

# TAN MALAKA: THE CONCEPT OF 100% INDEPENDENCE IN PERFECTING THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

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## Abstract

*This study examines Tan Malaka's idea of 100% independence as an effort to perfect Indonesian independence in the context of history and politics after the proclamation of August 17, 1945. As one of Indonesia's revolutionary figures, Tan Malaka argued that the independence declared in 1945 had not achieved the true meaning of complete freedom. He criticized independence, enjoyed only by a handful of elites and intellectuals, while the people were still marginalized from the welfare promised by independence. In his work "Towards the Republic of Indonesia," Tan Malaka emphasized the importance of true independence, where all Indonesian people, without exception, felt the results of the struggle. According to Tan Malaka, 100% independence is freedom that is not only free from physical colonization but also from economic and political dependence on foreign parties. Rejection of diplomacy that is considered detrimental, the struggle through the Madilog concept, and the development of the Murbaism ideology became the main pillars of Tan Malaka's strategy to achieve complete independence. This study focuses on the analysis of Tan Malaka's thoughts that are relevant to the current conditions of Indonesia, which despite being formally independent, still faces various forms of internal "colonization" such as corruption, injustice, and dependence on foreign powers. Using qualitative-descriptive methods, this study aims to explore more deeply the concept of 100% independence promoted by Tan Malaka and its relevance in efforts to build Indonesia as a truly independent, just, and prosperous country for all its people.*

**Keywords:** Indonesia, 100% Independence, Tan Malaka

## A. Introduction

On August 17, 1945 is a happy date for all Indonesian people, where the independence was realized by the Indonesian people, the moment of the proclamation was represented by the figure of the



national hero as well as the first president and vice-president of the Indonesian nation, namely Soekarno-Hatta in proclaiming the proclamation of independence of the Indonesian nation, the independence was held in Pegangsaan Timur No. 56 on Friday 17 August 1945 at 10.30 AM Java time and in the proclamation coincided with the holy month of Ramadan. Indonesia has been imprisoned for a long time in the colonialism of European nations such as Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands who in the record colonized Indonesia for 350 years, then entered colonization from Asia such as Japan which colonized Indonesia for approximately 3.5 years. The long journey of the Indonesian nation in achieving independence is indeed an unforgettable history, many great heroes and fighters are not written in textbooks. However, they participated in defending the homeland for independence over the colonizers who controlled Indonesia.<sup>1</sup>

Indonesia gained independence in 1945, there are many moments recorded in history regarding Indonesian independence, struggling and fighting against colonialists Indonesia has been an independent country since 1945 until today 2024. The 1945 Constitution, which is the guideline for the Indonesian nation, explains that Indonesia prohibits all forms of colonialism. Knowing how bad a colonialism is, Indonesia society gaining the independency with all efforts and methods. But the question today is, does Indonesia fully independent until now?, does Indonesia really 100% independent country in 2024? of course this question has been questioned by the national hero of our nation, namely Datuk Tan Malaka, who is known as the Father of the Republic of Indonesia because he himself was the first to introduce Indonesia on the world stage as a country with the "Republic" system. It is stated in his book

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<sup>1</sup> Bahar, S., Indonesia, I. P. P. K., Negara, I. S., Preparation, I. B. P. U. U., & Indonesia, K. Minutes of the Inquiry Agency for the Preparatory Efforts for Indonesian Independence (BPUPKI), Committee for the Preparation of Indonesian Independence (PPKI), May 29, 1945-August 19, 1945. (1995). p. 87



entitled "Towards Republic of Indonesia" which was published in 1925.<sup>2</sup>

Tan Malaka explained how Indonesia must be 100% independent, in the true sense of independence. It is no longer Independence for only one group or elite, but the true sense of 100% Independence is independency for all Indonesian society. Since Indonesia is a country with republic system, so in any form of atmosphere, any policy, and in any condition, Indonesia holds the guideline that Indonesia belongs to all Indonesian society, so in any aspect regarding Indonesia, the involvement of all Indonesian society must be the principle, basis and also the goals.

