

Volkscredietwezen: Credit System Modernization in Priangan from a Historical Perspective

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Abstract:

This paper elaborates the *volkscredietwezen* as a modern credit institution in Priangan from a historical perspective. The problems to be dealt with here are: why did the Priangan people use the traditional credit system. Second, what was the Dutch East Indies Government's motivation to modernize the native credit system. Third, how did the Priangan rural society respond to *volkscredietwezen* that was created by the Dutch East Indies Government. This paper used historical method with four major steps of heuristic, criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The paper employs an economic anthropology approach with theory of economic behavior from Polanyi and theory of social action from Max Weber. Around the twentieth century, Priangan society lived in poverty because traditional credit system, which was *mindring*, *ijon*, and profit sharing. The Dutch East Indies Government modernized the rural society credit by introducing *Volkscredietwezen*, which consisted of village's granary (*Lumbung Desa*), rural bank (*Bank Desa*), and People's Bank (*Bank Rakyat*). Priangan society responded to the *volkscredietwezen* positively because it benefited them.

Key Word: *Volkscredietwezen, Priangan, mindring, ijon, profit sharing*

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I. Introduction

Indonesia's government attempted to raise public welfare, especially in rural areas, by building the village's economic infrastructure. One of the policies related to building a village's economic infrastructure is by creating a credit institution that fits the rural economic system. The people's credit objective is to grant assistance to small entrepreneurs so that they will be more motivated to develop their businesses. Furthermore, society credit also aims to reduce rural society's dependency on informal credit providers which is considered detrimental to society (Colter, 1984:304).

Villages are the base of development and development planning data sources (Soehoed, 1994; Sanit, 1983). In development programs, every governor states about village development invariably, because villages can sustain the country's economy. Villages as the country's source of economic have an important role. However, the economy of villages discussion usually leads to how rural societies have weak economic position (Mubyarto, 2004; Colter, 1984:302).

Credit problems in rural areas have become the attention of the Dutch Government in the early 20th century. In line with the emergence of Ethical Policies, Dutch East Indies Government searches for the source of rural society poverty. One of the factors is debt. Debt in rural society used the traditional credit system which is considered detrimental to the debtor. This problem made the Dutch government try to find the solution (Van Dranen, 1919:61).

The study about society credit system by Djojohadikusumo (1989) uttered about the formation process and condition on *volkscredietwezen* as society credit institution with a depression period focus that occurred around 1920 until 1936. The study concludes that society credit created by Dutch East Indies Government as government imaging credit was not a popular credit institution. Darini (2004) studied about society credit system institution in Pekalongan at 1901 until 1939 era. She concludes that legal society credit institution couldn't solve the traditional credit system or illegal credit. This opinion was based from the fact that some rural society still used illegal credit system rather than using legal credit system. The study by Sidemen (2016) about financial management in Buleleng Bali village from XIX century to XX century states that the modernization of economic institution by government in the form of *Volkscredietwezen* didn't change the existed traditional credit structure in the form of financial management that held by village institution, *banjar*, *sekeha*, nor individual. The study about society credit in its governor era still in substantive economic level or closed economic system.

The study of credit system in the independence era was carried out by several experts. Geertz (1987) studied alternate credit association in Mojokuto, East Java. Alternate credit, or arisan, is an activity that considered to develop a cooperation in economic. Rather than the financial motivation, people interested on this activity because of the social interaction. For farmers, alternating cooperation is common. Nugroho (2001) studied about Bantul regency in Center Java's society perspective of money and credit and what are their opinion of money lender. The fact states that they regard money lender as helper, because when they need fast money or property, money lender can lend money or property fast enough without the need of complicated administration. They can also paid it in several payments within several months without calculating the debt interest. Independence era study could compare the credit system of rural society in independence era with Dutch colonial era, so that it can give an idea of changes and renewal of society credit system and society respond to the system change.

The credit system and its problem in Priangan at Dutch colonial era is interesting to be studied, especially if it's focused on the society respond to the money and credit. The theme of this article is about the society credit system in Dutch East Indies Government on 1900-1942 period in Priangan. The study focused on *volkscredietwezen* which was operated as credit institution for the society on several villages in Priangan. The base problems for this research are: why Priangan people need cash, lend it from *mindring*, use *ijon* and profit sharing system, what is the Dutch East Indies Government motivation to modernized native's credit system, and how rural Priangan society respond to the *volkscredietwezen* that was created by Dutch East Indies government.

