

Deconstructing the history of Madioensche Kartinischool (1914–1919): Indigenous women's education in Madiun during the Dutch colonial period

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ABSTRACT

Background: During the colonial period, indigenous women faced severe marginalization in education due to restrictive traditional customs like pingitan and a lack of serious attention from the Dutch East Indies government. This situation began to shift in the early 20th century following the implementation of the Ethical Policy, which spurred humanists and local elites to establish specialized female educational institutions across Java. While major cities like Semarang have been widely researched, the historical development of such schools in smaller regions remains understudied.

Purpose: This study aims to deconstruct the history of the Madioensche Kartinischool (Kartini School in Madiun) during its formative years from 1914 to 1919. It specifically examines its institutional origins, administrative dynamics, funding mechanisms, facilities, student body conditions, and curriculum development.

Method: This study employs a qualitative approach with a historical research method consisting of five systematic stages: topic selection, heuristics (data gathering), verification (source criticism), interpretation, and historiography. Primary sources utilized include colonial archives, official annual reports (Jaarverslag) of the Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinischool (1916–1919), and contemporary photographs, complemented by relevant secondary literature.

Findings: The school originated from a progressive local initiative under the "Wilotomo" association in 1913 before officially transforming into the Madioensche Kartinischool in 1914 with legal government recognition. Structurally, the management and teaching staff experienced high turnover due to health issues, marriages, and official transfers. Financially, operations were sustained through a diverse network of government subsidies, international aid from the Dutch Kartini Fonds, private donations from local sugar factories, and

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student tuition fees. Structurally, the school transitioned from a cramped, former prison building into a permanent facility with expanded classrooms by 1918. Student enrolment grew significantly from 50 in 1914 to 212 by 1919, despite experiencing a severe 41.5% absenteeism rate that forced a temporary closure in late 1918 due to staff shortages. The institution implemented a comprehensive curriculum featuring 14 subjects combining academic knowledge with domestic skills like batik and embroidery, alongside bi-monthly Islamic education supported by the Sarekat Islam, establishing the school as a vital cornerstone for regional women's emancipation.

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INTRODUCTION

In historical manuscripts from the colonial and independence eras, the mainstreamed narrative surrounding the formation of educational history often positions education as the ultimate cornerstone of civilization, framing it as a fundamental right that must be accessible to all people, regardless of gender. Within this historiographical tradition, the progress of civilizations, nations, and states is fundamentally determined by the quality of institutional instruction, which serves as a transformative vehicle to achieve a better standard of living or societal progress (Hikmah et al., 2023). In the modern Indonesian context, this long-standing developmental narrative is formally codified in the fourth paragraph of the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution, mandating the state's absolute duty to 'enlighten the life of the nation'. However, multitemporal historical reviews indicate that the structural reality of educational management during the colonial period stood in stark contrast to these normative ideals, as access was heavily fragmented by imperial policies designed to restrict native empowerment rather than foster emancipation (Dewi, 2026). This critical discrepancy necessitates a deeper deconstructive reading of how specific regional institutions, such as the Madioensche Kartinschool, were positioned within these contested spaces.

A deconstructive reading requires an analytical shift from treating colonial records as neutral historical truths to exposing them as ideological arenas where Dutch colonial historiography and Indonesian national narratives fiercely collide. Within traditional Dutch archival frameworks, the structural organization of the empire is often romanticized as an orderly administrative feat. However, from a critical Indonesian perspective, the narrative regarding the fundamental importance of education and the state's obligation to ensure its citizens' right to learning never truly existed under imperial governance. During the colonial period, formal education was deliberately utilized as an instrument of exclusion, rendered accessible only to a select few, namely Europeans, foreign Asians, and the indigenous

nobility. Ordinary indigenous people, or bumiputera who lacked aristocratic lineage, were systematically categorized as "third-class" subjects deemed unworthy of educational empowerment. Within this discriminatory framework, girls from both the subaltern lower-class and the noble bumiputera groups faced a double layer of structural neglect, marginalized by both the racialized priorities of the empire and internal class barriers (Mahistra, 2015).

This battle of discourse becomes even more pronounced when deconstructing the social positioning of indigenous women. While Eurocentric colonial reports frequently viewed the lack of formal female education as a benign reflection of stagnant native traditions, critical national historiography exposes how the Dutch East Indies government actively leveraged local patriarchal structures to maintain domestic stability and social control. Javanese traditional customs were co-opted to ensure that women remained barred from public life and bound by severe educational limitations (Urifatulailiyah, 2017). A woman's societal worth was explicitly restricted to managing the household under the rigid patriarchal doctrine of "manak, masak, macak" confining her existential role strictly to childbirth, cooking, and grooming (Hapsari, 2017). Furthermore, Javanese women across both noble and lower classes had to endure the highly restrictive tradition of seclusion (pingitan), which functioned as a spatial mechanism of disempowerment (Hikmah et al., 2023). Far from being an organic cultural consensus, this concept that women must be strictly controlled served as a calculated institutional foundation reinforcing the patriarchal social hierarchy under the colonial gaze (Mahardi et al., 2025).

The most contested discursive battlefield in this educational history lies in the interpretation of the Ethical Policy. Mainstream Dutch historiography traditionally champions the policy articulated by Van Deventer in his August 1899 article "Een Ereschuld" (A Debt of Honor) in *De Gids* as a grand humanitarian awakening and a benevolent attempt to rectify the economic suffering caused by centuries of intense colonization (Kurniawan, 2022). This imperial narrative was further institutionalized when Queen Wilhelmina I formally addressed the Ethical Policy in a speech on September 17, 1901, claiming an imperial duty to improve the welfare of the indigenous population (Afandi, 2020). However, an Indonesian counter-narrative deconstructs this benevolent facade, exposing the Trias van Deventer (Irrigation, Education, and Emigration) as a pragmatic imperial strategy. The expansion of the colonial education system in the 20th century was not designed for authentic native liberation, but rather to systematically produce literate, low-cost administrative labor to sustain the growing machinery of Dutch capital. As demonstrated in contemporary multitemporal reviews of colonial education policies, imperial interventions frequently generated structural friction, forcing indigenous communities to develop independent filtering mechanisms to prevent total cultural assimilation (Dewi, 2026).

Consequently, the early 20th century should not be viewed as a passive period of colonial enlightenment, but as a critical milestone marked by the rise of a proactive national movement where educated indigenous elites actively launched structured educational resistance. Rather than waiting for colonial concessions, indigenous elites established independent educational institutions specifically designed to dismantle European cultural supremacy. This subaltern agency manifested in pioneering initiatives such as Sekola Istri, founded by Dewi Sartika in Bandung on January 16, 1904; the Mangkunegaran Girls' School, Siswo Rini, established in 1912 under the strategic patronages of Mangkunegara VI and VII; and the Amai Setia Craft School, initiated by Rohana Kudus in 1915 (Syakur et al., 2024; Jati, 2012; Ermagusti et al., 2023). The curricula implemented at these independent schools shared a sophisticated dual orientation: they integrated basic academic education with domestic vocational skills (Wiriatmadja, 1983; Asjraq, 1925). By doing so, they did not passively embrace colonial domesticity, but strategically equipped women with the necessary modern knowledge and economic autonomy to dismantle the overlapping structures of colonial and traditional oppression.