In this 100% independence from Tan Malaka's perspective, we can get a broader view of how the Indonesian nation should achieve complete independence. In Tan Malaka's view, independence is not just obtained by the elite, moneyed people, or the powerful one. Independence must be owned to all citizens in Indonesia, from Sabang to Merauke, proclaiming independence in Tan Malaka's view means not tolerating colonialism in any form. Resistance, intolerance to colonialism, choosing Independence or death is the most likely path to 100% independence, So, from this background, the author is interested in studying more deeply how Tan Malaka reads the independence of the Indonesian nation, as well as his big concept of 100% Independence that must be realized by the Indonesian people for Independence, as well as this concept according to Tan Malaka is the way to realize the perfection of the Indonesian state to become a republic Indonesia.

## B. Method

This study uses a qualitative method with a library research approach to analyze Tan Malaka's idea of 100% independence as expressed in his book "*Naar de Republiek Indonesia*." Data was collected through literature searches that included Tan Malaka's works, including books, articles, and relevant historical records, as

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<sup>2</sup> Rinardi, H. Proclamation of August 17, 1945: The Political Revolution of the Indonesian Nation. *Journal of the History of Citra Lekha*, 2(2), (2017). p. 142



well as writings from researchers and historians that discussed Tan Malaka's thoughts. The analysis was carried out using descriptive-analytical techniques, where the data that had been collected was analyzed in depth to explore the concept of independence carried out by Tan Malaka and its relevance to the current conditions of Indonesia. This approach allows researchers to understand the historical and philosophical context of Tan Malaka's ideas, as well as evaluate the implementation and challenges faced in achieving 100% independence in Indonesia.

## C. Result and Discussion

### Biography Of Tan Malaka

Tan Malaka, was born with the name Ibrahim and title Datuk SuTan Malaka on June 2, 1897 in Nagari Pandam Gadang, Gunuang Omeh, Lima Puluh Kota, West Sumatra. Tan Malaka was an Indonesian teacher, philosopher, and freedom fighter. Coming from a noble family, Tan Malaka was educated in Dutch schools, but later became interested in revolution and socialism. In the Netherlands, he studied the works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, which influenced his views on the struggle against colonialism. Upon his return to Indonesia, he was actively involved in the resistance movement and was known as one of the founders of the Murba Party, a political party that aimed to fight for Indonesia's full independence.<sup>3</sup>

During his youth, Tan Malaka was greatly influenced by the socio-economic conditions of indigenous communities in the Dutch East Indies. He saw the stark inequality between the capitalists and the workers, as well as the suffering of the coolies in the plantations of East Sumatra. This experience prompted him to write and fight for a more just social change. He also established schools that aimed to educate the younger generation in the spirit of nationalism and resistance to colonialism. In addition, his involvement with the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) led him to a more radical

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<sup>3</sup> Tohis, R. A. *Progressive Islam: A Social Study of Tan Malaka's Islamic Thought*. Ethics International Press.(2024). Hlm 1-2



struggle, although he later took an independent path in the struggle for independence.<sup>4</sup>

Tan Malaka spent much of his time in exile, both in Europe and Asia, where he continued to write and strategize for Indonesian independence. His most famous work, "*Naar de Republiek Indonesia*", became his manifesto for the independence of Indonesia and gave him the nickname "Father of the Republic of Indonesia" by Muhammad Yamin. After the proclamation of independency, Tan Malaka returned to Indonesia and was involved in various battles and political discussions. However, his often-different views from other Indonesian leaders left him marginalized. In the end, he was executed on February 21, 1949, but his legacy of struggle lives on in Indonesian history as one of the most influential national figures.<sup>5</sup>

## THE INDEPENDENCE IN TAN MALAKA'S VIEW

Tan Malaka is a figure who has extraordinary ideas; he chose an unusual way of life to proclaim Indonesian independence. Tan Malaka's version of independence also has its own version compared to his contemporaries, he chose to fight for Indonesia's independence in full, without diplomatic considerations. Tan Malaka aspires to complete independence, the independence in which there is no longer foreign involvement in it. Tan Malaka aspires to full independence, where all Indonesian territories belong wholly to Indonesia. Tan Malaka fights for 100% independence, where there is no longer one group or elite that is independent, but the independence of all Indonesian people is completely elected.