The purposes of this study are: to give an idea about traditional credit scheme in rural Priangan, to describe the motivation of Dutch East Indies government to rural society credit system modernization, and how Priangan society responded to the modernization society credit institution as modern economic institution.

II. Material And Methods

This study about credit system in Priangan on Dutch East Indies era is historical study, therefore this study used historical method. Historical method has four work steps, which are euristic, critic, interpretation, and historiography (Garraghan, 1957; Gottschlak, 1986; Kartodirdjo, 1993; Syamsudin, 2007). Heuristic is a research relevant source gathering step. Primary source are credit system of Dutch colonial era archive and magazine. Secondary source are supporting references. The source was obtained from National Jakarta ARSIP, Bandung Military Library, and West Java Regional Library. Critic is a step to conclude the source originality and outenticity. Interpretation is data analysis step. Finally, historiography is writing step as historical construction.

Social economic phenomenon in society that related with economic behavior was analyzed with economic anthropology approach. Theory of exchange from Polanyi (1988) was used as an approach to understand the rural economic system. Polanyi (1988:150) stated that there are three system in rural economic exchange, those are reciprocity behavior, redistribution, and exchange, while the theory of social action from Max Weber (1964:115) was used to understand the economic subsistency and market economic.

III. Result

Priangan Society: The need of Money and Traditional Credit System

Priangan history is tracable from Parahiangan story script. The origin of Priangan is parahiangan, which means god's residence (Ekadjati, 1981:1). Historically, Priangan was Siliwangi King reign, which then conquered by Islamic empire from north coast (Cirebon). Priangan area was given to Mataram by Sumedang Larang King to Sultan Agung King in 1620 (Zakaria, 2010). However, Priangan didn't got the attention from Mataram because of its distance from the center of Mataram. This condition made Priangan, especially the plateau area, the not much influenced by Mataram empire, even though Mataram was the center of power in Nusantara that time.

The people who live in plateau work as peladang farmer, so they didn't live in permanent residency and always move from one place to another place or nomadent. As peladang farmer, they didn't create some rural bond. According to Kontowijoyo (1994:67), rice farmers were bonded with geneology and rural bond, because the rice plantenary system need cooperation bond, but not with *telagan* or peladang farmer.

Around XVII century, Priangan became an interest area for three big power, which are Mataram, Banten, and *Vereenigde Oost Compagnie* (VOC). VOC terminated Mataram authority in Priangan based from an agreement on 1677. Priangan was fully controlled by VOC on 1684. From there, VOC establish Priangan area as *omenlanden*, change the administration system, and change the native government lead. Since the administrative was changed on Dutrch East Indies government in Priangan residency management, The Priangan residency consists of Bandung regency, Sumedang, Garut, and Tasikmalaya in 1926 (Lubis, 1998:34).

The study by Hardjasaputra (1985), Lubis (1998), and Zakaria (2010) stated that on early XIX century, the financial condition of Priangan society was on better level compared with other society. Around early XVIII century, VOC initiate coffee planting in Priangan with *preangerstelsel* system. Coffee was a new product for

Priangan people. Moreover, coffee was the only one exported cultivation plant in Priangan (Breman, 2014:59). In this *preangerstelsellera*, Priangan people started to know financial economic, because they were required to provide coffee to the native government lead, which then will be sold to VOC. In *preangerstelsel* system, VOC involve native authority and village functionary, so that *preangerstelsel* system will benefit VOC. In this era, Priangan people started to know financial economic.

Priangan people responded *preangerstelsel* positively, because Priangan area was suitable with coffee plantations. Coffee was cultivated on empty area or *tegalan-tegalan* and around house yard, so the coffee will not disrupt rice field. On the other hand, farmer can still maintain their farming land with their food plant or rice (Hardjasaputra, 2002; Zakaria, 2010). Farmer in Priangan became prosper economically.