This historiographical tension directly reframes our understanding of the first Kartini School established in Semarang in 1913. While Eurocentric narratives emphasize the heroic, philanthropic role of Van Deventer and the Dutch humanists of the Kartini Fonds in mobilizing international donations to realize the ideals published in *Door Duisternis Tot Licht* (Harnawan, 2021; Hikmah et al., 2023), a critical deconstructive approach highlights that the operationalization of these schools heavily relied on the political agency and resource mobilization of local indigenous elites. The geographic expansion of the Kartini Fonds from a major urban hub like Semarang (1913) to a regional landscape like Madiun on January 5, 1914, represents a crucial site of localized negotiation. Because existing research on women's education has disproportionately concentrated on large metropolitan areas such as Semarang, it often inadvertently replicates a centralized bias that overlooks regional complexities (Inayatullah, 2018; Hikmah et al., 2023). The scarcity of local historical research reconstructing the journey of the Madioensche Kartinischool underscores the urgency of this study. By deconstructing its history during the formative period of 1914–1919, this study moves beyond the simplistic presentation of archival facts to reveal how regional women's education functioned as a highly contested, adaptive bastion of historical change.

This study aims to deconstruct the history of the Madioensche Kartinischool (Kartini School in Madiun) during its formative years from 1914 to 1919 by analyzing the critical tensions between colonial administrative structures and indigenous agency. Transitioning from a linear archival narrative to a deconstructive framework is imperative to unmask the hidden ideological frictions and power dynamics behind the school's institutional founding, administrative management, funding mechanisms, facilities, student conditions, and

curriculum development. This specific timeframe was selected based on the availability of historical data in the researcher's possession. Ultimately, this study provides distinct academic and practical benefits. Academically, it enriches local historiography regarding subaltern women's educational struggles during the Dutch colonial era in the Madiun region. Practically, these findings serve as a valuable resource for local history education, helping to preserve the collective memory of the Madiun community regarding the legacy of the Kartini School."

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach to examine the institutional dynamics of early female education. Qualitative research is fundamentally an interpretive and descriptive methodology utilized by scholars in the social sciences and humanities to comprehensively reveal complex historical processes, institutional behaviors, and localized socio-cultural meanings (Mappasere and Suyuti, 2019; Darmalaksana, 2020). Within this paper, the qualitative paradigm is specifically operationalized through the rigorous historical research method outlined by Kuntowijoyo (2013), which progresses through five systematic stages: topic selection, source collection (heuristics), source criticism (verification), interpretation, and writing (historiography). The initial stage of topic selection was executed by establishing a clear intellectual and emotional affinity toward the regional landscape of Madiun's social transformation. This was immediately followed by the heuristics stage, which involved an extensive gathering of both primary and secondary data networks. The primary sources successfully compiled for this study consist of official colonial archives, contemporary photographs, and the annual reports (Jaarverslag) of the Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool spanning from 1916 to 1919, all of which are systematically corroborated by relevant secondary literature to ensure archival empirical depth.

To enhance the scientific rigor and accuracy of the subsequent verification stage, which aims to critically assess the authenticity and credibility of the gathered historical sources, this study integrated modern Digital Humanities instruments into its workflow. The AI-powered handwritten and print recognition platform Transkribus was deployed to digitize, transcribe, and systematically index the early 20th-century Dutch printed scripts within the Jaarverslag records. Furthermore, advanced generative AI models, specifically Gemini, were strategically utilized under strict human researcher control to serve as a contextual translation and analytical tool. This collaborative loop was vital to decode obsolete colonial Dutch administrative vocabularies into precise historical definitions, thereby minimizing anachronistic errors during source criticism. Once verified, the data entered a critical interpretation phase executed through a deconstructive framework (reading against the grain). This critical reading allowed the authors to transcend a literal interpretation of colonial

texts, successfully dismantling Eurocentric biases to expose the hidden power dynamics, socio-religious negotiations with the Sarekat Islam, and local indigenous agencies that standard accounts obscure. Finally, these critical syntheses are structured into a cohesive, analytical narrative during the historiography stage to finalize the publication.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The systematic categorization of historical data and the subsequent thematic architecture of this Results and Discussion section are direct operational products of the five historical research stages outlined by [Kuntowijoyo \(2013\)](#), critically adapted to support a deconstructive framework. During the initial heuristics phase, a diverse array of primary source networks, principally consisting of colonial decrees, official annual reports (Jaarverslag) of the Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinischool (1916–1919), and contemporary photographs were extensively gathered to ensure empirical depth. To guarantee methodological rigor, the subsequent verification (source criticism) stage was structurally augmented through advanced Digital Humanities tools. The AI-driven recognition platform Transkribus was deployed to accurately digitize and transcribe archaic early 20th-century Dutch archival scripts, while generative AI models, specifically Gemini, were strategically utilized under strict researcher control to perform contextual and terminological translations. This modern technological intervention was crucial to unmasking the institutional prejudices, linguistic euphemisms, and paternalistic biases inherent in imperial administrative documents. Consequently, this collaborative human-AI loop effectively transformed raw, Eurocentric archival materials into highly validated historical evidence, establishing a pristine analytical foundation for deep critical analysis.

Through the subsequent interpretation stage, these verified historical fragments were synthesized not as a passive, linear chronology, but as highly contested institutional arenas. This critical parsing process naturally organized the compiled historical evidence into six core thematic dimensions: internal power struggles during its institutional genesis (Founding), the systemic fragility of human resources (Management), the strategic mobilization of diverse capital networks (Funding), the spatial politics of educational infrastructure (Facilities), the subaltern socio-economic responses (Students), and the ideological negotiations within the pedagogical framework (Curriculum). By operationalizing these specific structural categories, the following sub-sections deploy a deconstructive historical lens designed to directly challenge the traditional celebratory assumptions of Dutch colonial philanthropy. This thematic approach actively engages in the final historiography stage by constructing an empirical counter-narrative that exposes the vibrant, strategic indigenous agency operating beneath the imperial administrative framework. Ultimately, this multi-

layered analysis dismantles the myth of passive native reception, proving that this regional school functioned as a vital, contested site for socio-political negotiation and gender emancipation.

The Institutional Genesis of Madioensche Kartinschool: Deconstructing Bureaucratic Alliances and Local Agency

The traditional narrative surrounding the emergence of the Madioensche Kartinschool often frames it as a natural, top-down expansion of the benevolent Kartini Fonds foundation established in Semarang in 1913 by Conrad Theodore van Deventer and his wife. Imperial records emphasize a linear pedagogical expansion where successful urban models were paternalistically duplicated in regional hubs, including Jakarta (1914), Madiun (1914), Malang, Cirebon, and Bogor (1915), Pekalongan (1916), and Surabaya and Rembang (1918) ([Kartini Fonds, 1938](#)). However, a deconstructive reading of Madiun's educational landscape dismantles this myth of passive regional reception. Long before the institutionalization of the Kartini schools, the Madiun region had already experienced fractured gender educational frameworks; in the early 1890s, a meisjesschool (a girls' elementary school) had been operating specifically to preserve the class and racial privileges of Dutch colonial girls ([Dagblad van Zuidholland en 's Gravenhage, August 8, 1890](#); [Java Bode, January 6, 1892](#)). Therefore, the push for indigenous female education did not originate from colonial charity, but from a calculated, progressive counter-initiative in late 1912 by indigenous bureaucrats in Madiun who sought to subvert this racial exclusion by forming an organization dedicated to providing proper education for Javanese girls ([Soerabaijasch Handelsblad, February 13, 1939](#)).