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<sup>4</sup> Pramasto, A. (2019). ANALYSIS OF TAN MALAKA'S" NORTHERN INDONESIA" IDEA ON PHILIPPINE NATION HISTORY. *Santhet (Jurnal Sejarah Pendidikan Dan Humaniora)*, 3(1), (2019). Hlm 36

<sup>5</sup> Sirait, K., Pardosi, F. P., Manullang, V., & Sirait, R. (2023). History of Tan Malaka's Political Thought on Independence and the Concept of the Indonesian State. *Journal Transformation of Mandalika*, 4(6), (2023). Shifts pp. 329-330



According to Tan Malaka, the 100% Independency is true independence for the Indonesian nation.<sup>6</sup> Although on August 17, 1945 independence was proclaimed, according to Tan Malaka the independence in 1945 was an independence felt only by the elite, the moneyed and the powerful people only. Meanwhile, the Indonesian people do not fully feel the independence. The 1945 independence belonged to the rich and powerful, so Tan Malaka wanted 100% independence for all Indonesian people. In Tan Malaka's meeting with Soekarno, Hatta, Agus Salim on January 24, 1946, he expressed his disappointment to the figure about Indonesia's independence, he said;

*"To you friends, do you know why I am not interested in the independence you have created. I feel that independence is not designed for the common good. Your freedom is governed by a handful of people, not creating a great revolution. Today I come to you, O Sukarno, my friend. I must say that we are Independent, because Independence must be 100 percent, today I see that independence belongs only to the elite, who suddenly become bourjoists, joy becomes amtenar, independence belongs only to you, not to the people. We are on a wrong journey about the meaning of Merdeka. If you do not immediately fix it, then until when this nation will not be independent, only its leaders will experience independence, because independence is just and prosperous. Listen to my resistance, because if you continue to behave like this, then this is the last day I come as a friend and brother. Tomorrow, is the day when I will become your enemy, because I will continue to fight for 100 percent independence."*<sup>7</sup>

Tan Malaka viewed that Indonesia's independence from the beginning was not designed for 100% independence, so he was the one who fought for the 100% independence to be realized, even though he had to be an enemy of his own friends, becoming an

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<sup>6</sup> Crawford, O. .*The political thought of Tan Malaka* (Doctoral dissertation). (2019). Hlm 30

<sup>7</sup> Subekti, Dimas. *Combing Indonesia's Abnormal Period*. (Deepublish, 2021). p. 112



opposition in the Indonesian government (Soekarno-Hatta). According to Tan Malaka, this concept of independence can be felt by any circle, both the people, rulers, and elites who are busy collecting money. Of course, this independence is also expected by all Indonesian people, because they are no longer colonized by other nations or by their own nation.

Tan Malaka sees the independence as the same as sovereignty, where the meaning of sovereignty itself is the highest power. Indonesia is a nation that gives the highest power or sovereignty in the hands of the people, so the purpose of the existence and essence of Indonesian independence is for the Indonesian people. According to Tan Malaka, Independence as sovereignty must contain two types of power rights of every citizen without exception, namely the right of birth and the right of mind. The right to birth includes necessities for life, food, clothing, house, and cell phones. Meanwhile, inner rights include the right to assemble, power, expression, and human rights (HAM). Both types of rights belong to every citizen, 100% independence is how sovereignty is the same as power as well as the content of power including the right to birth and mind must belong to all Indonesian people.<sup>8</sup>

Independence contains peace because all citizens are fulfilled with their rights as an independent citizen, so that the independent life has an impact on prosperity and peace. However, if 100% Independence is not pursued or implemented, then the rights of citizens do not run, thus having an impact on un prosperity and chaos in a country, so that a big impact occurs, namely the threat to the independence of a nation. Does Indonesia today own 100% independent, or is it the other way around, Indonesia is threatened with independence because independence belongs to the elite alone? Of course, looking at the real conditions today, independence only belong to a group, social inequality is visible in front of our eyes by seeing the rich are getting richer, and the poor are getting poorer.

