideological background around the ideological founders of Indonesia and Taman Siswa are very close, or that Taman Siswa's principles are adapted in retrospect to fit the new political order. Tjetje identifies the base of the Taman Siswa educational system as following:

“1. ‘Cultural-nationalism’ principle; 2. ‘among system’ principle; 3. ‘right of self determination’; 4. ‘democracy with leadership’ principle; 5. ‘family-life spirit’ principle; 6. ‘tri-con’ principle (continuity- concentration- convergence)” (Tjetje 1969: vi-vii).

This summarized principles show aspects of indigenous and Western ideas. Put in a nutshell, the ideal education in the eyes of the Taman Siswa leaders consisted of a syncretism between new (Western) ideas and traditional (mostly Javanese) ways of teaching (Tsuchiya 1987: 57). Those ideas of a syncretism were not new, and in my eyes Tagore's *ashrama* style education at Santiniketan in 1901 could have served as a role model. This is supported by the fact that Soewardi took over the *Adhi Darma* HIS in Yogyakarta in 1921 that followed the system introduced by Tagore in Santiniketan (De Telegraaf 15.06.1921).²⁵ According to Gupta: “He [Tagore] offered a nationalist alternative to mainstream Western education imported through the English medium” (Gupta 2002: 454). It was a distinctive aim of Tagore's schools to combine Western and Eastern education (ibid.). This dialectic, between accepting ‘new’ things (mostly originating from the ‘West’) and letting go of some *adat* principles, became one of Taman Siswa's ideals (Dewantara 1967: 150). According to Dewantara:

“It reflects the inner meaning of our motto ‘Sutji tata ngesti tunggah’, which literally means ‘purity and order, striving for perfection’. It is this watchword that can eliminate in us the wavering and doubt so typical of a period of transition.” (ibid).²⁶

The problem is an alienation of the own culture, especially through the choice of accepting new values, patterns, and commodities, which did not necessarily lived up to its expectations, over the own values (Dewantara 1967: 151). The choices Dewantara refers to are the acceptance of certain parts of the colonialism by segments of the native society and in accepting those to a certain amount a decision to be colonized was made. These decisions were, according to Dewantara, made because “... of the great inferiority complex which we derived from our particular governmental experience, we were easily satisfied with anything that made us look a bit Dutch.” (ibid.). Unfortunately Dewantara did not make it clear if in his

²⁵ For an extensive explanation and (self) description of Tagore's lyric and educational work and philosophy see the by Uma Gusdupta edited collected works of Tagore *The Oxford India Tagore. Selected writings on education and nationalis* published in 2009.

²⁶ The motto also represents the Javanese year, 1854, of the Taman Siswa foundation (Dewantara 1967: 150).

view the Dutch education made people adapt to the lifestyle, or if the adaption of the lifestyle made them welcome the colonial education. Nevertheless, the Indonesians are, in his eyes, only indirectly responsible for the interruption of their cultural values and *adat*, they are more likely victims of the circumstances. Here he clearly neglects any free will of the Indonesians who might have indeed seen advantages in f.e. sending their children to Dutch schools; insofar he is patronizing his fellow men and claims the cultural values to be the achieving aim. Tjetje comes to a similar conclusion and accuses the Indonesian middle class during the colonial times, which made use of Dutch schools, to behave more like Dutch than Indonesians; they were accused to have lost the sense of their own culture (Tjetje 1969: 4); an accusation that is often found in a colonial or occupational context.

Dewantara agrees with Tagore, whom he met during his exile in the Netherlands and later in Yogyakarta again, that this live (full of Western adaption) was merely a quotation of the Western lifestyle. Instead of building own intellectuals, people concentrated on mimicry. This adaption was indeed one of the aims the Dutch colonial government wanted to achieve to also create an emotional and intellectual bond between the colony and the motherland to keep the dependence and power (im)balance intact. This motivation is also represented in a nota to the Ministerie van Koloniën at the 16th December in 1901:

De verbreiding van het Nederlandsch [through education, KK] wordt behalve om den Inlander te ontwikkelen ook aanbevolen uit een politiek oogmerk. Men wil den band tusschen moederland en koloniën zodoende nauwer aanhalen. (Afdeling A 1901 in Wal 1963: 14).

The motivation on the pursuit of the Dutch colonial education was according to Dewantara striving towards materialism through intellectualism (Dewantara 1967: 152). Education was (amongst other reasons) utilized to gain material progress and value. In other words knowledge was used to gain and maintain power over resources. This worked vice versa, the Dutch maintained their power through having the knowledge over education, and the to-be educated Indonesians gained the possibility to higher ranking jobs and though over potential resources. Intellectualism, materialism, and individualism are understood by Dewantara as consequences of the Dutch education and seen as “the most visible cause of our spiritual as well as our social unrest.” (Dewantara 1967: 153). However, even though Taman Siswa planned to abandon the ‘Western’ principles of education²⁷, they stated: “that as long as

²⁷ ‘Western principles of education’ does in this context not necessarily apply for all educational ideas that originated from Western scholars, here it is more to read as a hegemonic discourse on educational principles.

we do not have university education of a national style our secondary schools must also serve to prepare for the Western university.” (Dewantara 1967: 161).

1.3 Taman Siswa Schools and Structure

The concept of the Taman Siswa school was to adapt teaching to local values and customs (Veur 1969: 8), and was at that time more concerned with Javanism rather than Indonesian nationalism per se. This alternative school did not gain any subsidies from the colonial government nor did it strive to receive any (Veur 1969: 8). After the establishing of the first branch in Yogyakarta in 1922, other branches, predominantly on Java, were established in the 1930s. Like van der Veur states:

“Their growth [of unsubsidized schools, KK] and development was stimulated by the unsatisfied demand for Dutch education, the opportunity they provided for employment of young teacher, and the desire of some Indonesians for schooling in which their own national ideas could be expressed.” (ibid.).

The number of independent schools, Taman Siswa and others alike, was figured to be about 2200 schools with around 142000 pupils in the late 1930s (ibid.) which makes together with other unsubsidized schools around 10% of the overall schooling. In the official figures published by Taman Siswa themselves for the year 1937/38 a total number of 190 branches with 225 schools are given, the vast majority (147) on Java and Madura (Dewantara 1975: 32). The number of students is estimated to be around 17.000 (ibid.). Compared to the figures which van der Veur presents Taman Siswa would make out approximately 10% of the independent unsubsidized schools, so around 1% of the complete schooling, and around 12% of the pupils taught in the independent schools (ibid.).

	Vernacular Elementary Education		Western Elementary Schools			
	2de Klasse Schools	Village schools	ELS	Special schools	Dutch Chinese Schools	Dutch-Indonesian Schools
1935	64	16.962	277	14	106	286
Total	17.026		683			

Illustration 1. Showing the number of subsidized schools for the year 1935. Data assembled from Wal (1963: 691-696).

The illustration shows a total number of 18.000 schools for primary education that were either government run or at least subsidized.

In December 1922, sixth months after the establishing of the first school, a Supreme Council was formed to be able to realize the growth and expansion of Taman Siswa schools.

This council was further divided in the Central Committee and the Regional Representatives Committee. The Central Committee was set up as following.

Central Committee

First Chairman	Soetatmo Soeriokoesoemo
Second Chairman	Soerjopoetro
Secretary	Soewardi Soerjaningrat
Members	Pronowidigdo
	Wirjodihardjo
	Roedjito
	Soejoedi
	Soerjoedipoetro
Adviser	Prawirowiworo

And the Regional Representatives Committee as following

Regional Committee

Bogor	Soetopo Wonobojo
Bandung	Soekarno
Tegal	Besar
	Panoedjo Darmobroto
Semarang	Tjokrodirdjo
	Hardjosusastro
Surakarta	Soetodjo Brodjonagoro
Wonokromo	Soedyono Djojopraitno
Surabaya	Notodipoetro
	Soewarno
	Ali Sastroamidjojo
Malang	Poeger
Pasuran	Gondokusumo

In spring 1923 Taman Siswa had established schools in four more towns (Tegal, Cirebon, Surabaya, and Wonokromo) and a private school in Malang transferred to Taman Siswa (Tsuchiya 1987: 58), the branch in Yogyakarta being the biggest with 213 pupils in 1923 (Tsuchiya 1987: 66). The further establishment of more branches was delayed because of a lack of teachers.

The difference to other schools

Another vital point of the Taman Siswa concept was that teachers and pupils lived together and therefore the schooling concept should enable a holistic education (*opvoeding* and not only *onderwijs*). Dewantara describes the Taman Siswa schooling concept as following:

“Our school calls itself *perguruan* (Javanese: *paguron*). Derived from the word *guru* (teacher), it means literally the place where the teacher lives. It can be also taken as a derivation of the word *berguru* (Javanese: *meguru*), i.e., learning from somebody else. In this sense, the word may also mean a center of study. *Paguron* often implies the teaching itself, notably in these cases where the personality of the teacher constitutes the most important element, and in this sense it means the school of thought being pursued.” (Dewantara 1967: 158).

This statement makes it clear that the origins in the Taman Siswa educational concept are rooted in traditional Javanese education. Another point that stands out in contrast to other schools is that the teacher’s personality is a crucial point to a successful education in terms of body, soul/mind, and knowledge (Dewantara 1967: 158-159). The rootedness in Javanese mysticism however is not the only one, as Dewantara formulates in a Taman Siswa publication in 1942 in the Taman Siswa ideology the holistic “*globaliteitspsychologie*” (Dewantara 1962: 93) is preferred over the fragmented “*mozaiek-psychologie*” (*ibid.*). He acknowledges theosophists (f.e. the former chairman of the Theosophical Society Anne Bessant) and reformist educators (f.e. Georg Kerschensteiner, the founder of the *Arbeitsschule*; Maria Montessori) as *pendekar* (a master of an art, mostly in martial arts) that are indeed role models for a new time, and a new education (*ibid.*).

Formal study was defined as an important part, but still second to the character development. Dewantara himself puts it in a nutshell: “We do not desire merely intellectual development, but also and particularly upbringing in the sense of moral care and moral training.” (Dewantara 1967: 159). Another difference between a Taman Siswa school (*paguron* and *pawijatan*) and a boarding school (like *pesantren*), is the emphasis of a family character (Dewantara 1967: 159.160). This family character is a principle that penetrates the whole structure of Taman Siswa, from the single school to the nationwide organization. As van Asbeck mentions in his Java diaries the idea of the family character in Taman Siswa is another idea adopted from Tagore (NL-HaNA, Asbeck, van, 2.21.183.03, inv.nr. 68).

The intellectual influence and the support of those educational ideas are also visible in Soewardi Soerjaningrat’s lecture held on the influence of the Montessori- and Tagore-methods for a national Indonesian education at the Batavian Free-Manson branch in July

1922, only a few months after the establishing of the first Taman Siswa school (Bataviaasch nieuwsblad 29.07.1922).

This family character allowed Taman Siswa as well to co-educate, because the teachers are *ibu* and *bapak*, the Indonesian words that mean mother and madam (*ibu*), and father and sir (*bapak*). The language used in the schools was also used to stimulate the idea of a family bound. So in the surroundings of the school boys and girls were able to interact freely with each other, something not allowed in the world outside the family (being Taman Siswa or blood family) (Dewantara 1967: 160). Further on Taman Siswa was giving women an equal status in their organisation and a representation through the *Wanita* (women) *Taman Siswa* as well as a Women's council (Dewantara 1967: 166). Even though it was an aim to give women an equal status, and co-education was practised, the first woman who joined the Majelis Luhur²⁸ was Dewantara's wife, who took over his place after his death.

The difference from Taman Siswa to other schools during their time cannot only be seen in its family character, but also in the decision which legal status to pick and be able to be as independent as possible (Dewantara 1967: 165). Taman Siswa was not set up as a legal association, but as a 'free wakaf'.²⁹ Dewantara explains this decision as following:

"That is, they are a sort of native foundation, but not one registered with the Islamic courts as is required for ordinary wakaf, since the Taman Siswa has no desire to be tied by Islamic religious rules." (ibid.).

On the one hand, this is a major distinction from organisations like Muhammadiyah and a stance that should led repeatedly to criticism (see chapter 4.3). On the other hand is this statement another example for the absolute autonomy and freedom Taman Siswa wanted to maintain for the movement. The ultimate aim of Taman Siswa is described by Dewantara as the congruence with the 'outer' world, to keep the own identity and become equal in value (Dewantara 1967: 161).

²⁸ The central committee of Taman Siswa that is elected every four years (Dewantara 1938: 29).

²⁹ The status of a *wakaf* originates from 1923, Taman Siswa changed their status into a *yayasan* (foundation) in 1951 (Dewantara 1967: 165).

1.4 Reactions and Establishment

The immediate reactions to the founding of Taman Siswa can be distinguished into three types: 1. welcoming and supportive; 2. opposed or critical because it was assumed that the new founded schools would not meet the educational standards³⁰; and 3. denunciation as communist schools. The critical stance was predominantly taken by teachers at existing government run schools, and the hostile response mostly by government officials (Dewantara 1962: 82). Whereas parts of the lower Javanese royalty and people involved in the nationalist movement mostly welcomed the establishment of Taman Siswa. Dewantara reacts on the reservations of the society, that Taman Siswa would lower the educational standards, with lack of understanding (Dewantara 1967: 157). In his eyes the pursue of an own national education justified the feared decrease in educational quality and the set back in decades. The answer to this allegations was "Indeed, we should go back some decades, for we want to rediscover our 'starting point' in order to re-orient ourselves; for we have taken the wrong road." (Dewantara 1967: 158).

Taman Siswa's own reaction to the responses in 1922 was the "ascetisch zwijgen" (Dewantara 1962: 82) for a period of eight years as a strategy against the critics and to welcome and incorporate supporters of all kind (Tsuchiya 1987: 58). This policy allowed Taman Siswa to organize and strengthen its organizational body and to stay relatively unharmed from government measures.