This subaltern agency was formally crystallized in July 1913 through the establishment of an independent association named "Wilotomo". Deconstructing the linguistic roots of this initiative reveals a profound socio-spiritual negotiation; the name derives from the combination of two Javanese words: *wila* signifying a cave or a sacred place of deep meditation, and *tama* or *utama* meaning prioritized or primary, thus structurally defining the institution as a dedicated vehicle for cultivating individual excellence toward native greatness ([Poerwadarminta, 1939](#); [De Indische Courant, February 14, 1939](#)). The foundational architecture of Wilotomo directly unmasks a complex class dynamic: its board of directors was exclusively composed of indigenous officials, indicating that the local bureaucratic elite actively engineered female education as a strategic tool to modernise the *priyayi* class. Furthermore, their financial autonomy was deliberately built from below; the foundation's initial capital of 400 guilders was entirely raised through the organization of a local night market (*pasar malam*), serving as a form of independent collective fundraising that bypassed colonial state funding ([Kartini Fonds, 1938](#)).

The physical and spatial trajectory of the school further exposes the stark structural friction between native ambition and colonial neglect. In its earliest phase, the school was forced to operate inside a small, unsuitable house that failed to meet basic educational standards. This structural crisis prompted a highly symbolic spatial intervention by the Regent of Madiun, who temporarily relocated the activities of the "Wilotomo" Girls' School into three former prison cells located on his administrative land ([De Nieuwe Vorstenlanden, January 9, 1914](#)). From a deconstructive perspective, this relocation is highly paradoxical; a space originally constructed as an absolute apparatus of colonial penal repression and physical confinement was radically subverted by the indigenous elite into a temporary sanctuary for intellectual liberation and female empowerment, pending further plans to transfer operations to the regent's formal paseban building ([De Nieuwe Vorstenlanden, January 9, 1914](#)). The administrative legitimacy of this spatial subversion was highly contested, culminating in an opening ceremony on January 5, 1914, which forced a symbolic compromise where senior European officials, including Assistant-Resident G. D. van Ravenswaay, Gewestelijk Secretaris J. C. Brinks, and Controleur F. J. Couwenberg, attended alongside the regent to formally capture and re-integrate this autonomous native movement back under the umbrella of colonial surveillance ([Kartini Fonds, 1938](#); [De Nieuwe Vorstenlanden, January 9, 1914](#); [Regeeringsalmanak voor Nederlandsch-Indië, 1914](#)).

This subtle tug-of-war between local agency and colonial co-optation reached its climax during the formal institutional reorganization of 1914. As the student body rapidly expanded from the initial 50 female students under the Wilotomo foundation to 97 within its first official year, the structural necessity for qualified staff and financial stability triggered a profound institutional shift ([Kartini Fonds, 1938](#); [De Nieuwe Vorstenlanden, 1914](#)). During a strategic meeting held at the residence of Regent Koesnodiningrat (who served from 1900 to 1929), Resident J. A. E. van Deventer (serving 1914–1917) intervened on February 11, 1914, by orchestrating the official name change from the purely Javanese "Wilotomo Girls' School" to the Euro-vernacular "Madioensche Kartinschool" ([De Nieuwe Vorstenlanden, January 9, 1914](#); [Kartini Fonds, 1938](#); [De Indische Courant, February 14, 1939](#); [Soerabaijasch Handelsblad, February 13, 1939](#)). This naming transition marks a classic colonial co-optation strategy: by renaming the school after Kartini, the Dutch residency successfully absorbed a radical, grassroots indigenous initiative and rebranded it as a shining triumph of the state-sponsored Ethical Policy.

In return for surrendering their nominal independence, the indigenous board strategically utilized this colonial branding to secure legal protection and imperial resources. They established formal communications with Th. Van Deventer, Chair of the Kartini Fonds in The Hague, explicitly using this international connection to demand state subsidies. While their newly drafted articles of association referenced the organizational models of the

Bataviasch Kartinschool and the Kartini-Vereeniging in Semarang, the Madiun elite managed to maintain a high degree of autonomy; the school officially obtained its independent legal status through a government decree (*gouvernementsbesluit*) dated April 18, 1914, No. 44 (Kartini Fonds, 1938; *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, April 23, 1914). Under Article 3, paragraph (2) of these statutes, the institution functioned nominally as a local branch of the Semarang association, yet it legally guarded its position as an independent legal entity authorized to manage its administration and resources autonomously (*Provinciale Overijsselsche en Zwolsche Courant*, June 3, 1915).

The formal institutionalization and systemic regulation of this indigenous initiative were structurally codified through a series of official legal instruments issued by the imperial bureaucracy. Specifically, the colonial state responded to the school's rapid expansion by issuing Government Decrees dated November 10 and 21, J. 1 No. 28 and 6, alongside a formal Decree from the Director of Agriculture, Industry, and Trade dated November 20, No. 1100/B, which officially dictated the school's administrative parameters and operational boundaries (see Figure 1) (*Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool*, 1916). From a deconstructive historical perspective, these legislative enactments must not be misconstrued as pure acts of imperial benevolence or disinterested humanitarian philanthropy. Instead, by recognizing the school's public utility to expand state subsidies and granting total property tax exemptions, the Dutch administration effectively transformed an autonomous grassroots movement into a highly monitored state apparatus. Even concessions that appeared highly supportive, such as authorizing the cheap acquisition of state-controlled teak wood for facility expansion, functioned as pragmatic mechanisms of material dependency that tethered the school's physical survival directly to the goodwill of colonial forestry departments (*Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool*, 1916). Ultimately, this extensive legal grid served to safely domesticate and steer the eruptive, emancipatory energy of regional Javanese women within acceptable imperial boundaries, ensuring that native modernization remained strictly aligned with the geopolitical interests of the Dutch East Indies.

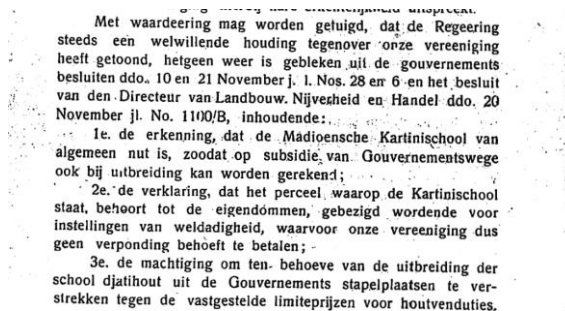
The Bureaucratic Grid of Governance and Pedagogical Fragility: Deconstructing Elite Alliances and Faculty Turnover

Deconstructing the internal architecture of the Madioensche Kartinschool foundation reveals that its administrative framework was not a neutral civic gathering, but a highly stratified bureaucratic grid designed to consolidate political control between European officials and the indigenous aristocracy. The initial governance model reflects a strict hierarchical alliance of power, as systematically detailed in the foundation's structural chart (see Table 1). The structural apex of the foundation featured the position of *Beschermheer*

(patron), occupied by Resident J. A. E. van Deventer, while the title of Eere-voorzitter (honorary advisor) was strategically entrusted to the Regent of Madiun, R. M. A. R. A. Koesnodiningrat. Operating beneath this dual-elite umbrella, the day-to-day administrative machinery was led by J. C. Brinks (Voorzitter/chairman) and M. Roostamhadji, the Patih of Madiun, as Vice-Voorzitter. Meanwhile, native administrative and financial accountabilities were delegated to Raden Soejoedi as secretary and Raden Sosrodiprodjo as treasurer. To ensure ideological alignment, the board members (Leden) integrated prominent institutional figures, including Mrs. van Deventer; W. D. Koot, a private school principal; J. J. A. de Groot, an engineer at the Madiun State Railways; and Mrs. A. H. de Bruijn Kops, the principal of the colonial Meisjesschool (Kartini Fonds, 1938). To visually reinforce this elite bureaucratic presence within the regional landscape, contemporary archival records preserve official photographic portraits of these key administrative actors and foundational figures (see Figure 2).