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<sup>8</sup> Setiawan, A., Subaryana, S., & Lestari, S. N. (2023). Ideological Evolution: The Influence of Tan Malaka on Indonesian Politics, 1921-1949. *Heritage: Journal of History and Cultural Heritage*, 4(3), (2023). Page 140





The Indonesian people only understand about independence, but they are not really independent in practice. Capitalists and oligarchs are flocking the power and collecting money, they are busy with their own affairs and then the detriment many people. As can be seen today, our officials in Indonesia are not busy taking care of their people, but are busy dividing the power pie, and preserving KKN (Corruption, Collusion, Nepotism). Crime seems to be unstoppable committed by our officials, they take refuge behind power and property. The law is like a game for them, because Indonesian law can be bought with the power they have. They are being corrupt, killing the people, making policy order, our government today is busy for their world and their own independence. As a result, Indonesia's independence until 2024 is only independence as said by Tan Malaka to the proclamatory, called as the independence for the elite, independence for the rich and powerful.

The concept of 100% Independence from Tan Malaka needs to be revitalized, because this concept is an alternative way of prosperity for the Indonesian nation, as well as realizing justice, unity, togetherness, and prosperity for all Indonesian people. The concept of 100% independence must come from the consciousness of every Indonesian people, must become an independent people, no longer colonized by foreigners and buyers of laws that only benefit themselves. 100% independence must be sought, until this moment must be pursued endlessly. The Republic of Indonesia is a complete speech in Tan Malaka's book, as well as the book is Tan Malaka's dream which until now has been realized in his speech, but not with the daily life of the Indonesian people. Ironically, 100% independence of the Indonesian nation has not happened up until today. If in the past, colonialism was carried out by foreign countries, now it is different and more ironic, colonization is carried out by the Indonesian people themselves who are greedy for power, thirsty for praise and interests.





## HOW TAN MALAKA MEANS 100% INDEPENDENCE

100% independence is the dream of Tan Malaka is still a story of books and thoughts. 100% independence is how independence is felt by all Indonesian people, this type of independence according to Tan Malaka is the true truth of the independence of the Indonesian nation. 100% independence is no longer tied to foreign colonizers or colonization carried out by Indonesian citizens themselves, but independence that is both brothers, even though they are different, still have the same goal of building, liberating and prospering the Indonesian nation.

At that time, Tan Malaka was striving and consistent to achieve 100% Indonesian independence involving various strategies and thoughts aimed at freeing the nation from the clutches of the colonizers, the real efforts made by Tan Malaka included;<sup>9</sup>

a. Rejection of all forms of diplomacy

One of the approaches taken is the rejection of diplomacy strategies that are considered ineffective. Diplomacy is often seen as a way to sacrifice too much of the nation's interests. Critics of this approach to diplomacy argue that when dealing with invaders, such as facing a thief, they should not be discussed, but should be expelled, even, if it necessary, it can take action by force. However, this approach is not free from risks. Violent evictions can trigger fierce resistance from the colonizers, which can ultimately cost many Indonesian lives. This is a dilemma faced by freedom fighters: choosing between fighting by violence or finding a middle ground through diplomacy. There is one quote that is a slap for the Indonesian people in prioritizing diplomacy in independence, like *"if a thief enters your house, expel him, if you need to hit him. Don't invite discussions"*

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<sup>9</sup> Philosophy study of fahrudin faiz. "Merdeka 100% Tan then". On August 15, 2024



b. The struggle of epistemology through the concept of MADILOG

In the context of intellectual struggle, the concept of MADILOG (Materialism, Dialectics, and Logic) introduced by Tan Malaka became an important foundation in developing knowledge that was independent from colonial myths and dogmas. Madilog emphasized the importance of reading social reality with a materialist and logical approach, avoiding the mystical views that were often used by colonizers to maintain their power. Tan Malaka encouraged the Indonesian people to fight against the colonization of knowledge with a critical and logical way of thinking, freeing themselves from the shackles of irrational thinking. Through this epistemological approach, the people are expected to be able to understand their social conditions more deeply and find a way out of colonialism, not only physically but also mentally.