Already around a half year after the establishment of the first school in Yogyakarta it was decided to broaden the schooling project. It was the aim to spread the Indonesian archipelago and that the provinces should gain autonomy over the activities in their branches. Even though this approach sounds rather democratic and decentralized, Soewardi/Dewantara was given veto rights to be able to maintain the organizations order (ibid.). "This meant that within less than a year of its founding, there were established in the nucleus of Taman Siswa the two fundamental principles of 'democracy' (*kerakjatan*) and 'leadership' that were to permeate the movement in later years." (ibid.). This approach will become even more formalized, where it becomes obvious that Soewardi functioned as the 'father' figure keeping an eye over the organization from Yogyakarta, the spiritual centre of Taman Siswa, whereas at the same time it is tried to give the branches a certain amount of autonomy. The a priori

³⁰ Compared to the different type of colonial schools, especially the HIS schools.

mentioned *among*-system is here not only working for the family-like interaction between teacher and pupil, but also on the structural organizational level between the centre and the branches.

The development of the organizational body of Taman Siswa advanced further with a conference held in 1923 where the leading principles and curriculum were discussed and manifested (Tsuchiya 1987: 59). A central committee, running under the name *Majelis Luhur*, was elected and it was decided that no overall organizational body seemed to be necessary. They learned that Taman Siswa should rather be run through comradeship and private loyalty, hence like a family. Furthermore, Western culture was seen as corrupt, hedonist and as the anti-thesis to the own (still rather Javanese than Indonesian) culture and perceived development of the self (Tsuchiya 1987: 60). Like mentioned before, the traditional Javanese education should build the foundation for the new educational system that Taman Siswa aimed to develop (Tsuchiya 1987: 62). However, like stated in the a priori mentioned seven principles, elements that are seen as useful should still be adapted. So does Dewantara differentiate between different types of schooling derived from the West. He criticizes the Dutch adaption of the “*klassikaal onderwijs*”(classical education) that needed to be read against the ideas of the Suisse reformist educator Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi and the strife and possibility for all people and pupils to “... menerima hikmat kesutjian.”, to receive the wisdom of sanctity (Dewantara 1962: 93).

Even though Taman Siswa remained in their phase to be ‘silent’, it is obvious that their ideology and strategies were opposed to the ‘Ethical Policy’ of the Dutch that should bring ‘light’ into the ‘darkness’ of the colonies (Tsuchiya 1987: 61). Following the first Taman Siswa congress in 1923 a number of schools (Budi Utomo and other private schools) transferred to Taman Siswa (Tsuchiya 1987: 64). The first branch outside Java opened in Medan (North Sumatra) in 1925. However, this school still operated in a Javanese context and for the Javanese community. Actually, most of the schools in Sumatra were former Budi Utomo schools also settled in a Javanese context (Tsuchiya 1987: 76), so that the first activities outside the Javanese community can be traced down to 1930 (Tsuchiya 1987: 65). Taman Siswa also established international links, accordingly an exchange student program was set up with one of Tagore’s schools in Bengal in 1928 (Gupta 2002: 458). More and more branches were established (mainly in Java) in the mid and late 1920s and Tsuchiya notices that:

“It was notable not only that schools had been opened in Medan and Jakarta, but that Taman Siswa became established in the important strongholds of the orthodox Muslim association, Nadhlatul Ulama, in Jombang and Madura.” (Tsuchiya 1987: 77).

This is indeed notable because, as shown above, Taman Siswa also wanted to be independent from religion and faith-based influence (Dewantara 1967: 165).

As decided in the conference in 1923 the schools stayed quite independent in the arrangement of their curriculum development (Tsuchiya 1987: 72-73.). A peculiarity was the Kencong school, established in 1928, because practical handicraft like dry-field farming was also taught there. As well grades of the students were only published when they wished to continue their education at other schools (Tsuchiya 1987: 71).

In general subjects taught in the Taman Siswa schools were, appearing in this order: Javanese (oral and written, Dutch (oral and written), reading, writing, sketching, counting, geography, history, history of science, music, Malay, English, mathematic, biology and chemistry, economy, agronomy, civic education and pedagogy (NL-HaNA, Asbeck, van, 2.21.183.03, inv.nr. 68). Soewardi further saw various advantages in the so-called pondok, the traditional Javanese, system of education: first because the costs would be considerably low pupils being taught and living at teachers homes; and second that the education would be more holistic because of the daily interaction between teachers and pupils (Dewantara 1962: 370).

With the praise and highlighting of the Javanese culture, Taman Siswa stood during this time in contrast to nationalist groups like Budi Utomo. Even though Budi Utomo also originated from Java and was mainly popular among Javanese people in Java and the other islands, they saw Western education and culture as a pre-condition and/or necessary to an Indonesian independence (Elson 2005: 146-147). Nevertheless Budi Utomo saw in Taman Siswa’s approach to education the ‘best’ way and a means to an end to support and promote Javanese culture as a dominating factor in Indonesian nationalism (Tsuchiya 1987: 89). As a consequence, as mentioned above, the group transferred their own schools to Taman Siswa.

After the first national congress³¹ held in 1930 Taman Siswa tightened their infrastructure in late 1931 to mid-’32 (Tsuchiya 1987: 140). Since 1931 the regional branches were divided in so-called *golongan* with one instructor to organize the communication with the supreme council (Tsuchiya 1987: 144-145). Dewantara finally announced that the

³¹ See the following chapter for a further description of the main points of the conference.

transformation into ‘one’ body was accomplished in 1932 (Tsuchiya 1987: 147). With this exclamation the first eight years of self-subscribed silence were over (Dewantara 1962: 88-89).

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter shows the origin and the early stages of the establishment of Taman Siswa. Along with the reformist educational ideas and the idea of a national education Taman Siswa wanted to pursue, a major point in the self-conception is the autonomy. This autonomy was seen as a pre-condition to be able to implement their ideas of a national education. Spring states that "By dividing the world into separate *people*, rather than one humanity, schools contribute to war, racism, and other forms of inhuman and unjust action." (Spring 2004: 10). When we consider that rather harsh statement not only on the level of the world, consisting of nation-states but narrow it down to the level of one state, it holds certainly a truth for the Dutch colonial educational system that divided schools by its ethnic stratified structure. For the independent Indonesia it is not that evident anymore, because schooling was certainly used to ‘unify’ the Indonesian people, regardless of their ethnic group. Nevertheless this setting was inside the boundaries of the nation-state and the ‘othering’ of groups of people, for whatever reason, not belonging to the nation is a vital part of it. Schools and the educational system are producing and reproducing social realities and inequalities and power relations (Faridah 2011: 1).

“A strong nation with obedient citizens is a secure home for international corporations.” (Spring 2004: 21). Regarding to this statement, investment in education, or at least formal education, can lead to the accumulation of human capital. This statement certainly works for the recent Indonesia, but it also shows one of the motivations for the introduction of a colonial education. Suryadama and Jones agree on the importance of education for the development of human resources: “Yet, in Indonesia, as elsewhere in Asia, education will inevitably play a key role in the trajectory of national development as the twenty-first century unfolds.” (Suryadama and Jones 2013: 1). Education is not only a key for the establishment of the nation-state, but also builds the basic instrument to further ‘develop’ and to create differentiations in contrast to other states.

In the following chapter I will show the relation to one of the main dependencies during the early stages: the colonial state.

2. The Colonial State and Taman Siswa

“In landen als Nederland, Engeland, enz. Is de functie van het onderwijs in der eerste plaats conservatief. Naar de pragmatische zijde houdt dit in overdracht van cultuur en inleiding tot de sfeer van de arbeid, naar de normatieve overdracht van idealen van de gemeenschap of van bepaalde groepen van die gemeenschap. In Indonesië daarentegen werkt het onderwijs voor een belangrijk deel als revolutionaire kracht.” (Vastenhouw 1949: 25).

To fully understand the impact that Taman Siswa had or may not have had on the educational system it is important to describe the colonial educational situation, in which Taman Siswa developed. Already Jean-Jaques Rousseau discussed the relation between education and (personal) freedom (Spring 2004: 5). This personal freedom is an important pattern of education and often stands in conflict to the implications that are written into education by the nation-state.

2.1 The Colonial Education System

The reason for the comparatively late establishment of an educational system in Indonesia compared to other colonial states like India can be found in the relation between ‘rulers’ and ‘ruled’. During the influence and ruling of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and before the Dutch colonial government established ‘Western’ style schools that were accessible for Indonesians, the *pesantren*³², were widely recognised as the traditional Indonesian school (Veur 1969: 1). The only schools supported by the VOC had been missionary schools and were mainly active in the Moluccas and North Sulawesi (ibid.). This shows clearly how different the colonial regimes affected the regions in South- and Southeast Asia. The English colonial rulers in India, for example, used the ‘indigenous’ middleclass as clerks and middlemen, where as the Dutch (respectively the VOC) installed the Chinese minority in Indonesia to fulfil the task as a middlemen between colonizers and indigenous population. This led to a different interest in ‘training’ and ‘educating’ the colonial subjects (Gupta 2002: 452). Especially the VOC had no relevant interest in the education of the indigenous population, but mostly economic profit in mind. The VOC was not interested in a sustainable colonization of their occupied areas but mostly in the commodities it had to offer. This changed, more or less, with the establishing of today’s Indonesia as a Dutch colony and the later popular ethical policy in the mid 19th century (Djajadiningrat 1942: 9). Dewantara

³² *Pesantren* are the Indonesian version of Islamic boarding schools and can be found throughout the country. In some parts of Indonesia it is and was the only form of education available. The *pesantren* has to be differentiated from the *madrasah*, an Islamic day school (Pringle 2010: 208-209). For a further differentiation between *madrasah* and *pesantren* and its political implication see Sidel 2001.

viewed the establishment of the in 1862 introduced Ethical Policy as a milestone for the colonial concern on education (Dewantara 1967: 153). The Ethical Policy was an attempt of the Dutch to take the needs and wished of the indigenous population more into consideration. The administrative structure of the colonial state became more complex and open for Indonesians, and one of the main achievement was the introduction of a colonial school system (Ufen 2002: 64). After claiming Indonesia to be a Dutch colony in 1819, the new but old rulers opened the first public school in 1849, followed by a teacher training school in 1852 (Veur 1969: 1). In 1854 the colonial ruler crossed the Rubicon in establishing an ‘organic law’ that acknowledged the governmental responsibility to provide schools and schooling for Indonesian (ibid.). This regulation was established to “encourage the establishment of schools for the ‘native’ population.” (Djajadiningrat 1942: 10). However, the main purpose, training native clerks for the colonial government changed little. In retro-perspective Tjetje characterizes the Dutch education system as following: “The purpose of establishing schools was not for the enlightenment and welfare of our people [the Indonesian people, KK], but that they were opened mainly for the select few, who could later be employed as clerks.” (Tjetje 1969: 3). Djajadiningrat³³, on the contrary, made out different purposes for the colonial education: “to reduce illiteracy; to make the population more receptive to various government welfare measures, particularly with regard to hygiene; and to prepare pupils for more advanced education.” (Djajadiningrat 1942: 17). Regarding to this, it was not the main purpose to teach for economic reasons only, but also to ‘enlighten’ the natives with the blessings of the perceived Western supremacy.

In 1864 the *Europeesche Lagere School* (ELS/ Dutch elementary school) was opened for ‘qualified’³⁴ Indonesians to train indigenous staff (Veur 1969: 1). In 1867 the schooling in the Dutch colony was institutionalised and a Department of Education was established. New schools, especially for Indonesians, were introduced in 1893. That meant, that two different kind of schools were established, the *Eerste Klasse* (first class) school for children of the aristocracy and well-off people, and the *Tweede Klasse* (second class) school for the more general population (Veur 1969: 2). Despite that goal the schools did not veritably expand due to the absence of financial resources and teaching staff (ibid.). Even though the *Tweede Klasse* school was established to educate the general population, it was not able to live up to

³³ Djajadiningrat is of Indonesian heritage, however, he went to the Dutch Higher Schools in Indonesia, and now addresses his book predominantly for the Anglo-American market.

³⁴ Unfortunately van der Veur did not explain what qualified did imply.

the own standards, mostly because those schools were located in cities and not in the rural areas. In 1904 the colonial government responded to the situation and established the so-called *Volksschool* that should finally offer ‘Western-style’ education for the majority of the Indonesian population (ibid.). Contrary to the *Eerste* and *Tweede Klasse* schools the lessons were held in the local language and/or Malay and not in Dutch. These schools, also called village schools, were mainly located in the rural areas. Nevertheless the *Tweede Klasse* and the *Volksschool* offered the same amount of school years, with differences in the curricula. In the 1920s the *Tweede Klasse* schools were finally abolished in favour of the *Volksschool* (ibid.). Following the *Volksschool* further training was offered in the vernacular. According to van der Veur the enrolment rate of Indonesian and Chinese pupils in the Dutch elementary school decreased from 17,8% in 1914/15 to only 12,5% in 1938/39. Unfortunately it is not further explained how many per cent were Chinese, and how many Indonesian.³⁵ Even though the *Volksschool* was much more accessible, it was not always attractive for the parents to send the children to school, because in doing so labour-force and -time would be lost (Djajadiningrat 1942: 20).

These schools were widespread throughout the archipelago, but not available everywhere, as Djajadiningrat explains:

“due to the limited cultural development of the people in such regions as the interior of Borneo and New Guinea, it is impossible to recruit teachers from their own people and second, the very type of life which these people lead makes the opening of schools very difficult.” (ibid.).

These areas were not subject of the national schools, but so-called civilizing schools “to teach an orderly mode of life and its advantages.” (ibid.). This rather bold statement seems somewhat outdated, but if we have a look at the nowadays situation, the areas with low facilities seem to have remained similar, the gap between urban and rural areas still existing (Handayani 2009: 192).

In contrast to the ‘Oriental’ schools, there also were ‘Occidental’ ones, which were also attended by Indonesian pupils. Not only the language of instruction was different between the distinctive school types, also the subjects taught and the methodology differentiated between ‘Oriental’ and ‘Occidental’ needs (Djajadiningrat 1942: 11).

