

PRIYANTO WIBOWO

When Ethnics Compete the Lands: Historical Study on the Racial Riots in Solo City, Central Java, Indonesia

ABSTRACT: *The riots in Solo, Central Java, Indonesia, become an historical phenomenon with different perceived conclusions. The political approach gives an answer that the riots have taken place due to the loss of political and cultural identities in line with the disappearance of feudalistic structures which have mastered Solo for ages. The economic approach tends to use Marxist analysis, i.e. the existence of the exploitation of the production facility owners toward the majority. Meanwhile, the sociological approach concludes that there is a conflict thinking pattern in the community to cope with the problems considered as the foundation for their collective memory. In the context of racial riots and chaos in Solo City has often taken place in various scales. From Mataram kingdom in the seventeenth century to the "Orde Baru" (New Order) government in twentieth century, there were tragedies but the basic causes and core problems of the tragedies were not yet clearly known. This paper revealed the chaotic tragedy in Solo, Central Java, Indonesia, particularly the racial tragedy blaming the Chinese ethnic who was considered to fight over the topographical city space. The double standards of the settlement policy done by the Solo royal palace and the Dutch colonial government formed the city space which was potentially conflicting. This paper is not a superficial study which has been done so far, but it clearly illustrates how this conflict actually took place in order that public can get in-depth understanding regarding the issue.*

KEY WORDS: *Chinese ethnic, Solo city, royal palace, Dutch colonial, Indonesian government, discrimination and alienation, chaotic tragedy, and city space.*

INTRODUCTION

In two days, on 14-15 May 1998, a massive racial chaos took place in Solo City, Central Java, Indonesia. Looting, burning, destruction, violence, humiliation, and other physical actions leading to racial assaults occurred in Solo City and this was predicted as the impact of the destruction which had taken place in Jakarta a day before. This tragedy reminded us to think of what had previously happened in two centuries and half, commonly known as "Angke tragedy" in Batavia in 1740 and *bedah Kartasura* (Kartasura surgery) in 1742.

These two tragedies above lead to two common phenomena which we can easily know. Firstly, the tragedies massively occurred in the authority centres: Batavia as

the centre of VOC (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* or Dutch East-India Company) and Kartasura as the Mataram centre. In the May 1998 tragedy, Jakarta as the capital city of Indonesia and Solo as a big city with cultural backgrounds prepared for an international tourism city, both of which are the symbols of Indonesia with each own historical moment.

The second similarity is Chinese ethnic as the tragedy object or target. In Batavia, this ethnic controlled economically marginalized sectors with their dominance on sugarcane industry centres; meanwhile, in Kartasura, Chinese appeared to master the retail trading and middlemen between Javanese people and native elites controlled by VOC officers in the north coastline of Java.

Dr. Priyanto Wibowo is a Senior Lecturer at the Chinese Study Programme, Department of History, Faculty of Humanities UI (University of Indonesia), UI Campus Depok, West Java, Indonesia. Corresponding author is: endah_hwl@yahoo.com

Being *middlemen* led Chinese ethnic to play an important role with two different faces: the face with European importers and VOC officers, and the one with local people. As the middlemen who have to cleverly play situations and conditions, they also lived in two coins of possibilities which have two thin lines: they had to get financial benefits according to commodity fluctuation, but they had also to face loss or bankruptcy risks.

Regardless the economic and political considerations, two lines can be understood from such comparison. The first line is that there was a similarity of both cities equally suffering from racial tragedies at their own ages; however, Solo has more frequency of racial tragedies than Jakarta does. The second is the role of Chinese ethnic in the city's social life; however, Solo has a lot of basic differences from what Jakarta has, one of which is that Solo functions as a space for Chinese ethnic and this ethnic has a role as a *social entity*, with a social and cultural meeting point, and Solo is dominated with Javanese culture which is far away from conflicting atmosphere.

Cultural approach, therefore, cannot be used to reveal the conflict roots which took place in Solo, particularly racial cases. This idea leads to implement the second approach, called a space approach, urging the control of space existence of a city, particularly the ones connected to social life, by social entity; therefore, this entity controlling the city always tries to prevent the other entity to use this entity. On the other words, is it possible that the racial tragedies in Solo are caused by space competition conflict?