c. The struggle through Murbaism

Murbaisms, or the ideology of the common people introduced by Tan Malaka, is more than just a form of social resistance. This is a political concept that emphasizes deliberation and participation of all levels of society in the struggle for independence. In Tan Malaka's view, the struggle for independence must involve all people, regardless of social or religious class. Murbaism emphasizes the importance of social solidarity and cooperation between various groups in society, including combining socialist values with belief in God. This shows that the struggle for independence is not only about overthrowing the colonizers, but also about building a just and equal society, where each individual has a role and voice in determining the direction of the nation.

D. Union of struggle (1946)

The United Struggle, formed in 1946, strengthened the concept of 100% independence that Tan Malaka fought for. In this United Struggle, Tan Malaka and his colleagues introduced a "minimum program" which included demands to



form a people's government, ensure full independence, and build a people's army that came from the people. The program also called for the organization of European prisoners, the disarmament of Japan, and the confiscation of enemy property as concrete steps to strengthen Indonesia's position in the face of the colonizers. Unity of Struggle is a forum to unite various elements of society that are different, but have the same goal, namely full independence for Indonesia.

#### E. Political Economic Guerrilla Strategy

The guerrilla political and economic strategy compiled in the Gerpolek brochure by Tan Malaka was also an important part of the struggle for independence. This brochure highlights the losses caused by failed diplomacy and divides Indonesia's period of struggle into two: a period of glory due to fighting and a period of setbacks due to diplomacy. In this context, political and economic guerrilla is intended as a strategy to defend independence by utilizing economic and political power more effectively, as well as avoiding mistakes made in diplomacy. Tan Malaka taught that to achieve true independence, the Indonesian people must continue to resist and not depend on negotiations that can reduce their sovereignty.

Tan Malaka in the idea of 100% Independence is a way for Indonesia to become an independent country, no longer confined and fully bound by other countries. Indonesia is an independent country, it is not easy to become an independent country, but Indonesia has a wealth of natural and human resources. So, in very consciously, Indonesia was built with the cooperation of all Indonesian people, flocking to create a 100% Independent Indonesia. Continue to try, learn, not be afraid of failure, build Indonesia with the Indonesian people themselves to become downstream to upstream actors. 100%



independence from the perspective of Tan Malaka brings Indonesia into prosperity, peace and welfare.<sup>10</sup>

The meaning of the Republic of Indonesia is also manifested if Indonesia dares to try to become a 100% independent country. Indonesia is wealth country in everything, so if the Indonesian people and the government are able to work together, they will be free from the shackles of colonialism both mentally and physically. So, Indonesia can build itself, become an independent country, try to build and learn from various mistakes. Indonesia must wake up, if any foreign country enters and dredges Indonesia's wealth under the guise of cooperation, at least in Tan Malaka's view, it will certainly expel them. Foreign countries know the wealth of Indonesia, so they try to cooperate then wanting to control Indonesia because they know the abundant resources of Indonesia.

In fact, Indonesia becomes the world's economic center if it is able to manage its existing resources well. Indeed, 100% independence does not mean anti-cooperation with other countries, or anti-foreign investors and becoming an introverted country. Rather, 100% Independence for the Indonesian state is Independence for all Indonesian people, then it is not fully dependent on other parties or countries in building the Indonesian nation. Even if other nations or foreign investors enter Indonesia, then we ourselves as the host limit them to guests. It does not provide opportunities for them to enter and exit freely as well as invest and cooperate.

Tan Malaka explained, that we as a country that strives for independence 100% strive for a place where we study, we provide opportunities for foreign parties to enter solely for learning space with the aim of increasing Indonesian human resources. We ourselves as an independent country give their limits to cooperate, because as an independent country we have the right to our own household, not the will of foreigners to enjoy the wealth of our country.