Figure 1

Statement by the Dutch East Indies government regarding the Kartini School in Madiun



(Source: Vereniging Madioensche Kartinischool, 1916)

Table 1.

Initial Board of Directors of the Kartini Madiun Foundation

No.	Position	Name
1.	<i>Beschermer</i> (Person in charge)	J. A. E. van Deventer
2.	<i>Eere-voorzitter</i> (Advisor)	R. M. A. R. A. Koesnodiningrat
3.	<i>Voorzitter</i> (Chairperson)	J. C. Brinks
4.	Vice-Voorzitter (Vice Chair)	M. Roostamhadji
5.	<i>Secretaris</i> (Secretary)	Raden Soejoedi.
6.	<i>Penningmeester</i> (Treasure)	Raden Sosrodiprodjo
7.	<i>Leden</i> (Board of Directors)	1. Nyonya van Deventer 2. W. D. Koot 3. J. J. A. de Groot 4. Nyonya A. H. de Bruijn Kops

(Source: *Kartini Fonds*, 1938, p. 60)

Figure 2.

Miss C.S. Van Der Hegge Spies



(Source: KITLV, 1916)

This bureaucratic integration ensured structural legitimacy, but it simultaneously exposed the institution's vulnerability to the systemic precarity of its human resources. The leadership of the teaching staff underwent chaotic annual disruptions, heavily affecting the structural continuity of the foundation, which required periodic administrative adjustments as delineated in the updated 1917 roster (see Table 2). The school was initially directed by I. W. C. Oberman, who abruptly resigned in September 1916 due to internal family issues, forcing the board to look back to the metropole by requesting a replacement from the central Kartini Foundation in the Netherlands ([Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinischool, 1916](#)). Although C. S. Van Der Hegge Spies was successfully secured as the new principal, alongside the appointment of teacher C. M. Evers on April 1, 1916, the European faculty—including the Dutch teacher Inej. C. Gijsing and a single native teacher named Iman—remained quantitatively fragile ([Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinischool, 1916](#)). By 1917, the political anchors of the foundation fragmented heavily following the passing of Mr. and Mrs. van Deventer, stripping the school of its primary imperial patrons ([Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinischool, 1917](#)). This structural loss forced an administrative shift within the executive board, where J. Th. Jarman assumed the role of Chairman, Mas Doerjat became Secretary, and Raden Tjokroadisoerjo stepped in as Treasurer ([Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinischool, 1917](#)).

Table 2.

The Board of Directors of the Kartini Madiun Foundation in 1917

No.	Position	Name
1.	<i>Beschermheer</i> (Person in charge)	J. A. E. van Deventer
2.	<i>Eere-voorzitter</i> (Advisor)	R. M. A. R. A. Koesnodiningrat
3.	<i>Voorzitter</i> (Chairperson)	J. Th. Jarman
4.	<i>Secretaris</i> (Secretary)	Mas Doerjat

No.	Position	Name
5.	<i>Penningmeester</i> (Treasure)	Raden Tjokroadisoerjo
6.	<i>Leden</i> (Board of Directors)	1. Nyonya van Deventer 2. W. D. Koot 3. Raden Ajoe Tjokrosoetomo 4. Nyonya A. H. de Bruijn Kops

(Source: *Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool*, 1917).

The school's staff structure at the end of 1917 was as follows:

No.	Position	Name
1.	Principal	C. S. van der Hegge Spies
2.	Dutch Teacher	1. C. M. Evers Ny Claassen
3.	Indigenous Teacher	Iman

In A critical deconstruction of the subsequent faculty changes illuminates how rigid colonial credentialism served to suppress and marginalize female labor within the school. Following the resignation of Inej C. Gijsing, the board hired Mrs. Claassen as a replacement ([Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1917](#)). However, because Mrs. Claassen lacked a formal European teaching certificate, the foundation weaponized imperial regulations to withhold her full financial compensation, refusing to pay her in full despite her executing the exact same pedagogical workload ([Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1917](#)). This internal instability rippled into 1918, a year defined by chronic labor turnovers driven by health crises and geographic displacement. In April 1918, C. M. Evers demanded an immediate transfer to a school located in a cooler climate, citing severe health issues caused by Madiun's tropical heat ([Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1918](#)). Following Mrs. Claassen's subsequent resignation, she was briefly replaced by Miss Westerbeek until her retirement, who was then succeeded by Miss J. Gortmans ([Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1918](#)). Even though the temporary recruitment of an assistant named H. van Lakerveld successfully managed the inflating student enrollment, the institutional structure collapsed on November 1 when Miss J. Gortmans secured an honorable dismissal to transfer to a more lucrative, government-run public school, revealing that the private Kartini School was constantly drained of talent by the state apparatus ([Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1918](#)).

By 1919, the institutional turnover escalated into a structural crisis that explicitly unmask the racialized and gendered instability of colonial faculty imports, shifting the leadership dynamics once again toward a reorganized board arrangement (see Table 3). To fill the vacuum left by Mrs. Gortmans, the school hired Mrs. C.A.H. Crousaz in January 1919 ([Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1919](#)). However, on March 1, Mrs. Kepper-Renaud resigned due to health failure, replaced by Miss R. Clignett, who then promptly abandoned

her position on September 1 due to her marriage (Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1919). Her successor, Miss L.A. Wettstein, likewise resigned after just three months on December 1 to pursue a superior government administrative post in Sumatra, forcing the school to hurriedly place Miss C.A. Filet into the vacant slot (Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1919). Concurrently, the assistant H. van Lakerveld resigned on September 1 following a state promotion, leaving her tasks to Miss P. Toersbijns (Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1919).

Table 3.

The Board of Directors of the Kartini Madiun Foundation in 1919

No.	Position	Name
1.	<i>Eere-voorzitter</i> (Pembina)	R. M. A. R. A. Koesnodiningrat
2.	<i>Voorzitter</i> (Kepala)	Mas Doerjat
3.	<i>Secretaris</i> (sekertaris)	Ny. I. Oosterling-Oberman
4.	<i>Penningmeester</i> (Bendahara)	Raden Tjokroadisoerjo
5.	<i>Leden</i> (dewan anggota)	1. Ny. E. van Ravenswaay-Hotmalk van Djikerhof 2. W. D. Koot 3. R. A. Soerjoditjokro 4. R. Margono

The climax of this colonial indifference occurred on August 22, 1919, when the Dutch East Indies government abruptly revoked the appointment of the native teacher, Yudokusoemo, effectively removing an essential vernacular voice from the school, an arbitrary action heavily documented in the foundation's official correspondence and structural reports (see Table 3) (Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1919). Despite repeated, urgent petitions submitted by the Madiun foundation pleading for a replacement, the colonial state systematically ignored the requests, leaving the native teaching position vacant throughout the remainder of 1919. This calculated negligence heavily increased the daily labor and psychological workload of the remaining staff, demonstrating that while the colonial government was happy to use the Madioensche Kartinschool as a display of imperial benevolence, it was fundamentally uninvested in providing the necessary structural stability to sustain autonomous native pedagogy.