However, based on Scheltema (1927), on early XX century, prosperity of Priangan economic condition was decreased. In general, the economic condition of rural society in Priangan was decreased because of debt problem with traditional credit system (de Vries, 1987:304). Therefore, the motivational background of Priangan people, Such that they were involved in debt and made them not prosperous or poor must be studied. The shortage of case not only felt by farmer on the village, but also the native authority and upper classes. There are also a lot of native authority and upper classes whose involved in debts money lender as loan giver (Burger, 1970:121).

There are some factor such that Priangan people, in early 20th century, started to be involved in debts. First factor is because the farmer was required to pay land tax with cash before they can pay it with crops, then they were required to pay income tax which already set by colonial government (Suharto, 1991). Second factor is because there were changes of coffee plantation system in Priangan called *cultuurstelsel* on 1830-1870. The requirement of coffee plantation on VOC era was different with *cultuurstelsel* which was implemented by Dutch East Indies Government. The farmers were not allowed to maintain their land with food plantation. The requirement to plant coffee with fixtated forced target drain the farmer time, so they don't have enough time to manage their own land with food plantation. The benefit of *cultuurstelsel* coffee in Priangan was perceived by elite native and Dutch East Indies Government, but not with the farmer (Breman, 2014). Third factor is because the fluctuative farmer income. The uncertainty of production because of weather, natural disaster, and plant disease could lead into crop failure. This condition made farmer susceptible to short of cash, so that the farmer don't have any saving in general (Suharto, 1991). Fourth factor is because the social culture of Priangan people, *selamatan*. In *selamatan* event, people need cash to prepare *selamatan*, such as marriage, birth, death, *bersih desa*, and so on.

Priangan people need lot of cash, but they do not have cash or saving, which were the reasoning for them to get the money from money lender with credit. In general, the credit necessity of Java people on Dutch colonial era was a credit to supply their consumptive needed (Burger, 1970:120). In the end of XIX century and early of XX century, Priangan society mostly involved in traditional debt, which gave a very high debt interests. According to Van Guttem (1919), the need of credit for Bumiputera society become a major economic problem because natives were easily owe money rather than manage their financial condition. Natives use their money without any consideration because they didn't consider the balancing of income and outcome. Credit were the only solution, but they didn't calculate the debt interests, which made them poor (Margono, 1924).

Traditional credit is informal credit, which didn't have any agreement administratively, without any collateral, and very easy process. To decrease the loss, money lender set a very high debt interest. The debt interest level made by lender in 1901 is around 5-7,5% per month or 60-90% per year (de Vries, 1984).

Traditional credit system includes *mindring*, *ijon*, and profit *sharing*. *Mindring* system is a credit system that rely on regular payment. Credit could be money on small nominal or household need, like cupboard, table, or broken furniture. The debt payment could be paid daily, weekly, or monthly with 5-7% interests per week (van Gutem, 1901). Interest was high because there are no warrant from the debtor as a guarantee, so that the lender should bear the risk of credit payment or any other loss.

Credit system *ijonis* a credit system in the form of nature. When the farmer need a quick cash but do not have saving, the unripe rice or fruit will be sold to someone who also are a merchant or *tengkulak* in the village. So, the transaction was happened before harvest season. The price was low because the plant was not ready to be harvested. When the harvest season occur, the product will be owned by the buyer. It will be profitable for the buyer because the product will have higher sell price than before the harvest season, but not with the farmer (Breman, 1986).

The profit sharing system is a system to share product yield between land owner and the land cultivator (the farmer) with mutual agreement. Some people agreed with 50% profit for land owner and 50% profit for land cultivator, some people also agreed with 70% profit for land owner and 30% profit for land cultivator, depend on the area. It will harm the cultivator because the position of the cultivator and land owner are not balanced (Breman, 1986). Profit sharing have patron client properties.

Modernization Credit System

In 1900, Dutch East Indies Government perform Ethnic Politic, known as return the favor politic. The purpose of Ethnic politic is to prosper the society from education improvement, imigration, and agriculture program. Agriculture policy related to rural society life which most of them don't have prosperous economic life.