THE HISTORY OF RACIAL TRAGEDIES IN SOLO

When *Geger Pacina* (Chinese tumult) ended in 1743 and the centre of Mataram Kingdom was moved from Kartasura to Surakarta in 1746, until the beginning of the XX century, the news about the tragedies in the government centre in Java was not heard anymore, despite small economic conflicts which sound individual still occurred. These

small conflicts were easily coped by involving the public figures of Solo city as the centre of Surakarta Sultanate in 1755 and which was not much bothered by the ethnical or racial tense lasting. This peaceful condition lasted for several years from *bedah Kartasura* (Kartasura surgery) took place.¹

The first racial conflict occurred in 1911, when there was a conflict between native *batik* traders who were Muslim in Laweyan with their *batik* clothing suppliers who were mostly Chinese people. The conflict, which took place all of a sudden, did not lead to massive destructions and the strongly felt effect could stop the trading cooperation between Javanese and Chinese ethnics (Mehden, 2010:3). Upon this tragedy, a series of conflicts and tense, none of which was connected to the violence to Chinese ethnic, attacked Solo, such as a labour strike initiated by Haji Misbach² in 1920, followed by a massive strike done by train and pawnshop officers in 1923 and 1925.

All the above chaotic facts can be considered to be controlled. *Sarekat Dagang Islam* (Muslim Trader Association) tends to limit their movement at Laweyan kampong and was spreading their activities to other kampongs at the beginning of their existence. Haji Misbach's movement, however, involved economic centres such as stations, pawnhouses, offices and banks, instead of individual assets. Similarly, the influence and authority of native businessmen, in this case related to the Sultanate and Mangkunegaran in Solo region, as well as the colonial laws, were still frightened and respected by the wide community (Siraishi, 1990:221).

¹Both occurrences clearly illustrate the conflicts among authority elites, either VOC (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* or Dutch East-India Company, a trading company that held a monopoly in Indonesia from 1602 to 1799), Mataram Kingdom, and the relationship of both. In the Javanese elites, these events were misused for their own groups. See, for further information, Leonard Blusse (2004:176).

²Haji Misbach was a public figure of *Sarekat Islam* (Islamic League) movement. Although using Islam basis with Hajj title, Misbach did not have any connection with *Sarekat Islam*. His ideological orientation tends to socialism; he, therefore, approached labourers to flame his rebellion to the government. See, for further information, Th. Sumartana (1991:111).

The really chaotic condition which attacked Solo City and neglected the existing legal and racial order took place in September 1945. With great euphoria of Independence, a number of Solo people were doing the demonstration against the *swapraja* government (self-government) establishment. Their movement was initially limited in certain groups of people on the street. However, at the end of 1945, when the feudal authority in Surakarta did not show their intention on the proclaimed independence, these people showed their power. Their potential nuance revealed anti *swapraja* (self-government) illustrations by destroying and burning feudalism symbols, like *ndalem Kepatihan* or residence of chief minister to a king.³

In such a chaotic situation, the violence was spreading its power to economic centres of the foreigners who were considered disobedient to the nationalism and became the hands of the colonial government. Without any clear initial reasons, Chinese ethnic became the key targets of the tragedy, and their shops and houses were looted and destroyed, but this was finally controlled with great success by TKR (*Tentara Keamanan Rakyat* or People Safety Army).

Although the conflicts followed by violence and riots, particularly the ones with racial nuance, in the *Orde Lama* (Old Order) regime (1959-1966) did not take place, the conflicting situations in Solo community were strongly felt and these situations becomes the triggering factors when an opportunity exists. In the middle of 1950s, when NISM (*Nederlandsch Indische Spoorweg Maatschappij* or Dutch Train Enterprise in Indonesia) located in Balapan Station refused to allow their labourers to join SOBSI (*Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia* or All-Indonesia Federation of Labor Organizations), the wave of protests and destruction encouraged by the left-wing labour movement. They attacked and destroyed the facilities of

Balapan Station, especially the office of NISM representative, but the destruction was limited to the objects related to their interests and did not spread to other places.

The end of *Orde Lama* (Old Order) regime in 1965-1966 marked the starting point of the destructive activities leading to the racial chaos in Solo city. In line with the big flood attacking this city in the middle of 1966, in the condition of exterminating the Communist elements which were dominant in Solo city, the massive tragedy leading to racial conflicts occurred. The groups of people who admitted being victimized by the flood looted the rice storehouses at Purwopuran and then these groups were coordinated to move to *Pasar* (market) Legi and along Tambaksegaran Street to destroy and loot the shops belonging to Chinese people.