The Political Economy of Emancipatory Education: Deconstructing Capital Mobilization and Fiscal Dependency

Deconstructing the financial architecture of the Madioensche Kartinschool dismantles the hegemonial narrative that consistently positions imperial colonial authorities as the sole philanthropic patrons behind native modernization. The initial funding structure of the foundation actually reveals a deliberate strategy of hybrid capital mobilization from below, which demanded self-governing commitments from civil society. Internal regulations setting

monthly membership dues at a minimum of 50 cents and a donor registration threshold at a minimum of one rijksdaalder per month prove that the school's economic foundation was primarily built upon a localized social base, rather than the fiscal benevolence of the colonial state budget ([Kartini Fonds, 1938](#)). This reality is further illuminated by the massive personal capital injection of 1,000 guilders from Tjan Ing Bo, a Chinese Titular Captain in Madiun who served from June 1912 to 1914, having previously operated as a Chinese Lieutenant from 1895 to 1912. Tjan Ing Bo's track record as a cross-regional philanthropist as recorded in contemporary colonial press reports detailing his donation of 600 guilders to the Blinden Instituut in Bandung on December 8, 1907 ([De Locomotief, August 10, 1907](#)) and a humanitarian aid of 1,000 guilders to disaster victims in the Netherlands ([Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad, November 14, 1914](#)), prompted the foundation to officially grant him the status of its first honorary member ([Kartini Fonds, 1938](#)). From a critical perspective, this substantial capital injection from the non-European bourgeoisie exposes a cross-ethnic alliance operating at the regional level that preceded state-sponsored Ethical Policy initiatives, confirming that the survival of indigenous women's educational sanctuaries depended heavily on non-European networks of wealth.

The dilemma of fiscal dependency and the structural friction between native agency and imperial pacification are vividly illustrated in the periodic balancing of the institution's financial sheets (see Figure 3). When these localized funds were collectively compiled at the end of the fiscal year, the foundation recorded nine permanent donors and eighty active members, forming a resilient social base for the expansion of women's education in Madiun ([Kartini Fonds, 1938](#)). This moral and financial solidarity was further extended through regional intellectual networks, with students from STOVIA and the Rechtsschool in Batavia, alongside the Opleidingsschool in Magelang, Bandung, Probolinggo, and Blitar, actively channeling capital to sustain the foundation's operations. At the local level, the involvement of students from OSVIA Madiun emerged as the most prominent driver through their highly effective tactical engagements to support the foundation's daily activities. This fund-mobilization network engineered by the nascent Javanese intelligentsia represents a subtle form of resistance: these future native administrators consciously reinvested their personal capital to wrest the ownership of female education away from the absolute monopoly of colonial discourse.

The direct confrontation between imperial bureaucratic control and localized financial agency reached its climax during the 1916 fiscal year. In this period, the school received a subsidy of 5,620 guilders from the Dutch East Indies government, which was structurally locked and restricted solely to covering the salaries of certified, state-approved teachers ([Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1916](#)). This discriminatory policy left a heavy structural burden on the foundation, forcing it to cover the entire cost of uncertified native

teachers' salaries by draining its own self-raised treasury and soliciting support from private entities. To mitigate this deficit, the foundation relied on a monthly donation of 40 guilders from the Dutch Kartini Foundation, combined with periodic contributions from the global commodity industry. The corporate sugar syndicates operating around Madiun, such as the Kanigoro Sugar Factory under the control of the Colonial Bank and the Pagotan Sugar Factory, each contributed 50 guilders monthly, supplemented by a lump-sum assistance of 500 guilders from the Redjosari Sugar Factory, and ongthoing monthly donations of 50 guilders from the Purwodadi and Sudhono sugar factories (Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1916). Through a deconstructive lens, the involvement of these highly exploitative sugar syndicates functions as an early iteration of corporate social responsibility designed to pacify agrarian unrest and polish corporate images. However, this capitalist penetration was radically neutralized by native cultural mobilization: indigenous students at the Civil Service Training School (OSVIA) successfully generated and donated a total of 466.02 guilders from the proceeds of a traditional wayang performance, which was further reinforced by a personal contribution of 174.17 guilders from Prajitno and a political donation of 40.59 guilders from the Sarekat Islam (SI) organization into the foundation's treasury (Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1916).

Figure 3.

Sources of income for the Kartini School

Hoofdstuk II.
Bijdragen en leden.
Gedurende het verslagjaar mocht de vereeniging zich nog steeds verheugen in een maandelijkschen steun van f 40.— 's maands van het Kartinifonds in Holland.
Behalve van de Suikerfabrieken Kanigoro (Koloniale Bank) en Pagottan, die de vereeniging met eene bijdrage van f 50.— 's maands steunen, werd door de bemoeiingen van onzen beschermheer de vereeniging verblijd met een gift van f 500.— van de suikerfabriek Redjosari en met een maandelijkschen steun van f 50.— van die van Poerwodadi en Soedhono.
Van de leerlingen der Opleidingsschool voor Inlandsche ambtenaren alhier, die de vereeniging behalve kleine giften, ook f 466,02^s van de opbrengst van een wajangvoorstelling hebben geschonken, moet met waardeering worden gesproken, evenals van den Inlander PRAJITNO en de vereeniging Sarekat Islam te dezer plaatse, die in onze kas respectievelijk f 174,17 en f 40,59^s deden vloeien.

(Source: *Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1916*)

Moving into the 1917–1919 period, the fluctuations within the school's budgetary landscape reveal the volatile nature of the Ethical Policy's promises, which could be easily retracted by the state. In 1917, the foundation recorded an increased government subsidy of 5,753 guilders, augmented by donations totaling 725 guilders, regular monthly payments from OSVIA students, a 50% contribution of wayang performance proceeds from the Madiun Charity Committee, and 2,889 guilders collected in tuition fees directly from the female students (Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1917). This trajectory shifted markedly in 1918; while monthly donations from the Kanigoro, Redjoagung, and Poerwodadi sugar factories persisted at 50 guilders, supplemented by 500 guilders from the

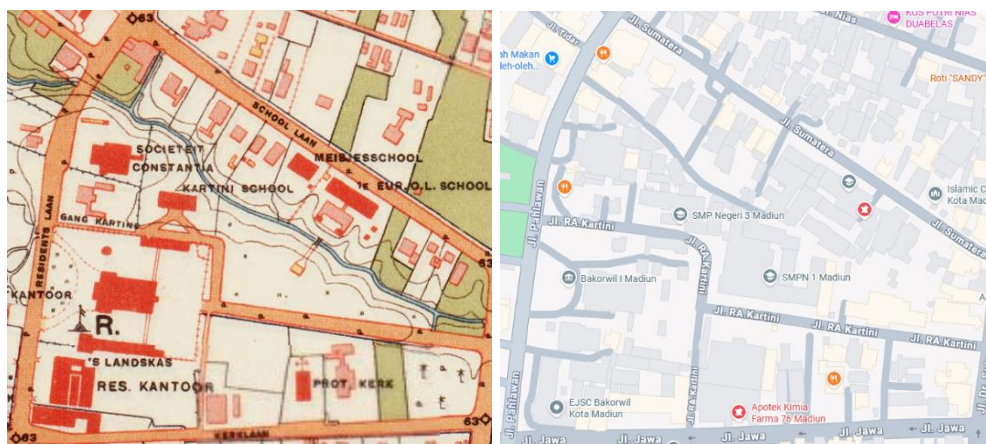
central Kartini Association in the Netherlands and a symbolic 2.50 guilders from OSVIA students, the school fees collected from students escalated to 3,558 guilders, just as the state subsidy contracted to 5,346 guilders ([Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1918](#)). The ultimate deconstructive turning point occurred in the 1919 fiscal year, when the foundation successfully amassed significantly more independent funding than the previous year, driven by a sharp increase in tuition fees that reached 4,426 guilders ([Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1919](#)). Yet, amidst this maturing financial autonomy, archival records show a complete absence of government subsidy data. This disappearance of state funding strongly indicates that the Dutch East Indies government unilaterally ceased funding the foundation once the indigenous institution achieved financial self-sufficiency, or when its expanding socio-political networks were deemed too dangerous due to ideological contamination by anti-colonial movements like the Sarekat Islam.