In 1904, Dutch East Indies Government created *volkscredietwezen* as small credit institution for native (van Laanen, 1988). The purpose of *volkscredietwezen* is to solve the poverty problem, especially on rural area. Beside of that, also to cut the link of traditional credit system that considered to be detrimental for society economic. According to Dutch East Indies government, traditional credit system was very harm to the debtor, because the debt interest was very high (Djojohadikusumo, 1989). *Volkscredietwezen* considered to be modern credit system, because the administration was very contractual, managed with transparant entry, and could be paid regularly with lower debt interest.

Volkscredietwezen consist of Lumbung Desa, Bank Desa, and *Afdelling Bank*. The main role for *volkscredietwezen* are two, which are in economic and social. In economic, *volkscredietwezen* role is to give loan to people, specifically in villages, with low debt interest. In social field, *volkscredietwezen* role is to socialize the modern credit system to society by involving native authority and village functionary. The purpose of involving native authority and village functionary in operating the modern credit system is to make it operated smoothly (Buerger, 1989).

Lumbung Desa was build on various location in Priangan. The establishment was stimulated by Dutch East Indies government and was supported by regional authority and village functionary. The Lumbung Desa was built in rural area with the purpose of stabilizing rice price, which when the harvest season occur, the partial of product will be given to the Lumbung Desa for fund, then when the *paceklik* season (waiting for harvest season) occur, the rice will be lend with low debt interest, around 25-30% per planting season around six months (van Dranen, 1933:943). Lumbung Desa was built on a limited money cycle area. Lumbung Desa grew fast on several location in Priangan, even though the growth of Lumbung Desa on several location were different. This growth could be seen on Table 1.1.

Table 1.1.
Lumbung Desa Condition in Priangan Year 1924

		LUMBUNG DESA			
Regency	Villages amount	Amount	%	Number of people (1.000)	Average loan/person (pikul)
Bandung	279	170	61	907	0,05
Sumedang	138	138	100	300	0,13
Garut	147	127	87	620	0,07
Tasikmalaya	291	131	45	760	0,03
Ciamis	117	109	93	258	0,10

Source: Processed from *Verslag van het Volkscredietwezen, 1925*. Welteverden: Drunk Emmink

Highest LumbungDesa percentage was in Sumedang regency and the lowest percentage was in Tasikmalaya. This condition associated with the different of work scheme or the livelihood on various area in Priangan. Majority Sumedang resident work in agriculture sector. Tasikmalaya and Ciamis resident have various profession. Other than farmer, they also work as merchant or have small business.

At first, LumbungDesa grew fast on various location in rural area. However, it got decreased, especially on economy crisis era around 1920 until the end of 1930 as it could be seen from Table 1.2.

Table 1.2.
Lumbung Desa Condition in Priangan Year 1933

		LUMBUNG DESA			
Regency	Villages amount	Amount	%	Number of people (1.000)	Average loan/person (pikul)
Bandung	260	100	38	1.154	4,3
Sumedang	138	136	99	329	6,5
Garut	148	115	78	666	4,2
Tasikmalaya	277	86	31	882	2,3
Ciamis	117	82	70	356	3,9

Source: Processed from *Verslag van het Volkscredietwezen, 1934*. Welteverden: Drunk Emmink

The existence of LumbungDesa in Sumedang relatively stable, because it was supported by the people and village authority who manage the LumbungDesa. Moreover, the majority of Sumedang resident still consists as farmer. However, the LumbungDesa on various location, such as Bandung, Garut, Tasikmalaya, and Ciamis run into high rate decreasing percentage. This is caused by the precipitant of Dutch East Indies Government to build the LumbungDesa without a careful planning in Priangan, the existence of subtle order, the existence of deviation by the LumbungDesa administrator, the weak administration system, crop failure, monetary crisis, various resident job, and the existence of changes of villages boundaries (Boeke, 1926; Cramer, 1929; Djojohadikusumo, 2989; Wolter, 1980). Beside of that, people thought that owing the Bank Desa is more practical than owing to LumbungDesa. In general, people who owe to Bank Desawere the one who need cash and the people who owe to LumbungDesa are just the one who need the consumptive need (van Dranen, 1933).