Despite the fact that this racial tragedy took place in several days, it led to a new psychological upheaval among Solo citizens which lasted for months, like the order recovery. The racial conflict of the upheaval signed with Communist extermination and tense dominated by political conditions gradually disappeared without leaving any notice at all. The disappearance cannot be driven away from Solo people's collective memory as marked by the fact that all of a sudden a racial conflict caused by a personal matter between a university student and *becak* (a form of pedaled three-wheeled rear-driven pedicab) rider took place in the next six year.

On the next day, this conflict became massive chaos with terrible racial problems ironically related to Chinese ethnic who were not really involved instead of Arab community who were directly involved in the initial step of the conflict. The investigation revealed that there was a powerful movement which directed the massive violence and anger to Chinese ethnic who had economically potential prospects.

Compared with the 1966-year tragedy, the 1972-year chaos can be considered as purely racial prototype of riots, because of the absence of bigger political tendency interests.

³According to the report, some officers and aristocrats of *Kepatihan* were kidnapped by the radical rebels who spoke against anti-*swapraja*. It is not clear whether this really took place or not, but the fact shows that the spirit against feudal was high. See, for further information, A.A.G.N. Dwipayana (2004:79).

This pattern can be repeated as the appearance of riots and racial violence involving Chinese ethnic in Solo city. The mass mobilization and a small-scale triggering factor becomes a unique characteristic of massive chaotic explosions which cover planning and preparation among certain mass groups. The movements of chaotic conditions and mobilization should be limited to certain groups prior to massive riots.

In November 1980, such patterns have occurred again. A quarrel between a young Chinese man with a Javanese UNS (*Universitas Negeri Sebelas Maret* or State University of Eleven March) student on Urip Sumohardjo Street turned to become a riot of throwing stones and destructing the shops along Urip Sumohardjo Street on the next day. Eventhough some public figure admitted investigating the people involved in this quarrel a day before, the marks of preparations regarding this chaos could be seen several days prior to this massive quarrel. Along Ir. Sutami Street, the mass who were gathering and merely seeing the traffic were becoming more aggressive throwing stones to the cars being driven by Chinese people.⁴

Therefore, when the mass were mobilized to investigate the people who were suspected to have been involved in the case of massive quarrel, these people were ready to be mobilized and they were waiting for further instructions to make movements. Another mark of planned mass mobilization appeared to the preparation to do these destructions, like vehicle preparation, stone collection, sticks, and others. Consequently, the chaotic upheaval occurred not only along Urip Sumohardjo Street but also on other streets in Solo city, particularly the location of Chinese ethnic settlements.

An interesting phenomenon which is related to this tragedy is that two days after this occurrence, the chaos was spreading to the

⁴See, for example, James T. Siegel (1986:232-233). This riot showed that the intellectual groups as coordinators, provocators, and the doers were involved. The coordinators were usually university students, while students of Senior High Schools became the doers. It is not clear yet who mobilized them, so they moved at the same at different cities.

neighbouring cities, such as Kartasura, Delanggu, Boyolali, and Klaten in Central Java. Another week, this upheaval was even further involving other cities, like Semarang and the ones in Central Java. The investigation proved that despite the existence of mass mobilization to the target cities, the mobilization was done by certain parties from Solo. Such chaotic patterns, which took place in 1980, show the networking and target existence to flame the massive riots in Central Java.

In the next two decades, another racial riot occurred in this Javanese cultural city. The occurrence which took place in the change demand nuance of the national government system seems to be more interesting to be investigated. If the triggering factors of mass mobilization of these two previous cases could be revealed, the riot in May 1998 does not need the factor. The tragedy, which resembled the 1966-year riot, took place with well coordinated and facilitated mass mobilization, transportation, communication, and destroying tools.