³⁵ This further differentiation would have been interesting because this both groups were prescribed different positions in the colonial population structure. The Chinese were installed as a middlemen between the colonial rulers and the indigenous population. This middlemen position can to a certain extent also be understood as a scapegoat position, and led in any case to a special position of the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia (cf. Chirot and Reid (ed.): *Essential outsiders: Chinese and Jews in the modern transformation of Southeast Asia and Central Europe*. Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press.)

Indonesian pupils who attained these schools were given European names and Dutch language knowledge was a pre-condition to be accepted (Djajadiningrat 1942: 30-31).

Behind the establishment of these schools stood a paradigm shift in the colonial politics; the *ethische politiek* (ethical policy) changed the colonial ideology and aimed to bring Indonesians closer to the Dutch language and culture (Veur 1969: 3). In retro perspective Dewantara acknowledges the ‘good will’ of the makers of the ethical policy, but criticised them for wanting to make the Indonesians like “them” (Dewantara 1967: 154-155.). This change, nevertheless, was accelerated by the pressure of companies, (indigenous) Indonesian and Chinese who wanted the opportunity to be educated in Dutch increased (Veur 1969: 3). To fulfil the need for Dutch education the *Hollandsch-Chineesche-School* for the Chinese community was established in 1904. This school later served as a role model for the later established *Hollandse-Inlandsche School* (Dutch-Indonesian school) which succeeded the *Eerste Klasse School*. This replacement led to an opening of the social structure of the pupils (ibid.). Another school was founded by the colonial government, the so-called *Speciale School*, a hybrid of the Dutch elementary school, in the late 19th century. This school is worth mentioning because it was established for indigenous Christians and pupils whose parents joined the Dutch forces (ibid.; Djajadiningrat 1942: 37-38).

The structure of the colonial society, as mentioned above, did not only delay the introduction of education for the broader population, the educational system also manifests the population structure. I agree with Djajadiningrat, who stated: “By retaining the Netherlands school system for European children in the Indies and by giving all races a varying education, a vestige of the colonial system remains.” (1942: 63).

Van der Veur acknowledges that around 40% of the children aged between 6 and 9 were enrolled in schools in the 1940s, but he criticised that the education was poor and short in duration (Veur 1969: 6). The preliminary estimate of the colonial government is summarized as following: “The [...] discussion of vernacular education has limited itself to the development of public and subsidized private schools.” (Veur 1969: 8).

In the 1920s the colonial government worried about the demand for Dutch education because the motivation seemed to be only socio-economic and not out of a desire to ‘become’ Dutch (Veur 1969: 9). An observation that stands in contrast to the later, in independent Indonesia, authored accusations against the Indonesian middleclass who would betray their own culture to become Dutch. However,

“[it] always had been government policy to consider Dutch education for non-Europeans as uitzondering (the exception) and to make a distinction between the individual desire for Dutch education and the need of the labor market for Dutch-speaking personnel.” (ibid.).

But, as will be shown in the following chapters, an Indonesian intelligentsia and proletariat was nevertheless developed. This is supported by Djajdiningrat’s observation in 1942, who states: “Although teachers were aware of the necessity for character development, it was not taught formally – rather it pervaded the entire curriculum.” (Djajadiningrat 1942: 14).

“The educational development which took place in Indonesia during this period [the 1930s, KK] contributed to the creation of a new elite and the growth of a national consciousness.” (Veur 1969: 16-17). But the development was still constrained by the low quantity and quality of education that did not develop congruent with the population growth. Van der Veur criticized the Dutch efforts, or the lacking force behind the efforts, but also emphasized that the “demand for instruction rather than education (and the view that all are entitled to it)” (Veur 1969: 17) was a novelty. Still we have to keep in mind that the target group of the educational system was the elite intending to qualify the indigenous elite for the colonial system. Most Indonesian pupils who joined the Dutch school system came from the milieu of wage-earners (who were linked to the government/ Dutch colonialism) and less from the indigenous economy sector (Veur 1969: 25). Indonesian pupils who attended the ELS were nearly exclusively from families employed in government services. The *Schakelschool* was the choice for pupils from a different economic background (ibid.). Even though the access to the different school types is determined by the economic background, it does not reveal the social status of pupils’ families.

“In the ordinance governing the HIS, it is stipulated that the children of parents who, because of their occupation, birth, wealth or education, hold a prominent position in Indonesian society should preferentially admitted to this school.” (Veur 1969: 26).

Nevertheless the admission to the elite HIS was income bound.³⁶ Because of that, the pupils did not necessarily form a homogenous group or even include Indonesians with a high social status as the Dutch colonial government had intended (Veur 1969: 26-27). However, the self-set requirements of the HIS were met with another obstacle. Because the target group of well-off Indonesians lived in a relatively large area, with the exemptions of cities, they remained the exemptions at the HIS’ (Veur 1969: 34). Even though the government could not be sure about the motivation of many pupils’ enrolment and interest in the Dutch schools,

³⁶ The chosen amount of the necessary wage was selected arbitrarily.

which in many cases was used as one way to increase their social status, outcome and somehow also the aim was the same: working for or at least in involvement with the Dutch colonial government (Veur 1969: 48).

But suggestions how to reform the Indonesian educational system not only came from the colonial and their counterpart, the strictly anti-colonial movements. Djajadiningrat suggested that: “Educational institutions must in general be adapted to the needs of students. [...] A uniform system of education not taking into account the main differences in cultural environment and needs would be doomed to failure.” (Djajadiningrat 1942: 8). This statement bears a certain similarity with the educational approach of Taman Siswa, which will be explained in the following chapter. However, Djajadiningrat did defend the colonial school system and its divisions because of the differences between a perceived ‘occidental’ and ‘oriental’ culture (ibid.). ‘Oriental’ education, by the means of Djajadiningrat, meant education from Indonesians for Indonesians (Djajadiningrat 1942: 15). It also included that

“The instructors are Indonesians taken from the same surroundings as the pupils in the lower grades and also, when possible, for the higher grades. This fact realizes the ideal which inspires the entire system of oriental education: adapting education to the original environment of the students.” (Djajadiningrat 1942: 15).

Nevertheless, the lacking interest and success in education was not understood as a shortcoming of the colonizers, but more likely due to the ignorance of the native. Djajadiningrat supported such a view in his statement:

“Even when the proper method had become clear, it was necessary, occasionally to apply gentle pressure in cases where the Indonesian population did not wish to take advantage of the instruction provided because of ignorance or economic reason.” (Djajadiningrat 1942: 8).

The insight, that the colonial system did not meet all the needs and wishes of parents can also be seen in a statement from van der Plaas in 1927, where he mentions that one reason for non-acceptance of Western education is rooted in the fact that it more or less only dealt with *onderwijs* (education) and not with *opvoeding* (upbringing/ instruction) (Plaas 1927 in Wal 1963: 439). Even though Djajadiningrat and van der Plaas acknowledge certain difficulties with the colonial education system they did not go further in their claims, like Dewantara, who states that a suitable educational system could only come from the people for the people (Dewantara 1967: 155). Accordingly he states that: “The government should therefore remain in the background, interfere only when this is desired, render aid where it is needed, and in brief put itself entirely at the service of the popular initiative.” (ibid).

Another obstacle for the educational system, governmental as well as the so-called ‘Wild Schools’, was the not yet unified language in the Indonesian archipelago; an obstacle that was also of nationalist concern, a unified language being one of the main characters to form a nation-state, because learning and adopting a language make communities imaginable (Anderson 2006: 15). The most government schools opted for Dutch (as their primary target group) and Malay (Djajadiningrat 1942: 9), schools like Taman Siswa opted for Javanese, with a very high emphasis on Dutch and less on Malay and English. In the 1940s the language question within Taman Siswa changed partly, Indonesian as language of the Indonesian people is introduced and local languages like Javanese should mainly be used in cultural contexts (Dewantara 1962: 524). But it is clear that language played a vital role in the nationalisation of education.

2.2 Taman Siswa and the Colonial Government

In the 1920s the colonial government was still not too concerned about a nationalistic and non-western education as the note from the director of the Department of *Onderwijs en Eredienst* (education and worship service) van der Meulen in January 1925 states:

“De aandrang om het officieele onderwijs minder Westersch te doen zijn, behoeft in het inderwerpelijk verband alleen bespreking voor zoover dit geleid heeft tot de oprichting van scholen van een afwijkend type. Voor zover bekend, bepalen de pogingen in die richting zich tot de Taman Siswa school van Soewardi in Djokja en de van theosofische zijde gestichte zgn, Ardjoenascholen. [...] Navolging buiten theosofische kringen schijnt dit min of meer nationalistisch onderwijs niet te vinden.” (Meulen 1925 in Wal 1963: 382).

Three years after the establishment of the first Taman Siswa school van der Meulen expressed the opinion that ‘nationalistic’ schools were not in vogue and for this reason, did not pose a threat to the colonial (education) system yet. However, only two years later, the progressive governor of Java van der Plas came to a different conclusion:

“Vandaar, dat het streven van den heer Soewardi Soerjaniningrat in Javansche kringen zoo diepe sympathie ontmoet, bij Vorstenlandsche prinsen evengoed als bij felle nationalist en zelfs in Moehammadijah kringen.” (Plas 1927 in Wal 1963: 439).

His statement shows the influence that Taman Siswa was able to gather further indicated the integrating factor that Taman Siswa later would have in the People’s Movement, being able to create a link between cultural-regionalists and nationalists.

The colonial governments influence on the so-called ‘wild schools’ was relatively low and as Tsuchiya puts it: “Eventhough [sic!] it could monitor the curricula of schools like Taman Siswa, that it did not subsidize, the colonial government had no power to prevent their establishment or to require licensing of their teachers.” (Tsuchiya 1987: 108). But

nevertheless it had the power to arrest teachers if they were participating in unapproved activities. In contrast to the handling of the so-called wild schools, the educational committee decided to co-operate with the Muhammadiyah in 1937 and established a school in Yogyakarta (Veur 1969: 6-8).

From 1923 on, the colonial government was more critical of Taman Siswa and its 'political' role (Tsuchiya 1987: 108). The confrontation between government and Taman Siswa appeared predominantly in the Sundanese city Bandung which also was a stronghold of Sukarno's *Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI/ Indonesian Nationalist Party)*. Both, the perceived and real relation of the Bandung school to the *PNI* led to problems and friction within Taman Siswa. Parents were especially concerned that the school would appear to be a *PNI* branch (ibid.). The school rejected these allegations, but Soekmi, the headmaster, had indeed been a founding member of the *PNI* and the party continued to be active in the milieu of the Bandung branch (ibid.). The colonial government also reacted to the increased allegations of anti-colonial activities surrounding the school and arrested some of the schools teachers (Tsuchiya 1987: 109). These arrests led to an acceleration of the process to strengthen and further enhance the internal rules and regulations of Taman Siswa (ibid.).

In a letter from 1940 the director of Education and worship services Idenburg acknowledged the motivations of Taman Siswa against the colonial education. He accurately observed that the *zakelijkheid* of the Dutch educational system and the lack of interest in the development of soul and body would not lead to the strived education to a national consciousness that Taman Siswa wanted to achieve (Idenburg 1940 in Wal 1963: 668).

2.3 The Wild School Ordinances

The first time that these so-called 'Wild Schools' appeared in the colonial documents was around 1922, falling more or less together around the time when Taman Siswa was founded (Tsuchiya 1987: 152). The first mentioned schools were the Chinese schools, the Tan Malaka school³⁷ in Semarang and the Yogyakarta branch of Taman Siswa (ibid.). The reproach against the schools was the promotion of Chinese nationalism and antisocial education, all pleaded as an excuse to penalize perceived and

³⁷ Sutan Ibrahim gelar Datuk Tan Malaka had been elected as the PKI chairman in 1921. Before that he had developed successfully that one school. Only a few months later his elevation he was exiled from Indonesia leading the PKI too vigorously in the eyes of the colonial government, but which led to his rise in the comintern. (Andersen 1972: 269-271)

real anti-Dutch education (ibid.). The recommendation of the colonizers during that time was to register all the teachers and to supervise the curricula (ibid.). The warning and a call for measures against the Wild Schools and their perceived ‘communist propaganda’ was reiterated in 1925 (Tsuchiya 1987: 153). After the arrest of many communist leaders, and the implementation of measures against the associated *Sarekat Rakjat* (People’s Associations) schools, the nationalist movement and Taman Siswa moved into the main focus of the authorities (ibid.).

“In this way, the focus of the ‘wild schools’ question shifted from the Communist Party and Sarekat Rakjat schools to the Taman Siswa schools, which since Taman Siswa’s founding had been considered to be anti-government and in step with nationalists.” (ibid.).

However, the situation was more complex even though Taman Siswa was vigorous kept under surveillance by the government, there were, nevertheless, clerks within the colonial system who were sympathetic to Taman Siswa and regarded them highly (Tsuchiya 1987: 157).

The measures that were being taken against the wild schools had started in 1923 and by 1932 had extended to a system of need for authorisation and control (Tsuchiya 1987: 155). The ordinance stated that teachers of wild schools needed to get a license from the head of the regional government. Before this license was granted to the teachers, they were often interrogated with regards to their educational background and choice of methodology as well as their obligation to maintain *orde en rust* (Tsuchiya 1987: 154). Tjetje interpreted the Ordinance aimed directly against Taman Siswa (Tjetje 1969: 25).

On one hand Dewantara welcomed measures against, in his eyes, unprofessional schools which he also defined as wild but on the other hand, he also saw the consequences that the measures held for Taman Siswa, because they were always located outside the official educational system (Tsuchiya 1987: 156). Dewantara argued that the problem was rooted in the lacking efforts of the colonialists to provide schooling, and not in the schools that established themselves outside the official system (ibid.).

In the beginning, Taman Siswa did not react directly to the Ordinance, however made at the same time efforts to strengthen its organization and structure (Tsuchiya 1987: 157). Dewantara, in his belief in defending the voice of the people, called for

passive resistance against the Ordinance and the colonial system in general in October 1932 (Tsuchiya 1987: 161-162.).