Spatial Politics of Pedagogical Infrastructure: Deconstructing Spatial Design, Material Commodification, and Architectural Expansion

The physical environment and spatial infrastructure of the Madioensche Kartinschool were not merely passive backdrops to the learning process; rather, they constituted a highly contested architectural arena that exposed the profound friction between colonial repression and the native pursuit of emancipatory spaces. This dynamic spatial transformation is clearly documented through the periodic reconstruction of the institution's historical mapping (see Figure 4). When traced to the contemporary landscape, the physical footprint of this colonial-era private school has undergone a complete functional conversion, now operating as the Madiun State Junior High School No. 3 (Hoofdplaats Madioen, 1917 via KITLV.nl; Google Maps, 2026). However, during its formative development in early 1915, as the influx of indigenous female students rapidly escalated to 120 children, the school was forced to operate within a profoundly ironic setting: a building formerly used as the regent's prison cells ([Soerabaijasch Handelsblad, February 13, 1939](#); [De Indische Courant, February 14, 1939](#)). A deconstructive reading of this spatial arrangement unmaskes a sharp paradox; an architecture originally engineered as a coercive state apparatus to confine bodies and punish criminality was radically subverted by the native elite into the initial womb for female intellectual liberation. The material failure of this former prison space which was cramped, damp, and severely lacking in natural light uncovers how the project of native female modernization was initially left abandoned within unsuitable spaces of domestication by imperial authorities.

Figure 4.

A map showing the location of Kartini School in 1917 (left) and a Google Maps image of the site of the former Kartini School, which has since been converted into Madiun State Junior High School No. 3 (right).



(Source: [Hoofdplaats Madioen, 1917 via KITLV.nl](#); Google Maps, 2026)

The architectural precarity of the prison cells inevitably triggered a dynamic spatial mobility as a form of institutional survival agency. Classes were temporarily relocated to vacant classrooms at OSVIA Madiun, before the foundation leased a building in the Pastorielaan area, which is the street situated north of St. Cornelius Church, which has since been renamed Ahmad Yani Street ([Soerabaijasch Handelsblad, February 13, 1939](#); [De Indische Courant, February 14, 1939](#)). This spatial displacement into the Pastorielaan corridor historically an elite European and ecclesiastical enclave demonstrates how the school physically encroached into the very epicenter of colonial urban design. This spatial consolidation culminated in the groundbreaking ceremony for a permanent school structure on January 12, 1915 (see Figure 5). This ceremonial event was heavily attended by the regional ruling elite, including Resident van Deventer, Regent Koesnodingrat, District Chief Roostamhadji, and J. C. Brinks (Binks) serving as the chairman of the foundation alongside the other founding members ([Huppe, 1915](#)). Financed through a hybrid capital structure connecting the budgetary commitments of the Kartini Fund in The Hague and colonial state subsidies, the permanent building was officially occupied in mid-November 1915. The facility was systematically equipped with four classrooms, a principal's office, an open veranda, a playground, and several supplementary structures supporting educational activities ([Kartini Fonds, 1938](#)). This newly constructed space featured a highly ordered architectural design, which visually functioned as an ideological showcase for the Ethical Policy, demonstrating to the public that the imperial state had successfully adopted and domesticated the native women's movement within a controlled, modern spatial framework.

Figure 5.

Photograph of the groundbreaking ceremony for the Madioensche Kartinischool in Madiun, January 12, 1915



(Source: [Huppe, 1915](#)).

Funding from the Kartini Fund in The Hague, along with government subsidies, made it possible to begin construction of the school building, marked by a groundbreaking ceremony on January 12, 1915, attended by Resident van Deventer, Regent/Bupati Koesnodingrat, District Chief/Patih Roostamhadji, J. C. Binks as chairman of the foundation, and the founding members of the Kartini Foundation of Madiun. The school building began to be used in mid-November and was equipped with four classrooms, a principal's office, an open veranda, a playground, and several additional buildings supporting educational activities ([Kartinifonds, 1938](#)).

In 1916, efforts to expand the school had not yet been realized due to increasing demand and rising construction material prices; furthermore, the association was facing a shortage of space that year. To address this, the front hall was used as a classroom ([Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinischool, 1916](#)). As of 1917, the front hall was still being used as a classroom ([Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinischool, 1917](#)). Fortunately, plans to expand the school building were carried out in 1918; specifically, by March, the new building was already in use, allowing for more effective and efficient instruction. This was thanks to the government's willingness to cover part of the construction costs, amounting to approximately 10,000 Gulden. The remainder was raised through voluntary donations, primarily from sugar factories. Donations included 1,200 Gulden from the Kanigoro sugar factory and 500 Gulden from Mas Kartohastro ([Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinischool, 1918](#)). After the school building was expanded, the front hall no longer needed to be used as a classroom but became a cool place to relax and play during recess. The successful expansion of the school building in 1918 spatially restored the original function of the front hall, freeing it from classroom duties and transforming it back into a cool place for relaxation and play during recess (see Figure 6).

Figure 6.

A scene from Kartini School in Madiun before 1938



(Source: Kartinifonds, 1938)

Contested Subaltern Agency and Imperial Domestication: Deconstructing Student Demographics, Absentee Resistance, and Economic Negotiations

Unpacking the demographic conditions and social behaviors of the female students at the Madioensche Kartinschool unmasks a sharp ideological tension between the imperial state's agenda of domestication and a quiet, subaltern resistance operating from the Javanese grassroots. At the inception of the 1916–1917 academic year, the school's demographics recorded 131 students distributed across six grade levels, ranging in age from 6 to 14 years old, with a highly stable average student absentee rate of 5% ([Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1916](#)). Beneath this statistical stability, however, the foundation began erecting economic barriers in response to institutional fiscal pressures. For students admitted in 1916 and thereafter, the minimum tuition fee was elevated to two guilders, though the maximum tuition fee remained strictly capped at five guilders per month ([Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1916](#)). This upward adjustment of monthly fees was implemented pragmatically by the association to cover inflating expenditures for school furnishings and the escalating salary demands of European teachers. Through a deconstructive lens, the imposition of this financial threshold functioned as an instrument of class stratification a commodification of educational access that effectively filtered and confined this emancipatory space within the boundaries of the priyayi elite.

This tension rooted in economic stratification became even more pronounced at the start of the 1917/1918 school year, where student enrollment defied these financial barriers by expanding to 153 students, divided into seven classes with ages ranging from 6 to 15 years old ([Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1917](#)). Although official colonial reports lauded the students for making excellent progress in handicrafts and batik-making despite a severe shortage of teachers, the archival record honestly reveals the ethical dilemma faced by the school board, which consciously chose not to raise tuition fees further ([Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1917](#)). The board recognized that any further increase would act

as a repressive barrier preventing parents from sending their daughters to school, given that the vast majority of the enrolled girls came from families with highly limited financial means. Conversely, the heavy curricular emphasis on domestic handicrafts and batik-making exposes the deep domestication bias inherent in the Dutch Ethical Policy: native girls were educated not to become critical public intellectuals, but were structurally molded to become skilled, thrifty, and compliant middle-class housewives operating under colonial supervision.