Although the tragedy did not spread to other Central Java areas, like the tragedy in November 1980, the racial riot in May 1998 qualitatively leads to terrible destruction and psychologically endless conflicts, especially for those victimized ones. Similarly, the violence resulted from the complicated tragedy is believed to be connected to rapping and sexual harassments. These two massive tragedies can be said to be more connected to genocide rather than social and economic riots which had previously taken place.⁵

THE SOLO SPACE

Since its establishment, Solo City has been designed as the royal government system on the basis of Javanese typological principle, as *kuthorojo* (a place where a king lives) or *kuthogoro* (royal governmental centre). Javanese authority concept believes in cosmology as the balance between macrocosmos and microcosmos with the king

⁵See, forexample, Eddie Lembong (2008:51). It is predicted that this riot was so organized that people could compete themselves to get authority when Soeharto did not become the President of Indonesia anymore.

as the centre and bridge of both. The palace, therefore, is located in the centre of the city space. Like the area typology surrounding *kuthogoro*, around the palace are the layers of circles illustrating the ray of light sources in god-king deification.⁶

In Javanese cosmology principles, the balance between macro and micro is really prioritized, and the balance between land and sea becomes the reference in city space planning. This balance is materialized between Merapi Mountain as the centre of sacredness on land and the South Sea as the centre of sacredness at sea.⁷

Considering that Merapi Mountain is located in the western area of Solo City and the sacred axis that the royal space planning is north-south, Solo experiences to have dual space planning. On the one side, the main roads stretch at the east-west axis with the last object at Merapi Mountain; on the other hand, the orientation of the palace is to the north marked by the pillar right on the north direction of Surakarta Sultanate. Consequently, all streets in Solo City form an east-west and north-south intersection which fulfills the requirements of *papat keblat, lima pancer*.⁸

⁶See, for further information, Soemarsaid Moertono (1985:139). Besides the city space arrangement, the topology concept on the basis of cosmology was also implemented in the area planning with *kuthorojo* in the centre. Around *kuthorojo* were *negara agung* as the lands belonging to noble families. In the third layer of this circle were *monconegoro* (outer region) as the defeated areas, and the last layer was *pasisiran* (coastal) and *jaba rangkah* (abroad).

⁷The sacredness of the sea is illustrated with the existence of the belief on the ruler of the South Sea symbolized by *Nyi Roro Kidul* or *Ratu Laut Selatan* (the Queen of Southern Ocean). To maintain this balance, there is a myth of marriages between the kings of Mataram with *Ratu Laut Selatan*. Despite physically illogic acceptance, this phenomenon shows the magic power helping the Javanese kings with natural forces. See, for further information, M.C. Ricklefs (1998:8).

⁸*Papat keblat, lima pancer* is the boundaries of the points of the compass of Javanese cosmology. These terminologies do not only associate with the directions but also with the ones who guard these direction according to Javanese cosmology of space on the basis of Mahameru cosmists, with the kings as the main guards. In somebody's personal life, these four points of compass are connected to four elements accompanying human being's birth, such as *kawah* (crater), *getih* (blood), *puser* (navel), and *ari-ari* (umbilical cord). See, for further information, Suwardi Endraswara (2006:54).

On the basis of the concept discussed above, *kuthorojo* space arrangements, the palace and space around it, follow the coverage of *baluwarti* wall, ordered according to the concept of *papat keblat, lima pancer* with the king at the centre, resembling the space arrangement of Mahameru Mountain in Hinduism deification. The north and south yards reflect the balance between the land and sea with the king right in the centre, like the market in the west and the mosque in the east. Outside *kuthorojo* coverage beyond the surrounding wall of *baluwarti* are kampongs of the royal members according to their status and positions. Outside this area are the houses of the servitors built on the basis of their closeness to the king and public facilities, like parks, security and guard posts, the houses of the soldiers, and others.

The change took place when the Dutch colonial intervention initiated by Governor General H.W. Daendels started. Although VOC (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* or Dutch East-India Company) asked Mataram King for the land to build a fortress in front of the palace in the previous century, when Mataram moved to Surakarta with the land for *Vastenburg* fortress in front, the existence of this fortress did not destroy the cosmology concept of *kuthogoro* space arrangement. The destruction really occurred when H.W. Daendels demanded two things: (1) the construction of a house for a Governor General when he visited Solo; and (2) the separation of Chinese people from other Foreign East people as the government's servitors.