Government were very careful to build Bank Desa and *Afdelling*Bank on an area. This was caused by the introduction of financial management with simple banking system. To spread and manage this modern banking system, the authority train and enclose the local authority and worker from native to manage it. The purpose of Dutch East Indies government created *Volkscredietwezen*, besides to inform the society about the disadvantage of traditional credit system, also to make them able to initiate and develop from their own will about a good credit system.

Bank Desa was built on an area which the majority of its resident already have stable income either from wages or trading results. Bank Desa debt interests was ups and down, depending on the condition, around 2% to 2,5% per month (Dranen, 1933). Supervisor originated from government employee, helped by native authority and village functionally.

Table 1.3.
Lumbung Desa Condition in Priangan Year 1924

		BANK DESA			
Regency	Villages amount	Amount	%	Number of people (1.000)	Average loan/person (pikul)
Bandung	279	179	64	907	2,67
Sumedang	138	37	27	300	0,96
Garut	147	106	71	620	2,26
Tasikmalaya	291	98	33	760	1,71
Ciamis	117	50	42	258	1,91

Source: Processed from *Verslag van het Volkscredietwezen, 1925*. Welteverden: Drunk Emmink

The amount of Bank Desa in Prianganis varies, with the highest in Garut and the lowest in Sumedang. This is because the money circulation in Garut is more fluent compared to Sumedang. Majority Sumedang resident depend on agriculture economy, while the Garut were private agriculture company area with export crops, so Garut resident could be a worker on agriculture sector or opened small business (tokokelontong).

Table 1.4.
Lumbung Desa Condition in Priangan Year 1933

		BANK DESA			
Regency	Villages amount	Amount	%	Number of people (1.000)	Average loan/person (pikul)
Bandung	260	200	77	1.154	113
Sumedang	138	51	37	329	124
Garut	148	111	75	666	140
Tasikmalaya	277	136	49	882	201
Ciamis	117	81	69	356	149

Source: Processed from *Verslag van het Volkscredietwezen, 1934*. Welteverden: Drunk Emmink

From Table 1.4. The highest amount of BankDesa was on Bandung and Sumedang still on the lowest precentage. This is because Bandung resident have various profession while Sumedang resident still depend on agriculture sector. The loan in the form of cash was more needed by people with various profession.

Bank *afdeling* also usually called as Bank Rakyat. Bank Rakyat is a formal credit insitution which gave credit with bigger nominal amount compared to Bank Desa and LumbungDesa. The management of Bank Rakyat was different than Bank Desa and LumbungDesa. Bank Rakyat was managed by local authority and stand individually, there are only cooperation on business fund, where Bank Desa and LumbungDesa could save

the monetary backup to Bank Rakyat (Wolter, 1980:74). Average debt interest usually around 10% to 15% per year. The structure of Bank Rakyat management is: The supervisor of Bank Rakyat is residen, the chairman is residen assistant, there are also a vice chairman and secretary from Patih. Bank Rakyat client usually are from city resident, high class person who usually live in a city, businessman, and not closing the possibility of farmers who have vast land from rural area or landowner.

Table 1.5
Bank Rakyat Loan Balance in Bandung Year 1926-1928

Credit	1926	1927	1928
Credit per January	1.677.817,02	1.798.943,61	2.031.739,49
Loaned	1.728.535,50	1.864.326,00	1.802.970,00
Total	3.406.362,52	3.663.269,61	3.833.709,46
Returned	1.607.408,91	1.631.530,15	1.785.484,61
Credit per Desember	1.789.943,61	2.031.739,46	2.048.224,86
Loan Amount	16.865	17.116	17.515
Average per debtor	f 102	f 109	f 103

Source: “ MemoriResidenPriangan Tengah P.W.W. van Gesser, September 1929”, dalamMemoriSerahTerimaJabatan 1921-1930 (Jawa Barat). 1976. Jakarta: ANRI Penerbitansumber-sumberSejarah No.8. page 158-159.

From Table 1.5, average loan amount on year 1927 was increased but the average of debtor in 1928 was decreased because Dutch East Indies started to hit financial depression. In this economic condition, Bank Rakyat still tried to give loan to client, even though the loaned amount were fewer than before. Economic depression which spread globally affect the Dutch East Indies government economic, including banking system. However, based from table 1.5, it could be concluded that the monetary cycle in Bank Rakyat still run relatively smooth. On 1930-1934 period, Bank Rakyat experiencing a setbacks which causing an interfere on credit provision for client. The lowest setbacks happened on 1934 (Creutzbergh and Ban Laanen, 1980:111).