This imperial domestication strategy suffered a fatal structural failure by the end of the 1918 academic year. Hit by a chaotic internal wave of European faculty turnovers with no immediate replacements available to fill the vacant positions, the students responded to this institutional collapse with a silent withdrawal that drove absenteeism to an extreme level of 41.5% by the end of the term ([Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinischool, 1918](#)). This soaring spike—which caused the full-year average absenteeism rate to swell to 11.6%—ultimately forced authorities to completely shut down all school operations by the end of 1918 ([Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinischool, 1918](#)). Critically, this 41.5% absenteeism rate must not be misconstrued merely as a consequence of "unfavorable circumstances" or individual student neglect; rather, it must be historicized as a profound manifestation of passive resistance by native parents and students who refused to consume colonial education once the institution lost its stability and failed to provide credible instructors. Before this emergency closure, the student body had reached 167 students divided into seven classes by the end of the 1918 term, where graduation dynamics revealed a compelling fragmentation of student agency: while some graduates chose to pursue secular secondary education at the Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs (M.U.L.O.), three others engaged in a cultural migration by continuing their studies at the girls' Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) in Salatiga, fiercely driven by their ambition to earn diplomas and fulfill their aspirations of becoming teachers ([Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinischool, 1918](#)).

A massive resurgence and recovery of student agency was recorded by early 1919, with the student body jumping to a record high of 212 students divided into seven grade levels ([Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinischool, 1919](#)). The vertical mobility of the graduates from the previous seventh-grade cohort revealed a fractured path forward: out of the six female students who completed the track, three remained in school to take supplementary classes, one successfully passed the rigorous selection to attend the Froebel Teacher Training School in Weltevreden, Batavia, while the remaining two were reabsorbed into the patriarchal domestic structure as homemakers ([Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinischool, 1919](#)). Parallel to this highly selective admission process, which routinely turned away five to six applicants each month, the school's internal dynamics also mirrored harsh material realities; throughout the year, a total of 48 students withdrew or dropped out due to various material determinants, including geographic relocation, school transfers, marriage, illness,

death, the pursuit of secondary education, extreme financial constraints, or unknown reasons, even as the overall absenteeism rate was successfully suppressed back down to 8% (Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1919).

The most emancipatory and radical dimension of subaltern agency among the students of the Madioensche Kartinschool manifested through their ability to reclaim economic autonomy directly from their desks. Alongside their formal academic curriculum, the students actively produced commodities in the form of self-made embroidery and batik, selling their crafts to the public market to generate independent revenue (Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1919). In a revolutionary turn, the capital they raised autonomously was independently allocated to purchase 40 new books to enrich the school's library, expanding the total collection of literature to 250 books by 1919 (Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1919). Furthermore, if these self-generated funds proved sufficient, students in the two highest grades held the autonomous right to organize and finance their own out-of-town study trips without imperial bureaucratic interference. The acts of producing commodities, generating independent income, purchasing their own choice of literature, and self-funding academic excursions offer a total deconstruction of the traditional colonial trope that depicted native women as passive, inferior, and entirely dependent on European philanthropic mercy. Through this grassroots micro-economic independence and the deliberate accumulation of literacy, the Kartini students of Madiun transformed themselves from passive objects of an Ethical Policy social experiment into active historical agents reclaiming intellectual liberation from below.

Curriculum Negotiation and Hybrid Pedagogical Spaces: Deconstructing Gender Domestication, Western Assimilation, and the Ideological Subversion of Sarekat Islam

Dismantling the curriculum blueprint of the *Madioensche Kartinschool* reveals a profound ambivalence within the Ethical Policy, which sought to balance Western cultural assimilation with the gendered domestication of indigenous women. Based on the foundation's archival documentation, the school's instructional framework formally adopted 14 subjects taught progressively according to the students' grade levels (see Figure 7) (Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1919). This configuration of 14 subjects included communication, reading, Dutch, arithmetic, writing, Javanese, Malay, geography, history, botany, zoology, embroidery, drawing, and singing.

From a deconstructive perspective, the dominance of the Dutch language, natural sciences, and geography represented a colonial effort to engineer a project of cultural mimicry, shaping elite native women to possess a modern intellect aligned with European civilizational standards. However, this curriculum never operated as a purely singular space

of assimilation. The inclusion of Javanese and Malay, alongside other localized materials, generated a hybrid space wherein native identity was preserved as a tactical adaptation by the board to prevent the school from being rejected by the strictly traditional society of Madiun.

Figure 7.

List of Subjects

BIJLAGE 3. 15

Recapitulatie van den Lesrooster der
MADIOENSCH KARTINI-SCHOOL.

VAKKEN	Kl. 1	Kl. 2	Kl. 3	Kl. 4	Kl. 5	Kl. 6	Kl. 7
Spoken	3	2 ³ / ₄	2 ¹ / ₄	1	1 ¹ / ₄	1 ¹ / ₄	1 ³ / ₄
Lezen	2 ³ / ₄	3 ¹ / ₂	3	3 ³ / ₄	1 ³ / ₄	1	3 ¹ / ₄
Ned. Taal	—	3 ¹ / ₂	7	6 ¹ / ₂	4 ¹ / ₄	6 ¹ / ₄	9 ³ / ₄
Rekenen	3 ¹ / ₂	4	5 ³ / ₄	3 ¹ / ₂	5 ¹ / ₂	6 ³ / ₄	9 ³ / ₄
Schoonschrijven	2 ¹ / ₂	1	1 ³ / ₄	1	3 ¹ / ₄	1	1
Javaansch	4	4 ¹ / ₂	3 ³ / ₄	4 ¹ / ₂	4 ³ / ₄	2 ¹ / ₄	1 ¹ / ₄
Malisch	—	—	—	2	1 ¹ / ₂	1	1 ¹ / ₂
Aardrijkskunde	—	—	1	1	1 ¹ / ₂	1 ¹ / ₂	1 ¹ / ₄
Geschiedenis	—	—	—	—	—	3 ¹ / ₄	1 ¹ / ₂
Plantkunde	—	—	—	—	1 ¹ / ₂	1 ¹ / ₂	1 ¹ / ₂
Dierkunde	—	—	—	—	1 ¹ / ₂	1 ¹ / ₂	3 ¹ / ₄
Handwerken	—	3	2	2	3	2	2
Teekenen	1 ³ / ₄	1	1 ¹ / ₂	3 ¹ / ₄	3 ¹ / ₄	1	1
Zingen	1	3 ¹ / ₄	1 ¹ / ₂	1 ¹ / ₂	1 ¹ / ₂	1 ¹ / ₂	1 ¹ / ₂
Totaal	18	24	26 ¹ / ₂	26 ¹ / ₂	26 ¹ / ₂	26 ¹ / ₂	26 ¹ / ₂

(Source: *Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1919*)

The internal dynamics of this curricular division demonstrate a strict discipline of the body and an expansion of spatial knowledge designed systematically from Grade 1 to Grade 7 (*Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1919*): *First Grade*. The primary language of instruction is Javanese. In this grade, students are taught basic reading and writing using the Latin alphabet, as well as counting from 1 to 20. Additionally, Dutch language practice, communication lessons, and copying dictations begin in first grade.