In the VOC era, the Governor Generals always stayed in the fortress when they visited Solo and visited the palace. H.W. Daendels intended to have a house for the Governor General in which *Sunan* (a short form of *susuhunan*, ruler or king) had to come to meet the Governor Generals. On the basis of what H.W. Daendels demanded, *Sunan* Paku Buwono IV provided a piece of land in which a Minister lived and the Governor Generals stayed nights. Due to its location in the front-

left of the palace, between the palace and fortress, the existence of this structure became the symbol of colonial foreign interventions in the Javanese cosmology concept.⁹

The second demand also influenced the city space planning. Because of the Foreign East's integration in the servitors of the government, H.W. Daendels forced them go out from the *kuthorojo* coverage and issued a certain land at which they could live and this land was adjusted to the first policy. Due to his demand to connect *Vastenburgh* fortress, Minister's house, and Kartasura military post, H.W. Daendels required to make the main street, now called Slamet Riyadi Street, the government land, where the Chinese people lived¹⁰ as instructed by H.W. Daendels.

This policy led to the dualism of Chinese kampong in Solo City. Prior to the policy, Chinese people were actually the servitors of *Sunan* and located in the western area of the palace under their own leadership, KRT (*Kanjeng Raden Tumenggung*) Secoyudo, then their kampong is known *Coyudan*. H.W. Daendels's instruction led some of Chinese people to move to the main street coordinated by a rich Chinese captain, called *Sie Ting Hoo*. Therefore, the dualism took place with regard of settlement and leadership in Solo City but such dualism did not occur at other Foreign East communities.¹¹

This H.W. Daendels's policy caused disputes and space competition grounded by ethnical

⁹See, for example, P.J. Veth (1912:273). What H.W. Daendels did was based on his decision that the officers of the Dutch assigned in the centres of Javanese kings did not represent the government officers, but acted as the representatives of the Dutch kings who were obliged to be respected like the kings in Java. Therefore, their titles were called *Minister*, equally treated as Javanese kings. The building H.W. Daendels asked for was an official house for Minister.

¹⁰In the government authority, this policy was already implemented when VOC (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* or Dutch East-India Company) had it rule. The Dutch officers believed that *Tionghoa* (Chinese people) had better to "follow our governmental influence to make it easy to get earnings and to implement legal actions on them (all the foreigners have submitted to the virtuous influence of our government, because the Dutch proceeded to give orders and enact laws)". See, for further information, Aan Kumar (1997:375).

¹¹*Pecinan* (Chinese) area was chosen by H.W. Daendels to be around *Pasar Gede* (Main Market) to make it easier to be supervised by the Residents and the commandor of *Vastenburgh* fortress as well as an economic symbol. See, for further information, Darsiti Soeratman (2000:85).

and racial differences. Another impact of the policy on this Chinese settlement was to expropriate the local people's existing properties which had lasted for years. Yet, the success of H.W. Daendels and the agreement from the Sultanate encouraged the Dutch government to continue and even legalize such system in accordance with their policy on Chinese people's settlements in all East Indie's colony (*wijkstelsel*).¹²

The implementation of *wijkstelsel* at Solo created different morphology and destroyed the cosmology concept in Javanese space arrangements. In the government cities, this system ran well due to the colonial governmental control; in Solo, however, the existence of *wijkstelsel* and the colonial policies on this ethnical field resulted in the space and structure chaos. The Chinese ethnic who lived in Chinese kampongs were headed by a *Tionghoa* captain appointed by the Residents. The captain, therefore, did not need to be loyal to the palace and regulation, but the regulations consistently implemented were on the basis of the colonial laws, instead of Javanese traditional laws. This situation triggered the pluralism in their social life and resulted in the boxes to separate them and this separation could lead to be socially conflicting potentials.¹³

Even though the Chinese ethnic settlements were not created by their own community, but the settlements resulted from the colonial policies, the public considered that this was identically planned by Chinese community to separate themselves from other communities' life. This image was getting clearer when the

¹²Despite the VOC era isolating communities on the basis of ethnicity, this policy was officially issued by the Dutch Indie presented in the formal regulation in *Staatsblad van Nederlandsch Indië* year 1835 number 37. In this regulation, the Dutch Government needed to separate the groups according to their ethnic to avoid the mixture which then could lead to security loss. See, for further information, Phoa Liong Gie (1992:12).