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<sup>10</sup> Malacca, T. Naar de'Republiek Indonesia" Towards the Republic of Indonesia. *Jakarta: Yayasan Massa.*( 1987). p. 28



Indonesia has a lot of resources which require machines and human resources to manage. Here Tan Malaka's idea explains that a country that is still new to independence and has minimal in everything but aims to be 100% independent is not prestigious to learn, the people and the government must work together to make machines or buy machines for the purposes of independent management. we do need to sacrifice a little thing for something big, by not having the prestige of learning from foreigners and buying their machines with the note that there are restrictions on foreigners to enter Indonesia, is the way and way to realize 100% independence. In Tan Malaka's own hypothesis, foreign parties could have turned in the direction of loving Indonesia and being loyal to Indonesia for various reasons. There is an advantage for the Indonesian nation itself, if foreign parties choose to be loyal to Indonesia, and participate in building Indonesia to become 100% independent, then justice, prosperity, peace will be easy to realize.

*"What is the measure of all is: the Indonesian people should not be threatened by their independence and prosperity. The guest nation remains safe and prosperous, over time with a path that is suitable for Indonesian laws and customs, the guest nation melts into Indonesian people who are obedient and loyal to the people's state and Indonesian laws" <sup>11</sup>*

Meanwhile, when the state is able to accommodate everything to manage resources independently, then that is where Indonesia no longer needs foreign parties in the service and goods cooperation sector, but the path that must be chosen is to become an independent country by focusing on economic independence. The state no longer needs foreign services, but the state chooses the Indonesian people themselves to manage. And foreign countries, only given less and less space to cooperate with Indonesia.

100% independence is a country that is no longer a slave to other countries, but it becomes an independent country with wealth that is well managed by the Indonesian people, and fully felt by the Indonesian people themselves. This kind of independence in Tan

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid p. 34



Malaka's view is Indonesia's way of feeling how rich Indonesia is, and how important Indonesia is in the eyes of the world when Indonesia is able to be 100% independent. There is no tolerance in an independence, Merdeka is the meaning of freedom for all Indonesian people without exception. Then, they built Indonesia themselves slowly. It takes a long time to build Indonesia and its people, there will be no more social gaps if Indonesia is truly 100% independent, because both the people and the government work together to live in pairs.<sup>12</sup>

The meaning of the Republic Indonesia is really inherent and become the nickname of Indonesia. 100% Independence by Tan Malaka brings Indonesia to the goal of prosperity, there is no more hunger, poverty, unemployment, crime and other negative news broadcast massively. Indonesia will be an example or role model for other countries, because independency has been achieved, all Indonesian people has been carried out the independency and all elements work together to build Indonesia into the main axis of other countries in various sectors of life.

100% independency indicates that sovereignty is in the hands of the people, people have the highest power in deciding everything. Laws are made by the people themselves based on the will of the people through their representatives, laws are made purely for the benefit of the Indonesian people, there are no more rules of order made for the benefit of a few people. Awareness is built by the Indonesian people who are truly 100% independent, growing into a country with capable and wise people and leaders. Tan Malaka's dream of 100% Independency is also the dream of almost all Indonesian people, a positive impact that is so real and a happy ending is Tan Malaka's big idea for the Indonesian nation.

## D. Conclusion

In Tan Malaka's view, true independency for Indonesia is independence that is 100% felt by all its people, not just by a handful

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid pp. 36–38



of elites or certain groups. Although the proclamation of independence had been made on August 17, 1945, Tan Malaka saw that the independence was still not fully independent because of the dominance of the interests of a few elite groups who tended to ignore the welfare of the people. Therefore, Tan Malaka strongly criticized the independence that was only enjoyed by intellectuals and power holders, without paying attention to the basic needs and rights of all Indonesian people.

Tan Malacca championed the concept of "100% independence" where Indonesia must become a truly independent country, both from foreign influences and from internal domination by certain groups. He emphasized the importance of sovereignty that involves all people in various aspects of state life, including in the rights of birth and mind. Through various strategies, such as the rejection of diplomacy with the colonizers, the intellectual struggle with the concept of MADILOG, and the development of the ideology of Murbais, Tan Malaka strives to realize true and equitable independence. However, to this day, Tan Malaka's ideals of 100% independence are still a major challenge for Indonesia, which still struggles to face social inequality and the domination of power by a handful of elites.

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