Second Grade. Dutch begins to be used as a language of instruction alongside Javanese. Subjects taught to second-grade students include expanded arithmetic up to 100, continuing the communication lessons previously studied, continuing reading instruction, language education consisting of copying dictations, learning simple grammar rules, and studying singular and plural forms. In this grade, sewing is introduced as a new subject, such as cross-stitching on coarse fabric and knitting.

Third Grade. The students write simple essays based on scenes and stories. Math now goes up to 1,000. The metric system is also studied. Additionally, there are geography lessons; they learn simple geographic concepts by drawing the school, the schoolyard, and

the area where they live. Furthermore, reading and writing in Javanese is taught using the Javanese script.

Fourth Grade. In this grade, students write more challenging essays based on stories and pictures, with a strong emphasis on appropriate word choice. Fourth grade serves as an extension or further development of the knowledge previously acquired. In math class, quick and accurate calculations are paramount; additionally, students must be able to solve simple problems. The students also learn to draw using paper and blackboards, as well as when drawing batik patterns. They study the geography of Java by drawing maps. In handicrafts class, they make simple outfits for dolls. They also learn to sew, cross-stitch on linen and fine mesh, and knit with fine yarn for collars, cuffs, and so on. In this class, reading and writing in Malay are also taught.

Fifth Grade. Education from the previous grade continues, where in mathematics lessons the students study common fractions and simple fractions. Meanwhile, the entire Indonesian archipelago is covered in Geography class. In this class, they begin learning to sew with white thread and make batik, while also learning to sew useful details such as hems, making buttonholes, and finishing garment seams.

Sixth Grade. In this grade, students are occasionally assigned free-response essay assignments. In mathematics, greater emphasis is placed on the students' thought processes when solving problems. Geography expands to cover the Eastern Archipelago, while the study of Dutch geography is conducted using maps, with explanations provided as needed to convey the local conditions. History is introduced as a new subject, in which stories from the history of the Indonesian archipelago are told. Natural sciences are also covered, including the structure and functions of the human body as well as health principles. Handicraft instruction is developed, covering mending holes and the use of sewing machines. In addition, white embroidery and batik techniques were continued and developed.

Seventh Grade This grade served as a general continuation and expansion of academic knowledge. Here, Europe and other continents were studied. Embroidery instruction continued as well. The doorstoppen technique and Hardanger embroidery were introduced, while batik-making exercises were conducted not only on cotton fabric but also on shantung silk.

The most radical ideological tension within the curriculum of the *Madioensche Kartinschool* occurred through the political-religious infiltration mobilized by the local Islamic nationalist movement. Beyond the 14 secular subjects engineered by colonial authorities, the school surprisingly provided Islamic religious education for its female students. The presence of this religious material did not stem from the initiative of the colonial government or the central foundation, but from the firm demands of the Sarekat

Islam (SI) organization. Based on this political compromise, Islamic religious education was mandated twice a month, taught directly by Sarekat Islam members every Sunday morning (Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1919). From a deconstructive perspective, SI's intervention on Sunday mornings a day traditionally designated in the Christian colonial calendar for rest or church worship constituted a daring ideological subversion. Sarekat Islam tactically utilized this curricular loophole as a form of counter-hegemony to safeguard the mentality of indigenous students, ensuring they did not undergo total secularization or become unrooted from their cultural-religious foundations due to intensive exposure to Western education.

The most compelling deconstructive fact regarding these trips to Ngawi and Solo is that their entire operational costs were successfully covered independently through the accumulation of capital generated from the sale of batik cloth and embroidery produced directly by the students' own hands (Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1918). By relying fully on their own money, the students successfully transformed a handicraft curriculum originally designed by colonial authorities for domestication (shaping them into compliant housewives) into an instrument of financial emancipation that became a source of immense collective pride. This micro-economic agency even spilled over into the domain of literacy, where funds from batik sales were utilized to purchase more than 40 new books to enrich the school library, allowing the literature collection to rapidly expand to a total of 250 books by 1919 (Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1918, 1919).

Ironically, amidst the strength of these ideological and economic currents from below, the colonial government continually sought to maintain formal control by equating the status of the *Madioensche Kartinschool* with that of Dutch private schools. The consequence of this administrative equalization forced certain school regulations to comply and align with the Dutch school system, including the determination of official school holidays (see Figure 8) (Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1917). This alignment of holidays was the colonial state's final bureaucratic pacification strategy to project an illusion of Western order, even though within the school's walls, critical reasoning, Sarekat Islam's religious militancy, and the economic self-sufficiency of the students had successfully reclaimed the right to intellectual liberation from below.

Figure 8.

School Regulations (Vereeniging Madioensche Kartinschool, 1917)

SCHOOLREGLEMENT.

Hierin zijn geen veranderingen aangebracht.
De vacantes worden in verband met haar officieele naam,
n. l. particuliere Hollandsch - Inlandsche school voor meisjes,
op denzelfden voet geregeld als op de Gouvernements Hollandsch-
Inlandsche scholen.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Madioensche Kartinschool cannot be understood merely as a philanthropic product of the Dutch colonial Ethical Policy. The school functioned as a hybrid and contested educational space in which colonial strategies of regulation, domestication, credentialism, and spatial control confronted various forms of indigenous agency. Colonial authority was exercised through government decrees, discriminatory teacher qualifications, dependence on public subsidies, and the relocation of the school across several institutional spaces. Nevertheless, these forms of control were continuously challenged by cross-ethnic and cross-ideological cooperation involving Chinese benefactors, Javanese elites, sugar companies, OSVIA students, Sarekat Islam, parents, teachers, and female students. Their contributions supported the school financially, introduced religious instruction into the secular curriculum, expanded its library, and enabled independent student activities. The boycott following the dismissal of Yudokusoemo further demonstrates that students and parents were not passive recipients of colonial education but active actors capable of resisting institutional injustice.

These findings imply that colonial education should be interpreted as a negotiated arena rather than a one-directional instrument of imperial domination. The experiences of the Madioensche Kartinschool show that indigenous communities were able to appropriate colonial educational institutions and transform them into spaces for intellectual emancipation, economic independence, religious expression, and collective mobilization. Activities initially designed to reinforce domestic gender roles, such as batik and embroidery, were redirected by female students into sources of financial autonomy. Similarly, fundraising networks and the involvement of Sarekat Islam reveal that educational institutions could connect local economic resources, religious identities, and emerging political consciousness. Therefore, the history of the school contributes to a broader understanding of Indonesian women's education by emphasizing the agency of local actors and the importance of regional networks in shaping the development of colonial-era education.

Future research should expand the available evidence beyond official colonial archives by examining Javanese-language sources, personal correspondence, newspapers, family collections, and oral histories from the descendants of former students and teachers. These sources may reveal the everyday experiences, interpersonal relationships, and personal perspectives of indigenous women that are largely absent from institutional reports. Comparative studies between the Madioensche Kartinschool and other Kartini schools across Java are also needed to determine whether the financial alliances, religious interventions, and resistance strategies identified in Madiun represented local characteristics or broader patterns. In addition, extending the period of analysis beyond 1919 would provide a more complete account of the school's institutional survival, its response to the

Great Depression, the development of nationalist movements, and the transformations experienced during the Japanese occupation.

DECLARATIONS

Author Contribution

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Declaration of AI Use

ChatGPT and Gemini was used to improve language clarity under author supervision.

Additional Information

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