¹³Ironically, when the *wijkstelsel* system was implemented, Chinese ethnic were still put into native status together with Moor people. The basic consideration was that they did not embrace Christian and then they could not be equally treated as European, while their national regulation could not be implemented outside their country. Having changed the regulation by Liberal Acts in 1848, this regulation was changed also to be under the European Laws. See, for example, P. Tjiok Liem (2009:70).

legal system differentiated the Chinese people from the native community and the different economic levels of both societies physically intensified their inequalities, leading to social problems.¹⁴

Upon the Indonesian independence (1945), this condition was strictly maintained. Despite the riots with racial nuance, particularly at the beginning of the independence, the national officers and Indonesian space arrangement designers did not make any change in connection with community management left by the Dutch colonial government. Although there were not old kampong model systems, ironically removed by the colonial government themselves in 1917, the limitation of Chinese ethnic settlements in certain areas, especially in the city, kept maintaining old colonial model pluralism in the national life.¹⁵

The policies of the *Orde Lama* (Old Order) regime (1959-1966) commonly called the fortress system on the national economy cornered the position of the Chinese ethnic, especially those who live in the villages, forcing them to move to cities, including Solo, due to the impossible factors to live in the sub-district areas and their movement made the cities more crowded. The governmental policies on limiting the land ownership outside the cities created the social separation of the settlement patterns between Chinese ethnic and local people.¹⁶

¹⁴Although they did not show the appearance of exclusive houses with Chinese traditional decorations, the new economic Chinese elites tend to show their luxurious things following the change of era. Upon the independence day (1945), many Chinese economic elites built luxurious houses with European styles instead of old Chinese styles. This phenomenon illustrates their identification with modern styles or at least with Western culture, if it cannot be said colonial culture. See, for further information, Peter Nas & Martien de Vletter (2000:100).

¹⁵There is an interesting comparison between *Pecinan* (Chinese) kampong and *ghettos* in which Jewish people live in European cities. This settlement illustrates more on exclusiveness instead of uniqueness. However, the difference is that in *Pecinan* area, Chinese people were given rights to develop economic richness and success, while *ghetto* of *Yahudi* (Jewish) tends to be under the tight control from the government and wealth limitation. Accordingly, the *Pecinan* area usually becomes more the object of social jealousy around the area than *ghetto* of *Yahudi*, despite the fact that racial nuance shows the same matter. See, for example, Benny G. Setiono (2007:130).

¹⁶One of the examples is *Solo Baru* (New Solo) housing complex, included in the area of Sukoharjo district and settled

Under the *Orde Baru* (New Order) governmental system (1966-1998), with the political discrimination on Chinese people, the opportunities to move out from *Pecinan* (the areas where Chinese people live and work, mostly as traders) were actually open in the economic considerations, but the chances did not lead to settlement movement or to expropriate other ethnics' belongings. The political limitation and the successful economic sectors encouraged Chinese ethnic to widen their land ownership until the limitation allowed according to the governmental regulation. Some Chinese ethnics were even able to own a certain number of lands for their own personal reasons which actually expropriated not only public belongings but also individual properties owned by the local people and Chinese people themselves.

The patterns above were proved by the expansion and development of Solo City in the 1980s and 1990s decades. Upon the 1980 riot, Solo did city beautification and development and became the second city in Central Java. *Walikota* (City Mayor) Hartomo, with the motto of *Solo Berseri* (Solo Smiles), developed the city infrastructure. However, due to unclear directions and supervision, the implementation of this project resulted in the benefits for certain groups of people. Some Chinese ethnic capitalists misused this government's project for the sake of controlling the public assets for their own benefits by changing the public assets to become their own business purposes. Therefore, under Hartomo management, the businesses on supermarkets developed to become shopping malls which were like mushrooms in Solo City, but then marginalized the native business activities. The symbols of Chinese ethnic capitalists did not give the rooms for the native people, but also made their markets collapse because these Chinese

by some native people. The image illustrates that this change is dominated by *Tionghoa* capitalists and put aside the native people and this cannot be denied. Especially their presence seems to be dominant in the neighborhood, in particular dominated by native settlers. See, for further information, Nurhadiantomo (2004:97).

capitalists used big capital in their economic activities.