Finally, the *Volksraad* (People's Council) decided to cancel the ordinance in 1933 (Tjetje 1969: 25). Even though the Wild School Ordinance is the well-known measurement against private schools during colonial times in Indonesia; indeed, the Dutch tried to sabotage the growth of private schools with 'indirect' sanctions. In 1935, for example, the government published a letter saying "that the children of Government official could not get children's allowances, free transportations tickets, etc., whenever sent to private schools." (ibid.).

2.5 Conclusion

"Efforts of private persons, associations and governmental agencies to combat illiteracy by direct methods often failed, mostly because of insufficient preliminary investigation." (Plas in Djajadiningrat 1942: 66). This statement of the former governor of East-Java Charles O. van der Plas³⁸ stays in harsh contrast to the statements and finding made by the organizers of such schools, like Taman Siswa, themselves. As shown in this chapter the colonial government had for quite some time a very indifferent stance towards Taman Siswa and the 'wild schools', only after relating those institutions to political movements and claims they became a threat. In the beginning the 'new' movement Taman Siswa was mostly met with curiosity as the early statements of Dutch officials has shown. So to speak, the eight years of existing and operating in relatively silence can be understood as success for Taman Siswa (Dewantara 1962: 82-85).

As the following chapter will show, the 'silence' was also used to strengthen the contacts with the nationalist movement in Indonesia and the location of Taman Siswa in it.

³⁸ Charles Olke van der Plas was 1912-1919 administrative clerk at the Binnelands Bestuur in Java.. After working in Jeddah for a few years he returned to Java in 1927. He was first employed as an advisor and appointed to become the governor of East Java in 1936. Van der Plas is described as progressive and with sympathy for the social and economic concerns of the Javanese population (Dingemanns 2013).

3 Taman Siswa and the Indonesian National Movement

[Taman Siswa] aimed at regenerating Indonesian society so that it could shed its colonial straitjacket and control its own political, social and economic development (Ingleson 1974: 8).

In the first years of Taman Siswa's existence, the organization was - beside of personal overlapping - relatively unnoticed by the nationalist movement as well as by the colonial rulers (Tsuchiya 1987: x). Indeed, Taman Siswa was able to remain autonomous and out of governmental affairs for most of the remaining time of the colonial system (ibid.). Even though Taman Siswa, as organization itself, remained relatively unmolested by the colonial government, Dewantara, at that time still known under the name Soewardi Soerjaningrat, had an incident with the colonial authorities in 1913 which led to his ban from Java because of the accusations of anti-colonial activities (Tsuchiya 1987: 16). As mentioned in the first chapter, he was exiled together with Dekker and Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo, and the three of them were seen to be the nucleus of the Indonesian nationalist movement and resistance ever since then (ibid.). During this time, Soewardi was also the branch chief of the influential national mass organization *Sarekat Islam* in Bandung. The reasons leading to this exile can also be found in the articles he had written that went against the Dutch Ethical Policy and that were published in various newspapers (Tsuchiya 1987: 24).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Soewardi was involved in educational and political debate during his exile in the Netherlands. So to speak, the banishment of Soewardi to The Hague in some ways was counter-productive for the colonial government, because he gained more expertise in educational and nationalistic concepts. Thus, Soewardi was able to focus further on different forms of education and educational theory in the Netherlands - the integral basis of Taman Siswa's later success in the nationalist movement and against the Dutch colonialism (McVey 1967: 130). The ideas of new educationalists as Tagore, Steiner and Montessori were crucial from the beginnings of Taman Siswa and had a great impact on the organizations ideas. Nonetheless, even though Taman Siswa and especially Dewantara was fond of the ideas of leading theosophical thinkers and educators, the Theosophical Society in Indonesia set up their own Ardjoenaschool in Batavia 1924 (Rheeden 1986: 256).

Tsuchiya describes the Taman Siswa position as following:

“The roles that were uniquely Taman Siswa’s were to show the cultural side of nationalism, to shape nationalist education, and to attempt to reconcile and harmonize Eastern and Western cultures. This multiplicity of roles made Taman Siswa the most self-aware of the movements that created a counterinstitution to the institution of colonial society.” (Tsuchiya 1987: xii).

As more and more schools were changing to become Taman Siswa schools and the background of the supporters became more varied, the links to the nationalist movement got closer. Tsuchiya describes four different kinds of backgrounds and motives of the people involved within Taman Siswa:

1. the founders of the original Taman Siswa school were closely linked to the royalty in Yogyakarta and most of them still held high positions in Taman Siswa in the following years;
2. people who were regionally active within Taman Siswa were those who had responded;
3. people not directly involved in Taman Siswas business, but who were supportive and offered hands- on assistance;
4. the parents of the attending pupils (Tsuchiya 1987: 79).

While the basis of Taman Siswa was growing in number and becoming more varied, the links to the nationalist movement became stronger as well. The development of the anti-colonial aims in Taman Siswa and in the nationalist movement can be seen to have been developing simultaneously (Tsuchiya 1987: 82). Many of the founding generation of the nationalist movement also came from a (lower) Javanese aristocratic background and also dealt with the issue of how to negotiate between the Javanese and Western cultures and ideas (McVey 1967: 128). Like in Taman Siswa the idea of an identity that was “simultaneously modern and indigenous.” (ibid.) gave rise to the national movement.

“In other words, Taman Siswa took over the role of cultural movement to which Budi Utomo had aspired at the same time functioning as a link between the social classes that had supported Budi Utomo and the nationalist movement.” (Tsuchiya 1987: 82).

Even though Taman Siswa was getting broader in context and size, the ‘core’ of the organization was still in Yogyakarta (Tsuchiya 1987: 89). The other schools were ‘clustered’ around and are linked with a rather loose tie. However, two main factors for the unity among the branches could still be spotted. The first factor was the link between the branches throughout a network of relations between nationalist (aristocrats) and their common interests and lineage (ibid.). Nearly all of them were connected to

Budi Utomo and the Selasa Kliwon group and had, as previously mentioned, the aim of maintaining Javanism and making it an important factor in the Indonesian nationalism (ibid.). These people, who were mainly from the first mentioned background in Tsuchiya's list, were especially active in the Yogyakarta centre. The second factor that linked the branches to each other were the people who came from the other previously mentioned background and who were involved with the Taman Siswa schools across the archipelago. These groups of people were sympathetic to the establishment of Sukarno's political party *PNI* (founded 1927) and the general goal of a unified Indonesia (Tsuchiya 1987: 90). These two factors did not only unify the institution, they also provided the potential for conflict. The conflict between the different political wings in Taman Siswa was evolving from the 1930s onwards (McVey 1967: 147), but the more radical - often equal with the younger generation - position was not officially recognized, which illuminates the power relations within Taman Siswa. According to McVey, there are two reasons for this handling of positions: firstly, Taman Siswa did not want to attract further attention from the colonial government and provoke measures against them (ibid.)³⁹; and secondly, Dewantara was dominating the official appearance of Taman Siswa as the leading personality, who was able to channel conflicts and tensions to a certain extent. Also, his role as a dictator was only questioned sporadically (McVey 1967: 148). Like in the nationalist movement "This double contrast between younger and older generations as well as between social groups, was to be a continuing theme in the development of the national movement and in post-revolutionary Indonesia." (McVey 1967: 129).

³⁹ Even though the beginning in the conflict is rooted way before the Wild School Ordinance, since the mid-1920s the government was more and more suspicious towards Taman Siswa.

3.1 The Shifting Subject of the Nationalist Movement

The Indonesian nationalist movement was influenced by many European movements, as well as, modernist movements in Islamic states and nationalist movements in other colonized countries. Tagore did observe this during his visit to Indonesia: “It became clear in the course of the conversation that young Indonesian nationalists were keeping a sharp eye on the Indian political scene” (Gupta 2002: 473). In the case of Taman Siswa, these ideas were used to try to establish Taman Siswa as a counterinstitution to the educational and cultural ones provided by the colonial state (Tsuchiya 1987: 90). Here a major difference can be seen to the schools of the Muhammadiyah, as opposed to certain similarities. Taman Siswa and Muhammadiyah share similar origins and were both established by Budi Utomo leaders, they both also had their headquarters in Yogyakarta and were mainly active in Java and “both represented attempts at combating old fashioned ways and educating Indonesia for the modern world.” (McVey 1967: 132). That being said, they also represented different sides of the (Javanese) society, Taman Siswa appealed to the non-orthodox *abangan (agama Java)*⁴⁰ side and the Muhammadiyah to the *santri*⁴¹, the pious Muslim side (McVey 1967: 131). Whereas Taman Siswa was aiming for an Indonesian national education and therefore was appealing for the nationalist movement, the Muhammadiyah was (and is still) rooted in the Islamic society and appealed to its supporters through religion. Another major distinction was that Muhammadiyah cooperated with the colonial government and accepted its subsidies (McVey 1967: 132).⁴² The Muhammadiyah also had to deal and position itself within traditional Islamic schooling systems, where as Taman Siswa was free to invent a new own tradition.

Nevertheless, even though the nationalist movement was initially very positive on the adaption of ‘modernity’, this changed as the number of people and groups involved in it began to increase and with them, due to the variety of ideas, as well as practical experiences (McVey 1967: 129-130). During the 1920s and 1930s, the term ‘Indonesia’ for the area of the Netherlands-Indies became more and more popular and with this term the idea of a unified

⁴⁰ As *abangan* and *agama Java* are (in this context) people meant who follow a syncretistic and non-orthodox version of Islam (Ufen 2002: xiv).

⁴¹ The *santri* followers can again be divided in two groups who maintained schools. *Pesantren* were often maintained by the Islamic mass organization of the Nahdlatul Ulama and the *madrasah* often by Masjumi (Sidel 2001: 115).

⁴² Here is the difference between the handling of Islamic schools by the Dutch and by the British in Malaysia interesting. Whereas the Dutch “...had allowed Islamic schools to remain outside the control of the indigenous aristocracy and the emerging bureaucratic state ...” (Sidel 2001: 117), the British did not allow it.

body of people also became more and more attractive to the agents of the nationalist movement (Elson 2008: 1-8). Tsuchiya describes these new emerging ideas as follows: “The common denominator in this plethora of ideas was the principle that a new independent state should be founded on the basis of a ‘Sovereign People’ (*Kedaulat Rakjat*).” (Tsuchiya 1987: 90). During this time the so-called ‘humble’ Indonesian also became the target group of the nationalist movement. The bearer of a supposed pure targeted Indonesian-ness and the personification of ‘the’ people were no longer predominantly in the (Javanese) court, but in the villagers and the peasants (McVey 1967: 138). However, before they could fulfill the task of being the ‘people’, villagers and other previously disadvantaged groups had to be educated, so that they would not be thought of as ‘dumb’ and ‘unmodern’ and would be able to embody the Indonesian nation (*ibid.*). In this context Taman Siswa and its ideas of a national education became more and more attractive to the national movement. Tsuchiya describes this constellation accurately: “Sukarno was the propagator of the age; Ki Hadjar Dewantara was its embodiment.” (Tsuchiya 1987: 91). Taman Siswa’s role in this constellation was to promote education for the people; it functioned indeed as a counterinstitution for the yet-to-be established nation and against the colonially ruled state (Tsuchiya 1987: 90). This led to the situation that

as a result it was constantly aware of its opposition to the educational machinery run by the colonial government and constantly seeking to define the ideal Indonesian and the ideal type of a national education system. (*ibid.*).

Still, the view of the peasant as an ideal bearer of an assumed pureness was an elite view. Nevertheless, the elite did not take into consideration the possibility of education (in any context) could de-idealize their image of the harmonious and pure village (McVey 1967: 139). This is especially true for Taman Siswa, who rather propagated the idealized Indonesian past over the Western and especially in Dutch ‘modernity’ (McVey 1967: 140). Dewantara indeed claimed that it would be necessary to go back decades to be able to re-orientate again (Dewantara 1967: 158).

Even though the focus in the national movement and Taman Siswa alike shifted towards the people, especially the nationalist movement, the need for ‘charismatic leaders’ was still being left. The leaders who rose from within the movement, mostly held a superior position through social or economic status, education etc. in relation to their target group (McVey 1967: 141). In turn, this led to problems with the younger activists, who criticized the conservative way of leadership. Dewantara again, was the personification of this style of leadership.

Taking all this into consideration, it is not surprising that Taman Siswa played a huge role in creating the melting pot of the nationalist groups in Indonesia; the Association of Political Organizations of the Indonesian people (*Pemufakatan Perhimpunan-perhimpunan Politik Kebangsaan Indonesia/ PPPKI*) and its attempt to strengthen and unify this organization (Tsuchiya 1987: 91). The establishment of the *PPPKI* was initiated by Sukarno's *PNI* in Bandung 1927, who aimed to promote a unified Indonesia through an equally unified movement (Pluvier 1953: 28). The *PPPKI* functioned as an umbrella organization for the different organizations and parties involved in the nationalist struggle and encompass all major forces of the Indonesian nationalist movement.⁴³

Dewantara spoke on educational issues at the first *PPPKI* congress in Surabaya in August/September 1928 (Tsuchiya 1987: 92). The speech consisted of four major points:

1. National education is an education for the people, with the focus rather on the children (=future) than on adults;
2. national education should (re)create and support independent people;
3. in the national education “grants with strings attached must be refused” (ibid.);
4. an independent central structure must be set up to establish a national education.

The only noticeable objections against Dewantara's suggestions were brought forward by the Muhammadiyah officials, because they deemed the concept to be ‘pre-Islamic’ and wanted to carry on their own more ‘modern’ educational agenda forward (ibid.). In defiance of those demurs, Dewantara's concept was accepted and a program was set up to implement an Indonesian national education system (ibid.). To realize this program, a National Education Committee was founded during this conference (ibid.). This committee was a huge success for Taman Siswa because three out of the people on this committee came directly from Taman Siswa (Singgih, Sastroamidjojo, Dewantara) and the fourth person, Soejoedi, was closely affiliated to them (Tsuchiya 1987: 92-93). Accordingly, Taman Siswa became the main force in the committee and was able to put through their ideas on a level what would later be the national level, and a greater context (Tsuchiya 1987: 93).