Society Response to *Volkscardietwezen*

From the start, the government tried to make *Volkscardietwezen* rules which contain economic and social significance to make the native understand about the modern credit system. Government thought that LumbungDesa which has been already owned by society could be strengthen and perfected to be modern credit system. LumbungDesa adapted with rural economic institution that already been rooted in the rural society economic institution. LumbungDesa just strenghten the administration form, debt system, fixtated the debt interest and the target utilization. Even though in general the existance of LumbungDesa credit system couldn't eradicated the link of traditional credit system as a whole (Suharto, 1991), but the Priangan society already have the understanding about modern credit system which gave the people more advantages.

The respond of Priangan society toward the LumbungDesa was positive, especially from Sumedang, because most people in Sumedang was work as a farmer, so every village have LumbungDesa. On around 1930, there were a decreasing LumbungDesa amount, but Sumedang regency still have the most LumbungDesa amount compared to other area. The heterogeneity of Sumedang resident profession as farmer, businessman, and merchant was the reasoning behind that phenomenon. Moreover, there's a presumption that the credit system on rice form was not practical because the rice type that was loaned and paid were not same occasionally (de Vries, 1986).

Generally, the response for Bank Desa was also positive. Bank Desa could be reached easily because Bank Desa was established on around the village, the process was not complicated, and have low debt interest. In general, the loan from Bank Desa was still used to fulfill the household need or for consumptive reasoning. People were more prefer to loan cash rather than rice in LumbungDesa because it was more practical. The loan fund in the form of money could be used as fund to manage a land or to be used for consumptive reasoning directly. Priangan society could adapted with modern credit system.

Bank Rakyat or *Afdelling Bank* as credit institution located in the city also experiencing a development, either in the amount of member, debt, or the returned debt. This signify that Priangan society responded

positively to Bank Rakyat operational, because qualitatively, the amount of bank were growing. Bank Rakyat was supposed to provide higher amount of loan, so that the debtor tend to use it for more productive activity (de Vries, 1986). In rural society, especially the landowner which also included in high class citizen, understand that the fund that they owed was not owed for personal benefit, but to fund and establish an industry. Even though the amount was not big, but they could recruited worker around them. However, from the money lender, *volkscredietwezen* was considered as inhibitor for their business on performing traditional credit system (Djojohadikusumo, 1986).

IV. Conclusion

In early XX century, Priangan society economic condition were not prosperous or poor. Some factor which caused the poverty of Priangan society were the requirement to pay the land tax, the requirement to operate *cultuurstelsel* for export crop, which is coffee, the uncertainty of income every month, and always organize *selamatan* event that require amount of money. The needs of money were being bigger, but the income were uncertain. This condition made them need money credit.

Credit system in rural society was traditional credit system with no contractual, no complex administration, personal, but with high debt interest. Traditional credit are *rentes* system, *ijon*, *land rent*, and pawn. The need of money would be fulfilled, but not balanced between the debtor and the money lender because the debt interest was high. That was the reason the debtor could never freed from loan debt.

Dutch East Indies Government considered the debt with high deb interest was one of the causes of poverty on rural society. On early 20th century, Dutch East Indies Government modernized the credit system from legal credit institution from government, which is *Volkscardietwezen*. *Volkcredietwezen* was customized to adapt the resident economic live scheme, which is economic and social function. *Volkcreditwezen* consists of Lumbung Desa, Bank Desa, and *Afdelling* Bank. The purpose of those three establishment was to solve traditional credit system problem.

In general, Priangan people responded positively and the young elite or young generation could adapted with modern credit system. Bank Rakyat have an impact to Priangan society mindset. The loan to develop the business was a moving fund, which is money, not land. People did credit transaction not only for consumptive reasoning, but for the productive activity.

In General, The *Volkscardietwezen* that was created by Dutch East Indies Government was responded positively by people, native, and village functional, because this formal credit institution gave people knowledge about healthy credit system and Priangan people could adapted with modern credit system.

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