Ki Hadjar Dewantara had already tried to promote the idea of a unified national education earlier, during occasions where he had met the leaders of the active nationalists

⁴³ Including the *PNI*, seven other organizations participated in the *PPPKI*: *PSI*, *Budi Utomo*, *Pasundan*, *Kaum Betawi*, *Sumatra Union* and the *Indonesian Study Club of Surabaya* (Tsuchiya 1987: 91).

groups, even before Taman Siswa was founded. However, those early attempts were not successful, and even later as the leader of Taman Siswa he failed initially. So, the establishment of the *PPPKI* educational committee was not only a symptom of the increasing importance that Taman Siswa held as an organization, but also a personal success for Dewantara himself (Tsuchiya 1987: 93).

The outcome of the committees meetings was a three step plan: firstly to set up a national education center (*Concentratie Pengadjaran Nasional/ CPN*); secondly to create an *onderwijsfond* administered by the *CPN*, and thirdly to set up a standardized educational system up to middle school level immediately (ibid). A further task of the *CPN* was to build schools, create textbooks and a standard national curriculum. All in all, these measures should have been the basic steps in setting up and running a nationwide education system. Finally, in 1929, the *PPPKI* gave their blessings to the committee's ideas (ibid.).

The *PPPKI*, however, was itself a victim of internal tensions and escalating political differences among the group after Sukarno and other *PNI* leader were imprisoned in 1929 (Pluvier 1953: 28). The lines of escalation could be drawn between two respectively opposing positions, the Islamic vs. secular and the cooperatist vs. non-cooperatist (Tsuchiya 1987: 94).⁴⁴ This tension between the different groups could not only be seen in Indonesia, according to Ingleson

The rift between secular and Islamic nationalists was not confined to Indonesia, for already Muslim in India had withdrawn from the Indian national congress in order to form a separate Muslim League and by 1931 were campaigning strongly for a separate Islamic state in the Indian sub-continent. (Ingleson 1974: 7).

Still, it was not only the *PPPKI* who struggled, but the initiative party, the *PNI*, was struggling itself and finally were forced to split up into the *PNI* lead by Sukarno and Sartono, and the *PNI-Baru* (*Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia-Baru*) led by Hatta and Sjahrir (Elson 2008: 75). McVey summarizes the conflicts as follows: “the national movement had several areas of concern, and individuals and groups that favored radical innovation in one of them might well be conservative in another.” (McVey 1967: 130).

All the conflicts and tensions in the organizations involved in the fight for an independent Indonesia were reflected within Taman Siswa. For Taman Siswa, an internal

⁴⁴ Whereby no direct connection can be drawn between Islamic and cooperatist and non-Islamic being related to non-cooperatist groups, the dichotomies are not determining each other. For an extensive review and explanation of the conflict between the no-cooperating and cooperating wings of the national movement see John Ingleson's 1974 published dissertation *The secular and non-cooperating nationalist movement in Indonesia 1923-1934*.

unity and harmony was always crucial, and so it is not surprising that Taman Siswa tried to give this ideal more substance in its own organization (Tsuchiya 1987: 94-95). The 'peace and order' principle inside its organization should have been achieved through a healthy balance of centralization and decentralization. This was indeed necessary because new members began to broaden the membership constellation of Taman Siswa and also its geographical foci; put in a nutshell Javanese nobility (to whatever degree) was becoming less important (Dewantara 1967: 166-167). Within the 'new' context, the same ideas became more important rather than their shared experiences and background (Tsuchiya 1987: 97). Taman Siswa used the CPN to strengthen its inner organization (Tsuchiya 1987: 94). The national movement also used harmony, or the pursuit of harmony, as a compensating factor for the different positions and ideologies among the diverse groups in the nationalist movement (McVey 1967: 136). It is, in my opinion, noteworthy that the national movement and Taman Siswa here refer to Javanese values and were not using nationalistic language (independence, development etc.) as a unifying factor.

Occasionally, Taman Siswa, was also directly involved in the political differences among the nationalist movement. In Surabaya, for example, problems evolved within the *PNI* because Taman Siswa teachers were not allowed to become members of any political parties any longer (Tsuchiya 1987: 99). This example is also part of the inner conflict within Taman Siswa; the discussion on the active political involvement⁴⁵ of its members. The opinions about this matter varied broadly among the members. Safioedin, for example, proposed Taman Siswa play an active role in the political movements to fulfill certain goals whereas Soenjoto said: "that political and educational movements should be kept separate and that each individual should choose to become involved with one or another." (ibid). No definitive conclusion was reached on this debate, but Dewantara sympathized more with Safioedin's ideas. The compromise reached on this argument stated that teachers could join political groups, but that they could not mix politics with education. However, it became prohibited for a head of school to become a leader in political groups (Tsuchiya 1987: 100). At this point, it can be seen that, even though Dewantara's opinion was of great importance, he was not almighty and a 'dictator' by any means.

⁴⁵ Political involvement does here mean involvement in any of the nationalist organizations or parties. Even though Taman Siswa's own commitment could well be considered political it was located and defined as cultural.

At the East Java Conference⁴⁶ in July 1929, Dewantara, again, made three major points on Taman Siswa's relation to nationalism and the nationalist movement, namely: "that Taman Siswa was an educational system of the People; that it was concerned with the cultural side of the nationalist movement; and that it held as a principle the idea of overcoming the deficiencies of Western education." (Tsuchiya 1987: 103). Taman Siswa saw itself rooted within the people (regardless of the mostly noble origin of the founding members), and understood itself as a movement from the people for the people. Following this idea, Taman Siswa enforced the people's wish to further opportunities of education, in contrast to the colonial government (ibid.). Moreover, because Taman Siswa was created for the people, it needed to play a role in the nationalist movement. Contrary to the political groups who focused on material livelihood, Taman Siswa was closer to the cultural groups who emphasized the spiritual side (ibid.). Dewantara emphasized this importance of spirituality and set it into stark contrast with the colonial education, he stated that: "Taman Siswa's education should not be like the Dutch opvoeding but should be called by the Javanese terms, *panggoelawentah*, *momong*, *among*, or *ngemong*." (Tsuchiya 1987: 104). Dewantara clearly defined Taman Siswa as a cultural rather than a political movement. That being said, the different political movements were nevertheless seen as friends (Tsuchiya 1987: 105).⁴⁷ Afterwards, during the 1930s, Dewantara differentiated even more between Western and Javanese education and educational ideas, and focused greatly on the latter (Suwignyo 2012: 125).

Parallel to the development of the people involved and the target group of the People's Movement, the (presumed) audience, or the people in contact with Taman Siswa changed between the 1920s to the 1930s. During its founding, the audience consisted mainly of people belonging to an elite group, including government officials and royalty. However, after its establishment, the 'ordinary' people and the (new) Indonesian intelligentsia took center (Tsuchiya 1987: 105). Or as Tsuchiya puts it: "In terms of political groups, it can be said to show a shift from the bearer of Budi Utomo to the membership of the PNI." (ibid.). Like stated before, 'the people' became a more and more important target group and *kerakyatan* an important concept for Taman Siswa (Tsuchiya 1987: 105-106). While the subject of the

⁴⁶ The East Java conference was one of the first conferences of Taman Siswa and can be interpreted as a test run for a national conference.

⁴⁷ All quoted from the original speech of Dewantara (1930) : Pengadjaran Nasional. Pidato K.H.D. pada Openbare-Vergadering di Malang (2 Februar 1930), *Wasita* 2,(1). that is not available in the Netherlands.

Taman Siswa schools slowly shifted away from an explicit Javanese noble background to a more general one, the ideology of teaching turned more and more towards Javanese traditions.

3.2 The East Java and National Conference 1929/1930

In 1930 the first National Conference of Taman Siswa took place.⁴⁸ The reasons behind the conference were manifold, consisting of issues relating to the structure and how they were discussed internally and externally. The three main reasons for the congress were named by Taman Siswa as:

1. Taman Siswa had grown significantly and all (new) people concerned should be able to meet and get to know each other;
2. the intentions and objectives of Taman Siswa appeared to be unclear for a part of the people involved; and
3. it was deemed necessary to discuss the future and further steps of Taman Siswa (Tsuchiya 1987: 106-107).

The debate about the internal structure of Taman Siswa occurred simultaneously with the *PPPKI* discussions, and the desire to establish a national educational system (Tsuchiya 1987: 107). Within Taman Siswa, they had, with the arrest of their teachers in Bandung formed an acute background. To forestall other incidents like the arrests, the aim was to integrate the ‘power’ of the youth, who was said to not have the same principles of Taman Siswa internalized as did the older generation (Tsuchiya 1987: 110).

The conference was also used to present Taman Siswa’s aims to a broader public. Dewantara described the success of Taman Siswa as a success of nationalism over regionalism and that Taman Siswa was now “becoming widely accepted by the entire nation.” (ibid.). One of the educational goals of Taman Siswa was to create holders of a ‘pure’ culture (*wutuh*), untouched by the evil of colonialism, a statement that was widely accepted by the nationalist groups present at the conference (Tsuchiya 1987: 111). Furthermore, Dewantara also presented the idea of Taman Siswa as being organized like a family, and especially the family bonds within the structure (Tsuchiya 1987: 114). This organizational form was not

⁴⁸ What is remarkable about this conference, is that not only Taman Siswa members were present, but also government officials. So was for example van der Plas present, who is described by Tsuchiya as following: “then an official in the office of the adviser on Netherland-Indies affairs, who was later involved behind the scenes in the maneuvering to restore the colony to the Dutch during the war of independence that followed Japanese military rule.” (Tsuchiya 1987: 110).

only important for Taman Siswa's own structure, but also greatly influenced the nationalist movement. Tsuchiya describes the impact as following:

“Through this advocacy of the familial community, Taman Siswa made a major contribution to the Indonesian nationalist movement as originator and driving force for the formalization of the appellations ‘Bapak’ and ‘Ibu’, which were expressions of just such an understanding of human relationships.” (ibid.).

Later, in 1952, Dewantara would further explain why he or his organization introduced these terms. In his eyes, the terms were important because they were less associated with a power structure than the otherwise used Dutch expressions (Tsuchiya 1987: 115). At least these terms were indeed not related to a colonial or a Western structure, but rather these terms *ibu* and *bapak* fed the idea of an imagined community embodied in the idea of a family⁴⁹, as I have already described in chapter 1.2. The terms were introduced as a conscious decision in favour of the spiritual and emotional bounds of a *gemeinschaft* against the *zakelijkheid* of the Dutch *Beamtenstaat* (ibid.). Taman Siswa's ideal can be seen as a *gemeinschaft*⁵⁰ organized in a family structure, the *gemeinschaft* was indeed necessary because Taman Siswa was not drawn together by the shared ancestry of its members anymore, but to a greater and greater extent by the shared and same intentions (that we find in a *gemeinschaft*). The idea of organizing a relation between state and society in family terms is, according to Ruth McVey, a recurring topic in ‘modern’ Indonesian thought (1967: 137). The family, as well as the reference to harmony suggest a form of (social) security that is a necessary pillar for the different groups to rely on. McVey puts it as following: “The traditional social hierarchy no longer has meaning, the new forms as they stand are unendurable; what remains is the family, regret for and idealized past, and the sense of a mortal need for community.” (ibid.). She also directly gives an answer as to how the certain groups dealt with that dilemma:

The result of this malaise in Indonesia was the creation of associations and of social concepts that utilized modern organizational forms and served the general goal of achieving a modern Indonesia, but that ‘nationalized’ these forms by giving them an ideological content that would restore the lost sense of community. (ibid.).

However, as I will explain in the following chapter, the feeling and necessity of solidarity soon deflated after the achievement of the unifying goal of independence (ibid.)

⁴⁹ In my eyes family needs to be read as an extended family and not the nuclear family, because even though encouraged a face to face relation was not even in the boundaries of Taman Siswa possible anymore, let alone in the nationalist movement and its subject, the people.

⁵⁰ The term *gemeinschaft* is here introduced by McVey, but also appears in publications of Taman Siswa. Soewandhi, for example, wrote in his article *Dasar-dasar kemasyarakatan dalam pergoeroean Taman-Siswa* in 1935 repeatedly of a *gemeinschaft* that should be achieved via social education (Soewandhi 1935: 155).

In the further process of the congress, Yogyakarta was defined as Taman Siswa's spiritual centre and Dewantara as its 'dictator' (Tsuchiya 1987: 116). This dictatorship was justified within the democratic principles that were also established, and that would need a decision-maker as otherwise no conclusion would be found and the principles of Taman Siswa would be neglected (McVey 1967: 138). With the ongoing promotion of the national movement, more and more problems arose inside Taman Siswa with the accordance of Indonesian/ Javanese and 'Western' principles (McVey 1967: 142; Tsuchiya 187: 118).

After the conference, Taman Siswa's popularity rose enormously, with many branches being founded afterwards. This expansion also led to an increased role and more power in the Indonesian People's Movement. However, Taman Siswa was also criticised for its principles, and even more its execution. Soediono, for example, disapproved the colonial spirit still present within Taman Siswa in his series "Educate yourselves!" (Tsuchiya 1987: 133)⁵¹. His criticism based on the fact that Dutch was still used in some lessons, that Taman Siswa schools had reverted to using the same resources as the colonial schools, and that it was no longer a school for all or at least a group of people because the tuition fee was becoming an obstacle for many poorer people (Tsuchiya 1987: 133-134.). Lessons in Dutch were seen as unavoidable yet in the Indonesian (read Taman Siswa) school system for pragmatic reasons. Colonialism was still a fact, and sufficient knowledge of the colonizers' language (Dutch) enabled Indonesians at least theoretically, to penetrate the system and to participate within the confined conditions. This decision also illustrates that the nationalistic ideas did not overrule pragmatism (Tsuchiya 1987: 101).

Soediono and his articles suggest that Taman Siswa should have taken the nationalistic ideas more seriously and tended towards a more nationalistic approach. In his series of articles he defined the outer boundaries of Taman Siswa, and Dewantara represented the inner, calm, centre (Tsuchiya 1987: 143). Taman Siswa's discussions and exclamations (inner unity = family) "also reflected the various ideas and activities of the contemporary Indonesian nationalist movement: heightening the sense of national unity, pursuit of the non-cooperation policy, and the grouping for organizational principles." (ibid.). Nevertheless Taman Siswa did not share the direct confrontation against the colonial system yet, but its

⁵¹ Unfortunately I had not the possibility to access the article myself because it was published in the journal *Pusara* 2 from 1930. The first available publications of this journal in the Netherlands originate from 1935.

ethics and organisational structure emphasized their anti-colonial character (Tsuchiya 1987: 148).

3.3 The Wild School Ordinance Incident

During the 1930s, Taman Siswa and the People's movement gained more and more popularity among the social organizations in Indonesia. Because of this, the Dutch colonial government began to enforce measures against the so-called 'wild schools' to preserve their understanding of 'order and tranquillity' (*orde en rust*) (Tsuchiya 1987: 151).

Just like the nationalist movement, who recognised education of the natives as one of its central points (Pluvier 1953: 52), the colonial government identified this education as a 'troublemaker'. Tsuchiya interprets Taman Siswa's role as the following: "In this way, the People's Movement came to be subsumed into Taman Siswa as a movement for the creation of order." (Tsuchiya 1987: 148). Taman Siswa was now not longer only the cultural wing of the nationalist movement, but also more influential on the 'political' groups in it. Not only with their commentaries on educational and spiritual topics, but now also with political strategies on how to react to the colonial government. Tsuchiya describes Taman Siswa's changed function as:

"In this period [the Wild School ordinance 1932/33 KK] in the history of the Indonesian nationalist movement, Taman Siswa showed pertinacity in resistance and the strength to survive, and greatly influenced the People's movement." (Tsuchiya 1987: 151).

The struggle against the ordinance and the introduction of the passive resistance against the Dutch measures strengthened the position of Taman Siswa in the People's Movement. "In sum, in its struggle against the Wild Schools Ordinance, Taman Siswa exhibited fully and simultaneously both the 'counter' and the 'institution' functions of a counterinstitution." (Tsuchiya 1987: 152). During the struggle against the Ordinance Dewantara also defined the connection between the cultural and therefore, educational and political wing of the national movements. He defined the political movements as the fence surrounding the 'field' of the educational movement (Tsuchiya 1987: 162). This description nurtured the understanding that the educational movement was the core of the nationalist movement, where the future at present was trained to become an independent people. Dewantara makes it clear that independence always was the spirit of Taman Siswa, as long as it was a "kemerdekaan jang tertib-damai" (Dewantara 1935: 149); an independence that would not destroy the order and tranquility.

This Ordinance was answered through manifold active and passive protests and rallies that began with action from the *PSII* (*Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia*) and Taman Siswa, but received support from national groups from all camps (Pluvier 1953: 55). During this incident, Taman Siswa experienced a lot of support for their stand inter alia from the *PI* and the Council of Teachers of 'Peoples Education' (Tsuchiya 1987: 185). Just like the fence-and-field analogy, Taman Siswa became the centre of the struggle (Tsuchiya 1987: 186). In conclusion, it can be said that the Ordinance and the struggle against it, strengthened and radicalized Taman Siswa's position and its relation to political groups and ideas of nationalism, and further illustrates their stance against the colonial (educational) system (Tsuchiya 1987: 191).⁵²

⁵² For an extensive description on the nationalist movement and Taman Siswa towards the 'Wild School Ordinance' see Tsuchiya 1986 pp. 151-205 and Pluvier 1953 pp. 52-57.

3.4 The Japanese Occupation

With the Japanese occupation, the role of Taman Siswa could be enforced. Sukarno, Hatta, Kyai Haji Mansur, and Ki Hadjar Dewantara amongst others were recognized by the Japanese forces as Indonesian leaders against colonialism (Tsuchiya 1987: xi). This statement of the Japanese forces highlights the important role that Dewantara and his organizations had in the nationalist movement and the beginning struggle for independence. Dewantara was also requested to hold a position in the PUTERA (Center of the People's Power) which "included all of the former Indonesian political and non-political nationalists associations domiciled in Java and Madura (Tjetje 1969: 26). He was appointed the assistant chairman to represent PUTERA whenever Sukarno, the chairman, was prevented for any reason (NL-HaNA, Proc.-Gen. Hooggerechtshof Ned.-Ind., 2.10.17, inv.nr. 725). Furthermore he was also selected as an adviser for the Educational Bureau in 1944, even though his 'own' school was prohibited (Anderson 1972: 417).

Even though the nationalists and political leader were acknowledged by the Japanese power, they showed no interest in encouraging nationalist schooling and education (Tjetje 1969: 26). Because the prohibition of non-state schools was attended by the Japanese occupation, the military rule only intensified the longing and demand for an 'own' national education (Meijers 1973: 8). Dewantara himself positions Taman Siswa in the nationalist movement as following:

The reader should not think that we with our Taman Siswa are the only workers in the sphere of national education let alone that we pretend to have a monopoly on wisdom and are confident of achieving the best results. By no means: we are only one of many groups which in this difficult time of transition would do anything for the cultural and social development of our country and folk. We are searching together for the best ways to the same goal. If there is something that distinguishes us from the others, then it is probably the fact that we have the courage to be ourselves again. (Dewantara 1967: 167).

Nevertheless, the occupation had a great impact on the structure of Taman Siswa and disrupted the organization greatly. Taman Siswa, together with other non-governmental schools was forbidden (Meijers 1973: 1). At the same time, the number of members and people serving as staff for Taman Siswa was minimized and it evolved a debate about the continuation of the Taman Siswa system (McVey 1967: 148). The discussion involved the question whether the purpose of Taman Siswa was fulfilled or if they should carry on like before (ibid).

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has shown how Taman Siswa was involved in the national movement. Predominantly as the cultural wing but as the 'Wild School' incident has shown, more and more in an active political role.

Would it be possibly for Taman Siswa to become popular again as a role-model for a modest and idealistic organization against corrupt established parties and organizations after the revolution? This question remains to be answered in the following chapter.

4. Taman Siswa in Independent Indonesia

The years from 1945 until 1950 were dominated by the struggle and fight against the Dutch on political and military level, but it was also the time to define a national education (Meijers 1973: 8). As demonstrated in the earlier chapter, Taman Siswa was connected to the prewar nationalist movement through their emphasis on national education (Hing 1978: 41)⁵³. This proximity to the nationalist movement made Taman Siswa also attractive for persons who joined Taman Siswa because, as a cultural movement, they were less regimented than other ‘political’ institutions (ibid.). In this chapter, I am going to analyze if and how the relation between Taman Siswa, the prewar nationalists groups and the officials of the now independent Indonesia changed. Was Taman Siswa able to maintain its function and position as national educational institution in the now independent state?

⁵³ Lee Kam Hing’s work will be used very thoroughly through the chapter, because some of his findings are based on interviews with Taman Siswa members like Moh. Tauchid and unpublished sources on the relation between *PKI* and Taman Siswa.

4.1 The early years of Independence 1945-1950

According to Hing, Taman Siswa lost importance after the independence of Indonesia. This resulted from the fact that now the most of the actions for a national education came from the newly established government (Hing 1978: 42). If we consider the distinction of the nationalist groups in cultural-nationalists and political-nationalists (as further explained in the first chapter), one explanation might be that Taman Siswa was located in the cultural-nationalist group, where as the new rulers were a priori persons with a political-nationalist background (Meijers 1973: 3). This might have been true for the years after 1950, but before that Taman Siswa, or at least persons closely associated, still was linked to the government's bodies and Dewantara became educational minister in independent Indonesia (the first cabinet) and later chief adviser on educational matters (Tsuchiya 1987: xi).⁵⁴ The enormous impact that Dewantara had on the Indonesian nation-building is best illustrated in the fact that his birthday (2nd of May) became announced the *Hari Pendidikan*, the National Education Day, by President Sukarno (Thomas 1981: 377).⁵⁵

However, this time can be characterized through a high fluctuation of Ministers of Education, but it is noticeable that most of them also held positions in Taman Siswa (Meijers 1973: 8). Further on was the organization still present at the conference on educational matters until the 1950s (NL-HaNA, NEFIS en CMI, 2.10.62, inv.nr. 7240.). Taman Siswa is a very good example how a non-state actor can transform into a state actor. And regarding to this Taman Siswa can indeed be seen as the educational/ cultural wing of the nationalist movement, helped to build the pillars of this state. This also indicates that even though the political-nationalists are in power, the drift between them and the cultural-nationalists were not an insuperable gap now, and the unity (and to some extent harmony) between the fractions still necessary. This is also visible in a first official document on national education in 1945. The purpose is best characterized by the following ten points (Meijer 1973: 9):

1. Creating necessary new guidelines for education (*opvoeding and onderwijs, upbringing and education?*) for a new social life in the now independent society. This education should have the aim to produce conscious and responsible citizens;

⁵⁴ Dewantara was also asked to function as Minister of Education a second time, but he was only willing to accept this offer if the term in office would not go below ten years; a claim that was not admitted (Meijers 1973: 8).

⁵⁵ Even after the regime change the new President Suharto kept the date of the National Education Day and the reference to Dewantara, despite his closeness to Sukarno, illustrates even more the importance of Ki Hadjar Dewantara as a national figure and hero (Tjetje 1969: 1).

2. It should strengthen the unity of the people and schools should include all social classes. For the means of social justice girls and boys should be co-educated;
3. The methodology should be hands-on orientated to further empower the people in the manual labor sector;
4. Additionally to primary and basic education for children, education for adults to fight analphabetism should also be established;
5. a) religion should hold a special, not yet further determined, place in education. But always under the consideration of the freedom of the different groups;
b) Madrasah and pesantren, as traditional and deeply rooted forms of education, should receive special (material) support from the government;
6. Higher education should be extended, possibly with the help of leading foreign academics;
7. Compulsory education should last six years and be established in a ten year plan;
8. Technical and economical education (especially the sectors concerning agriculture, industry, and seafaring) should be given special attention;
9. Health care and physical education should play a vital part in the curricula;
10. Primary education should be free of charge, second and tertiary education should establish regulations to support themselves, with the obligation that every student should be able to afford it.

These ten basic principles clearly bear the mark of Taman Siswa and its ideals are visible. The implementation, alike, is also shaped by Taman Siswa as Dewantara was appointed as chairman of the committee that should put the plan into practice in 1950 (Meijer 1973: 10). Still, like in the years before, Dewantara seemed to be the person who had the say over Taman Siswa's course of action. All in all the basic principles of 1945 can be narrowed down to two central agendas: nationalism (1) and democracy (2). Nationalism should make out the content of education and build at the same time the basis for democracy (Meijers 1973: 11). One educational main focus is now laid on history, as a tool to shape the nations past and future '... the bond between history and the nation-state.' (Duara 1998: 106), but also art and dance classes and lectures in the new national language Indonesian were important pillars. Regarding the language a compromise between the cultural- and political-nationalists was established, so that the first three years the local-language would also be a language of instruction (Meijers 1973: 11). The language issue has to be understood as a compromise because the political-nationalists saw education as a vehicle to fulfill their 'national' aims, where as the cultural-nationalists (still) relied much on their own culture and heritage concept,

including and emphasizing the regional ones (ibid.). Language was for both groups a crucial point to fulfill their aims (Nuryatno 2006: 169.)

One of the features of the democratic character of the educational system proposal is clearly that most of the points include diverse actors and interest groups (Meijers 1973: 11). To further clarify the democratic features I will follow the idea of Meijers and distinguish between internal and external democratic factors. Internal democracy aimed to create democratic persons. This should be achieved mainly through the pupil-teacher interaction and the methodology used (Meijers 1973: 12). Children should not be educated to be submissive, but rather to be free people. Especially here the resemblance to Taman Siswa ideals is unmistakable. If this goal could be achieved, the educational system would be worth to be called a democratic one (ibid.). The external democracy, however, dealt with the democratization of the educational system itself (ibid.). A system should be developed that would not determine the growth of the pupils. Another crucial factor to the external democracy was also the existence and governmental support of private schools; a factor that clearly worked in favor for Taman Siswa (ibid.).

In 1946 a Taman Siswa conference was held to discuss the events and developments in the now independent state, three major considerations regarding their own organization were made:

1. Indonesia is independent, so the immediate purpose of Taman Siswa was fulfilled and private schools at all should not be necessary anymore, because now the state should and could fulfill the task of a national and nationalist education (Meijers 1973: 13).
2. Nevertheless Taman Siswa is still important and necessary for the years of transition because:
 - a) The government needs time to set up schools that could fulfill the demanding needs of a national education, and
 - b) The content of state school education cannot be that rapidly changed like it should happen according to Taman Siswa. (Meijers 1973: 13).
3. Even though there already existed a few functioning 'national' schools, Taman Siswa still deemed it necessary to function as a role-model (ibid.).

Another Taman Siswa congress was held in September 1949 where there participants strengthen the a priori mentioned statements and decided to support the qualification of teachers for Taman Siswa schools, but also for other educational institutions (NL-HaNA,

NEFIS en CMI, 2.10.62, inv.nr. 7240). Furthermore it was opted for the publishing of schoolbooks and for a broadening of “culture education” (ibid.).

Concluding it can be said that in the early years of the Indonesian independence until the 1950s the ideals of Taman Siswa were still very visible in the laws and proposals on national education, furthermore the organization, or people linked with Taman Siswa, still played a vital, if not an outstanding role.

4.2 The ‘Liberal Democracy’ Phase

The time from 1950 until 1959 is known in Indonesia as the ‘liberal’ or ‘parliamentary democracy’ phase; a time in which parties and mass organizations flourished and stood in fierce competition against each other (Aspinall 2013: 32). Whereas Taman Siswa was still quite visible during the immediate post-war phase, according to Hing they “survived simply as an appendix of the state school system.” (Hing 1978: 42). During this phase Taman Siswa lived on as a private school, but in a rather unpopular sphere. Hing reasoned that “those children who were unable to get into or continue in the government system sought places in its schools”. (ibid). Hing comes to the scathing judgment that after the independence Taman Siswa was merely another educational body without a link to other organization (ibid.). It can be argued that even though the organization lost lots of its importance, the activists and as already mentioned, above all Ki Hadjar Dewantara, were still an active and important factor in the early years of the Indonesian political and cultural field (ibid.). So to speak, while the institution itself lost more and more from its former role as the educational role-model, its personnel were incorporated in the newly established state system. Nevertheless, one of the characteristics of the liberal democracy phase is that the people behind the ideas and ideologies of nationalism and democracy got less important (Meijers 1973: 17). This had the consequence for Taman Siswa, who was now mainly active through their people that the overall importance and influence significantly decreased. A similar view is offered by Moh. Said in 1950 where he complained that Taman Siswa, in his perception, did not held a reputation for its education, but only for its one of its founder, Ki Hadjar Dewantara (Said 1990: 103).

After the successful creation of the Indonesian nation, the standards and the life full of sacrifices in Taman Siswa was not longer that appealing for a part of its members and especially did not make joining Taman Siswa attractive for new potential members.

The post-independence time also led to conflicts and discussions inside Taman Siswa whether their aim were now achieved or not. The main question was if Taman Siswa should resolve itself or further pursue their ideas and ideals of a national education. One of the conflicts that already arose again in 1945 was situated around the topic of government subsidies (Hing 1978: 43). The pro-subsidies side argued that the old oppositions and reservations against any (state) subsidies became obsolete and should be reconsidered. Especially if the subsidies were to come from a state they had fought for (ibid.). The contra side, however, stated according to Hing that: “the acceptance of assistance from the government would greatly reduce the freedom of Taman Siswa to pursue its own objectives.” (Hing 1978: 43-44). Consequentially, it would be likely that Taman Siswa would be absorbed by the state’s school system. The compromise found for now (1946) stated that Taman Siswa would not actively reach out and seek for subsidies. Nevertheless, they would accept subsidies when they would be offered to them (Hing 1978: 44). However, in 1947 the stance towards subsidies was revised and Taman Siswa would also seek actively for support (Meijers 1973: 13-14). Nevertheless, Taman Siswa remained critical towards certain parts of the government’s educational policy, especially the evolving criticism of the government towards private schools and the implementation of state examinations (Meijers 1973: 14). They grew more and more conscious of the changed and changing life conditions. This led to the conclusion within parts of Taman Siswa that some of their basic principles would not be necessary anymore and therefore tried to re-define them (ibid.). But according to a decision from 1930 an oath was taken that the principles of Taman Siswa should never be changed (ibid.). However, this decision was now overruled and the committee around Mangoesarkono decided that the *Panca Dharma* should form the new Taman Siswa basis (Meijers 1973: 15). According to the Majelis Luhur the reformulation of their principles made it more obvious that Taman Siswa wanted to pursue an own direction and that they were able to adapt and react to the new circumstances. The co-operation with the Ministry of Education and the government in general were still welcomed, but Taman Siswa shaped through the new principles their own agenda (ibid.).

The subsidy issue arose again as the government re-defined the regulations on subsidies for private schools, and linked it up with requirements and conditions which had to be fulfilled to further receive aid. The Majelis Luhur was opposed to this new regulation, and the position against state-subsidies was strengthened again (Hing 1978: 44). They argued that:

It would be unfair for the government to discriminate in favour of its own schools. On the principle of education for all, students in Taman Siswa schools were actually *entitled* to subsidies, especially since the government itself was unable to provide sufficient schools for all. (ibid).

This argument went along with the stricture that the government would resemble the colonial government in its measurements against private schools (Meijers 1973: 21). Taman Siswa further demanded from the government to be excluded from the new implemented subsidies regulations and insisted on their special status because of their role during the revolution and in the nationalist movement (Hing 1978: 45). However, the government did not give in and the relation remained cool. Indeed, this may be one indication of the lost of Taman Siswa's political meaning as the cultural wing of the former nationalist movement and the government (Hing 1978: 47). Taman Siswa was still partly seen as a role-model, but now less in an active form, and more as a historiced template (Thomas 1981: 377).

As one consequence of the tensions between the public authorities and Taman Siswa, they opened themselves again towards other social and political organisations. Taman Siswa especially bounded with unions because they shared some ideals on society, and according to Taman Siswa outside their society, classlessness and equality had not been achieved yet (Hing 1978: 45). Taman Siswa's teachers were neither kept from joining the unions nor encouraged to do so (Hing 1978: 46). A situation that resembled the state of affairs in the 1920s and 1930s and the Taman Siswa policies on joining political parties (cp. Chapter 1).

One of Taman Siswa's main problems, along with the tensions with government bodies, was that they lost their ideological appeal. The fight and teaching for independence, that was a main factor for its former popularity, was in an independent Indonesia obsolete (Hing 1978: 47). After independence the Taman Siswa schools were seen as a pool for otherwise not successful students, and not (anymore) as a hatchery for an open-minded, well educated (cultural) nationalist elite. The holistic concept of education, that was a keystone in Taman Siswa's educational concept, seemed to have reached its limits, with parents more and more focusing on 'regular' schooling (ibid.). Consequently, on the 7th national congress in 1952, a transformation of the school curricula was an important topic. The need for a revision was seen to be able to further attract pupils and to keep up with the state schools (Hing 1978: 48). At the conference a compromise was established that the primary and secondary schools should follow the curriculum defined by the Ministry of Education, but that the teacher training should remain unchanged and according to the Taman Siswa principles (ibid.). The changes, nevertheless, did not lead to the desired effect; the only consequence that followed

was the now improved comparability between the different schools, the pupils' background enrolling in Taman Siswa, however, remained the same.

The changes made and proposed were not implemented without internal struggle and discussions. A lot of resistance was brought forward against the renunciation of the principles, mostly originated from the still active and influential founding members who had their say in the Majelis Luhur (Hing 1978: 49). In the early 1950s two different stances in Taman Siswa became more and more obvious. The first group (also called the *murni* group⁵⁶) wanted to isolate Taman Siswa even more from state structures, and neglect all alien assistance. They wanted to keep on teaching according to their ideals until the society would be ready for 'their' idea of a national education (ibid.). The second group, also referred to as Tauchid⁵⁷ group, advanced the view that Taman Siswa should accept that the circumstances and the post-war society have changed, and that Taman Siswa should try to influence the development of the state's national education programme and policies (ibid.). This line of diversion seemed to follow the line of activists who participated in pre-war politics and often were active party members (mostly the Tauchid group) and those, who were not actively involved in politics and stuck closer to the Taman Siswa's ideal (the *murni* group) (Hing 1978: 49-50). A third group, who carried no weight in the Majelis Luhur, was in turn pushing for radical changes before Taman Siswa would get totally dispensable. Most of its members were younger activists from branches far away from the spiritual centre in Yogyakarta (Hing 1978: 50). There are different reasons applicable why the third group remained relatively unheard. On the one hand the family structure of Taman Siswa did not facilitate suggestions from younger persons (children) far away and partly against the 'parents' (Dewantara and the spiritual centre Yogyakarta), and on the other hand the activists branches lost more and more of their predominant role, as the government was able to expand the presence of state schools across the archipelago (ibid.).

However, education was still seen as the tool to implement the governments' ideas of nationalism and democracy. So even if Taman Siswa's role slowly decreased, they were still a viable organisation for the Ministry of Education.

⁵⁶ *Murni* refers to the 'pure'. So this group basically wanted to stick by the pure teachings and principles of Taman Siswa.

⁵⁷ Mohammed Tauchid attended, after a government run Standardschool, one of the Taman Siswa schools. He also worked as a teacher for Taman Siswa from 1933-1936, in 1938 he became an elected member of the Majelis Luhur (Anderson 1972: 453).

4.3 The National Elections 1955

The path to Taman Siswa's unimportance took a turning point in the context of the 1955 general elections. This election was indeed not only a crucial point for Taman Siswa but also for the general ideas on national education; the point when the *Pancasila* gained more and more importance (Meijers 1973: 17). Getting to the heart of the crucial question of the 1955 election is a question of direction. Should Indonesia move towards a *Pancasila*⁵⁸ - a state based on Indonesian nationalism - or an Islamic state? As the Ministry of Education stayed in nationalists' hands, at least the direction the national education plan should take was clear.

As a result of the elections, when Sukarno was confirmed as state leader, a second phase of the governmental educational policy came into effect, the actual implementation of the a priori developed national and democratic educational system (Meijers 1973: 18). The focus of the education concentrated in those years even more on the purpose to build a national character, because the national spirit still needed time to fully develop (Poerbakawatja in Meijers 1973: 18-19.). However, again, according to Meijers the focus was laid on the quantity, especially the establishing of primary schools, rather than the quality of the education (Meijers 1973: 19). This approach could still be considered as part of the 'outer' democratisation of the educational system. The focus on the quantity can at the same time be understood as a focus on a just and equal access to education, which went to the disadvantage of the quality and usefulness (ibid.). The extension of primary schools went hand in hand with a proposal of a ten year plan to implement compulsory schooling. This was a milestone for the realization of the national education, and its main aim to create citizens, during this period. To create a national consciousness it was necessary that the (to-be) citizens should be able to communicate (in oral and written form) to even learn about the *Pancasila* and a shared nation's past and future (Meijers 1973: 20). Communication amongst each other was necessary to enable the imagination of a people in a nation. To be able to do so, as explained above, extensive primary and basic education was necessary. Shortcomings of this rather fast extension were a lack of teachers and buildings. Announcing that education had to be a national issue, the government tried to convince its citizens to provide the necessary buildings and the state would take care of the teachers, a programme that completely failed (ibid.). During the same time more and more private schools with more or less qualified teaching

⁵⁸ The *Pancasila* here stands symbolically for nationalism. So the real question asked is, whether to establish a nation- or a religious state (Meijers 1973: 17).

personal were founded to close the gap (ibid.). However, the simple extension of schooling in quantity only was not enough to fulfil the aims of the national education as originally planned (Meijers 1973: 21). The fast spreading of schools made it hard for the cultural-nationalist to keep in track with the Ministry of Education, and confirmed the worries and reservations that were held by Taman Siswa (ibid.).

During the election campaigns many of the parties reached out to Taman Siswa and tried to win their support for the elections (Hing 1978: 50). For the political parties it would have been a great advantage, if Taman Siswa would have supported them. Because even though they were relatively unimportant in practice, Taman Siswa was still one of the crucial symbols embodying the successful nationalist movement. The former ‘neutrality’ or congruency with the major political parties in Indonesia worked well during the time leading and including the revolution, but in post-war time this attitude was only hard to maintain as the unifying factor - the Indonesian independency- was not applicable anymore (ibid.). The members of Taman Siswa who were active in politics demanded for Taman Siswa to change and associate with party politics, a demand that clearly provided further internal tensions. With its ideal of equality and a democratic, classless society, Taman Siswa was quite consonant with the aims formulated by the Indonesian Communist Party (*PKI*) (Thomas 1981: 378). The accusation that Taman Siswa would be a breeding place for communist is a recurring pattern and especially visible during the regime change from Old Order to New Order (Meijers 1973: 37). But also the Dutch already had suspicions against some members of teachers. In the exchange between Moh. Said⁵⁹, on behalf of the Majelis Luhur Taman Siswa, and the Dutch authorities in Indonesia regarding the imprisonment of around ten Taman Siswa teachers, at least one is alleged of anti-Dutch communist propaganda in 1948 (NL-HaNA, Marine en Leger Inlichtingendienst, 2.10.62, inv.nr. 7151).

The real and perceived influence from the *PKI* on Taman Siswa and vice versa needs to be contextualised on different levels. One important factor was certainly the similar social and geographical background of the both organizations (Hing 1978: 52). The regions where the *PKI* was most successful in the elections 1955 were also the homeland of Taman Siswa and friends. Also a lot of younger members of Taman Siswa joined organizations for political and ideological reasons, but also to be able to step ‘further’ in the post-war society. The *PKI* being one of the most influential parties at that time, was obviously also a destination (Hing

⁵⁹ Moh. Said was the leading figure in the post-war Jakarta branch of Taman Siswa (Foulcher 2012: 50).

1978: 53). Another reason why the *PKI* and Taman Siswa could be viewed as associates was the fact that *PKI* members concentrated their activities inside Taman Siswa pre-dominantly in Yogyakarta and Jakarta, the heart of Taman Siswa and the heart of the new political Indonesia (Thomas 1981: 378).⁶⁰ The *PKI* members and sympathisers represented also the fraction inside Taman Siswa who voted for a (closer) co-operation with the Ministry of Education (Hing 1978: 53). They tended to maintain the revolutionary character of Taman Siswa and less the conservation of the ideals like older and founding members. The pro *PKI* members of Taman Siswa also actively supported Sukarno's *Manipol-Usdek*⁶¹ and argued that these goals were consistent with Dewantara's book *Demokrasi en Leiderschap* and the Taman Siswa principles. Their aim was it to actively support Sukarno's ideas through teaching, and forwarded a corresponding proposal towards the Majelis Luhur (Hing 1978: 54). However, this proposal was not successful, because that would have meant that Taman Siswa would finally and voluntarily join the national educational policy from the Ministry of Education. One main opponent was the *murni* group in Taman Siswa who wanted to stay out of (party) politics at all, where at least the Tauchid group saw the need to deal with the grammar and language of the pamphlets by the Ministry of Education, but they also remained cautious (ibid.).

In 1956 the constellation of the Majelis Luhur changed radically. Six out of the 14 persons elected were known to be *PKI* sympathisers, and changed the balance of power within the former strictly non- (if not anti-) communist committee⁶² (Hing 1978: 55). The elected *PKI* members were all established and well-known in Taman Siswa. They were able to obtain strategically important posts, so that they had the possibility to 'manipulate' Taman Siswa's communications and public organs (ibid.). The persons around Tauchid worried about this development and interpreted it as an infiltration and not a 'free' choice of the certain individual members (ibid.). An anonymous letter that alleged the *PKI* on infiltrating Taman

⁶⁰ The motivation, why the *PKI* was seen as a viable political destination was not always clear. Hing suggests that one of the reasons was less the communist ideology but more the ideas of Sukarno's 'guided democracy' (Hing 1978: 53).

⁶¹ Manipol stands for *manifesto politik* (political manifest) and USDEK for: *Undang-undang dasar 1945* (constitution of 1945), *Sosialisme ala Indonesia* (socialism à la Indonesia), *Demokrasi terpimpin* (guided democracy), *Ekonomi terpimpin* (guided economy), *Kepribadian Indonesia* (Indonesian Identity). Sometimes these terms are also abbreviated as USMAN (Parsidi and Tol 2014: 729).

⁶² Hing consequently uses the term noncommunist. In my eyes is the term too vague and not correct, and the term anti-communists would be much more appropriate. I prefer that term because the people and activists called noncommunists by Hing are taking active action against real and perceived communists or at least try to do so. Whereas being 'simply' a noncommunist does not need to lead to action, like the mentioned *murni* group, who can be safely be named noncommunist because they would not engage in (party) politics.

Siswa, added further fuel to the fire in 1958. The accusations were supported by several documents, whose correctness was not neglected by the radical fraction sympathising with the *PKI*. Anti-communists wanted to take measures against this alleged plot, but Dewantara was not to be convinced and the *murni* group neglected to interpret Taman Siswa in the context of political fractions and stated to be open for all people, regardless of their party card (Hing 1978: 56). Another obstacle for the anti-communists parts in Taman Siswa was the raising acceptance of the *PKI* on a national level and in the national politics. With Sukarno integrating socialist and communist ideas, it was also sometimes not perspicacious if the pro-*PKI* elements were not simply pro-Sukarno.

A decisive event for Taman Siswa as an organisation was the death of its father-figure, Ki Hadjar Dewantara, in 1959. Even though, Soedyoono already warned in the 1930s for a sole focus on one leader – Dewantara. The death left a power vacuum behind and the power of the *murni* group rapidly decreased (Hing 1978: 57). This power imbalance led to a fight for control that became more and more openly hostile, each of the different groups demanding to be the keeper of Taman Siswa's ideals and principles (Hing 1978: 56-57). The Tauchid group finally used the a priori mentioned anonymous letter and documents to prove that the *PKI* was violating the non-political ideal of Taman Siswa and tried to mobilize branches against the *PKI* (Hing 1978: 57). These actions were partly successful, but according to Hing the *PKI* and its sympathizers remained powerful in Taman Siswa (Hing 1978: 58). One outcome of these tensions was that Taman Siswa itself got more and more politicized and divided (ibid.). But this ongoing is not a process that can solely be seen in Taman Siswa, but as well in many other social organizations and the society in general (ibid.). In the educational sector, for example, the teachers union and even the Ministry of Education were confronted with similar problems. During this time up until the election Taman Siswa remained more or less invisible, the organisation lost some of its appeal as the embodiment of the national education (Meijers 1973: 21). According to Hing the 'split' of Taman Siswa was a consequence of the struggle to remain an important player in post-war Indonesia, combined with the development and changes in the political scene and society (Hing 1978: 59). Meijers, however, comes to a slightly different conclusion, in his eyes the shared experiences and ideology still overruled tensions in favour of harmony (Meijers 1973: 22).

4.4 Guided Democracy and New Order

As we have seen, the meaning of Taman Siswa changed from the embodiment of the national education to a symbol for the glorious, revolutionary past and as fighters for the Indonesian independence (Meijers 1973: 22). Could the guided democracy, with its recurrence to aims and figures of the revolution, have been a possibility for Taman Siswa to retrieve importance again? After all, the programme and ideals of the revolution should give guidance for all intents and purposes again (Meijers 1973: 24). It was for example intended that the village should again be the main focus of nationalism, and all the ideas and principles of the guided democracy (like *gotong royong*/ mutual aid) should be derived from the 'typical' Indonesian village life (Meijers 1973: 25). This was indeed a reference to one of the ideological claims of the nationalist movement, the village and the peasant who embodies the nation. The government used all available tools (military, communication, finance, education) to visualize the goals of the revolution again and to achieve its goals (ibid.). Simply put: everything and everybody has to submit for the revolution. This recurrence to a greater past is common trope in nationalist movements, and as described earlier, was already used by the nationalist movement in Indonesia and Taman Siswa alike. Again education should function here as a vehicle to transport the new old principles (Meijers 1973: 26). The emphasis of a change in the educational policy is illustrated through the statements of the Minister of Education (Priyono)⁶³ who criticized the educational system severely in 1959 (ibid.). According to Priyono the system was too intellectualized and still held to many characteristics of the colonial system, because of that education and its responsible bodies should submit to the project of nation-building and as a tool to govern the people (Priyono 1964: 6).

Another point that was gaining more attention again was the question of nationalism vs. regionalism. The Indonesian nation and nationalism should be the main identity point and not the *suku*⁶⁴ or other forms of belonging. This meant for the practice in schools that classes on citizenship were emphasized as like the emotional and (national) artistic development of the pupils (Meijers 1973: 27). These measurements could, at least theoretically, support Taman Siswa's holistic concept of education, which was indeed similar but located in a

⁶³ Priyono was severely criticized by Muslim groups and the army because he was alleged to have connections with the *PKI*. On Priyono's connections with the *PKI* see Murray R. Thomas article 'Indonesian Education: Communist Strategies (1950-1965) and Governmental Counter Strategies (1966-1980)' in the *Asian Survey* in 1981 pp.373-375.

⁶⁴ *Suku* is a term that is used for the different ethnic groups in Indonesia, f.e. *suku Java*. *Sukuisme* is a ethnocentric form of regionalism. As most of the provinces have one major *suku*.

different framework. But whereas Taman Siswa emphasized the autonomy of its branches and thus regional cultural aspects, the government ‘invented’ or brought forward common cultural goods to be able to overcome the different regional, religious and ideological aspects (ibid.). Separatism, in form of strong regional cultures and belief that was not subordinated, was seen as one of the main obstacles to the central state and national unity.

At the same time as Sukarno presented his Manipol manifest in 1959, Prijono presented his ideas how to reform and nationalize the educational system. He points out seven new principles (ibid.):

1. Re-organisation of the apparatus and activities of the Ministry of Education (increasing discipline, nationalism indoctrination etc.);
2. Greater attention towards physical education and art (particularly on national songs);
3. Greater focus on agriculture, industry and livestock;
4. Obligation to save money;
5. Obligatory cooperative activities;
6. Establishment of classes for villagers and peasants with the aim to increase the villages’ economy;
7. Establishment of workgroups, consisting of secondary and tertiary students, to fight illiteracy and to defence the people.

These points can be summed up as a guideline how to implement the Manipol-USDEK where the schools functioned as a centre for community development and as a link between the nation-state and the local communities (Meijers 1973: 28-29). However, these principles did not last long and were already revised again in 1960, and the new five principles (*Panca Wardhana*) were even more consistent with the five principles in the *Pancasila* and Manipol-USDEK.

These five principles can be summarized as following (Prijono 1964:5-6):

1. The development of ‘love’ for the country and its people, as well as national, international, and religious morals implemented through civic lessons;
2. The development of intelligence through a greater focus on understanding and opinion, and not only specific expertise;
3. Emotional and artistic development to guarantee and deepen nationalism. In this point Taman Siswa is acknowledged as a role-model;
4. The development of ‘practical’ skills to serve the above all the industrial sector;

5. Physical development through sports and scouting activities.

Prijono also offers an own interpretation of the principles and on the implementation, one of the main factors being a lesson from and against colonialism:

It's an antidote against the colonial education the development of love for the country and people and the development of national morals are regarded as the most important elements of the Pantjawardhana system. (Prijono 1964: 6).

As to be expected, the educational policy was very much influenced by the spirit of Indonesiasi and anti-colonial language which were omnipresent through the guided democracy phase. The focus was still to evenly spread schools throughout the nation and to motivate former students, who were activists during the revolution, to function as a part of the teaching body (Meijers 1973: 30). For this approach Prijono gained much support from the *PKI* and other leftist groups, where as the Muslims remained critical. The crux of the matter was that the one-god element (f.e. the first principle in the *Pancasila*) did not gain enough importance within the *Panca Wardhana* (Meijers 1973: 31). But Prijono was also criticized from the nationalist side that the policy would be to 'far going'; this stance was supported by religious parties and, as well, Taman Siswa (ibid.). These groups asked Sukarno to have the *Panca Wardhana* revised and in turn to establish directly the *Pancasila* as the base of the educational system (ibid.). This revision actually never happened because of the regime change in 1965. Even though Taman Siswa joined the protest note, after the regime change they were often labelled as a hotbed for communists (Meijers 1973: 37; Sidel 2001: 115), furthermore they were also accused that religion did not play the prominent role it should have had (Meijers 1973: 39).

4.5 Conclusion

Even though Taman Siswa was not actively involved in the educational policy during the guided democracy anymore, they were regarded as pioneer for the nationalisation of the educational policy (Meijers 1973: 37). Indeed, the items published by the Ministry of Education do resemble the positions and principles of Taman Siswa decades earlier.

The question to be asked remains in how far could and would Taman Siswa agree with the educational policies? Other than the above mentioned discussions, statements from Taman Siswa concerning this period of time are rare (ibid.). One reason might be the a priori mentioned internal struggle, between the pro- and anti-communists sections within Taman Siswa (Hing 1978: 53-54). But, as described before Taman Siswa did play an implicit role during the guided democracy. On the hand the similarities between the guided democracy and

Dewantara's concept of democracy and leadership are unmistakeable. But on the other hand the personal relationship that Sukarno had with Taman Siswa might have also played a role. Meijers comes to the conclusion that the relative silence of Taman Siswa during the guided democracy can be explained by this relation (Meijers 1973: 37). But not only Sukarno had a personal relation to Taman Siswa and especially Dewantara, but also the Minister of Education during that time, Prijono, understood himself as a student of Dewantara and claimed to be influenced by the ideas of Taman Siswa (Meijers 1973: 38). And of course the death of Dewantara, as described before, impacted Taman Siswa severely.

Meijers suggest that Taman Siswa could have easily agreed with the educational policy during the guided democracy, but he, like Hing, questions the unity within Taman Siswa (Meijers 1973: 39). I do agree with the conclusion that inner tensions led to a rather silent phase of Taman Siswa. Even though they joined the group criticizing Prijono, the time of the guided democracy was not characterised by Taman Siswa's active role, but more by the visibility and persistence of their ideas and ideals. Concluding it can be said that Taman Siswa in post-war Indonesia was rather a template than an actor.

Conclusion

The name 'Taman Siswa' was identified with the national struggle, because it definitely played a vital role since its inception, not only in the field of education, but also in the struggle for the national awakening and in determining the national political life of the Indonesian people (Tjetje: 1969: 23).

This study has dealt with the educational institution Taman Siswa in the context of colonial and national education from 1910 to 1960. It has shown how the political and social circumstances influenced Taman Siswa on the one hand and on the other hand, what role Taman Siswa and the leading clique around the dominant and important figure Dewantara played in the formation of a national education system in Indonesia. It is important to keep in mind, that personal circumstances of individual members of one organization as for example the exile of Dewantara in the Netherlands, the thoughts and ideas he brought with him back to Indonesia, influenced the shape and focus of Taman Siswa as such.

In the first period of Taman Siswa's existence the motivation for an own educational institute can primarily be understood as anti-colonial. In the later years, and with more and more involvement in the nationalist movement, the idea of a national education system, not only against the colonial state, took shape. In the final years described in this work, the national educational system and theory provided by Taman Siswa was manifested as a pillar for the educational policy of the newly independent state. Taman Siswa, as an organization, was, during that time, not able anymore to profoundly influence the educational discourses. Nevertheless, they were always seen as a template in the policies on education of the governments.

At the 50 years celebration of Taman Siswa in 1972, the purpose of Taman Siswa is again described as setting up a national educational system. Similar to the 30 years anniversary, many government officials were present (f.e. the Minister of Education) but the president (Suharto) did not join the festivities like Sukarno did 20 years before (Meijers 1973: 1). The celebration was used to highlight the national character of Taman Siswa, through a play that illustrated the history of modern Indonesia through the eyes of Taman Siswa or re-telling concrete events that happened inside the organization (ibid).

Nowadays, basic education is compulsory for nine years, consisting of six years of primary school plus three years of junior secondary school, according to the Indonesian Law No. 2/1989 (Hartono and Ehrmann 2001: 4). With the change from the authoritarian New Order system to the epoch called *Reformasi* (reformation) in 1998, it is not surprising though

that the state of the educational system in Indonesia changed profoundly in 2001 (Kristiansen and Pratikno 2005: 513). But even if we look at the nowadays national education philosophy, we often find the same ideals and terms used, as they were already introduced by Taman Siswa. Many scholars (still) refer to the *Pancasila* as the base for the national education, but as I have explained in the previous chapters, the *Pancasila* and the principles by Taman Siswa show many similarities, especially in regard to education. According to Siswoyo the characteristics of a national education in Indonesia should be the: “ability/skilfulness and personality that are united, organized, harmonized and dynamic.” (Siswoyo 2013: 137). All metaphors used also by Taman Siswa to describe its own structure. The nation-wide important newspaper The Jakarta Post wrote in its online edition in 2002, that only one school remains until today (The Jakarta Post 2002), there is little doubt that the ideas and methods developed by Taman Siswa are still visible in the nowadays Indonesian approach to national education.

This work has shown how an organization deals with and reacts to the different political systems it was and is set in. Taman Siswa’s concern with education and a national education as their guiding principle are a very good example how the positioning of a (former) non-governmental organization changes with the systems, even though the central ideas of Taman Siswa self have not changed profoundly.

As education is seen - nevertheless of these discordant relations - as one necessary part in the growing up of young people and thus an elementary part in the design of a society, alternative concepts of national education are always part of the educational debate. Thus, in many cases the state is not the only provider of basic education but religious and social groups are providing more and more of it. Regarding to that observation, I assume that Taman Siswa may be considered in the change of time as a non-state actor who contributed within a nascent national state to its *ideological* constitution.

All in all it can be said that the actual political influence of Taman Siswa more and more declined over the years. But nonetheless Taman Siswa remains powerful. The principles, once formulated by Taman Siswa are still a vital part of the Indonesian national education philosophy.

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