LEADING TO RACIAL RIOTS

The above discussions on the condition of Solo City lead us to predict why the racial conflicts became crystallized in Solo, Central Java, Indonesia. Until 1966, the riots were meant to show the urgent demands; but upon 1970, the conflicts were triggered by the feeling of terrible hatred. The change of this nuance was marked by the destructions which were increasing in every new riot explosion. Such conditions should be criticized from both economic factors which demand space arrangement and historical contexts which demand the structural demands of the permanent space arrangement on the basis of Javanese power concept since the Dutch colonial intervention on Solo space arrangement. The space arrangement obliged by the Dutch colonial government and then followed by the capital-based policies forced to change the existing Javanese structure. This was strongly felt by *Sunan* (King) Paku Buwono X who was then officially followed by building the structures around the palace with personal symbols (Larson, 1987:17).

The change of regimes from the colonial to the national governmental systems does not bring any significant influences on city space. Besides removing the colonial symbols which remind us to the colonial domination, the national government was mostly focused on dealing with population density and complex urbanization. The *Orde Lama* (Old Order) regime (1959-1966) with strong nationalism, particularly with regard of nationalization and *Irian Barat* (West Irian) returning to Indonesia territory, shows their disputes on the colonial influence and heritage. The *Orde Baru* (New Order) regime (1966-1998) preferred to reinforce its economic development programme, despite the existence of discrimination to Chinese people, to allow and need their cooperation so as to underpinning the national economic growth.¹⁷

¹⁷Under *Orde Baru* (New Order) regime, Chinese ethnics, especially those with big capital, are needed to support development projects, considered as the dominant capitalists

Solo City has experienced the impacts from the central government policies. During the revolutionary period (1945-1950), Solo in Central Java was suffering from a political riot, generally called the social revolution in 1946, followed by the Communist rebellion in Madiun, East Java, whose influence was strongly felt in this city despite the fact that this rebellion did not spread to Solo City in 1948. The last chaos involving mass, during the post-revolutionary period, was the destruction of Balapan train station by labourers supported by the left wing elements in 1951.

During the *Orde Lama* (Old Order) government (1959-1966), Solo City did not much experience chaotic conditions because the political dynamics mostly occurred in the national level and the government focused on solving local riots, besides international problems such as Irian cases (1962) and Malaysia confrontation (1963).¹⁸ Entering the *Orde Baru* (New Order) regime (1966-1998) gave Solo City more opportunities to do development programmes planned by the central government through the close relationship between the Mayors of Solo and the central government. These Mayors could get the government assistance in term of city rearrangements and development.

This development programme was a top-down approach, because it preferred paying attention to what the central government plans to listening to the aspiration from the community, especially the local Solo people.

without any power. Meanwhile, the power of the government was held by the bureaucrats acting like managers of a country. Therefore, the country is managed like a company that gets the capital from such capitalists. This system is considered effective to post an important role in the bargaining process with foreign investments, which looks like a synergy between the capitalists and power rather than the power for welfare equality like the one proposed as the objective of development. See, for example, Christina Chua (2008:23).

¹⁸In the *Orde Lama* (Old Order) regime, there are two national regulation considered to contain discriminative elements on Chinese ethnic, namely PP (*Peraturan Presiden* or Presidential Decree) No.10 and *Politik Benteng* (Fortress Politics). PP 10 was regulating the citizenship to gives a clear status for Chinese ethnic about their citizenship; while *Politik Benteng* is the government strategy to strengthen and protect native economic position by banning Chinese people to do business activities in the village and sub-district levels. See, for further information, Leo Suryadinata (2005:159).

Although the same pattern was done in other cities in Indonesia, Solo City showed its own uniqueness. Upon the crises on belief regarding the elite change following structural adjustments from the feudal to the national systems dominated by the nationalist intellectual elites, the social community in this city did not have culturally tight orientation manuals. Following the elite rearrangement in the conflicting period in the 1965 chaos, new elites who had power were dominated by the military groups.¹⁹

The integrated policy between technocrate-military elites implemented the top-down approach and demanded the community loyalty, meaning that this policy practically illustrated the mixture of regimes between colonial behavior and national policies. The colonial discriminative perspectives on certain ethnics, particularly Chinese ethnic in Surakarta, were activated again with various limitation rules. The national policies, involving Chinese conglomerates in the national development projects, were followed by local elites. But, the national government policy tends to involve the Chinese conglomerates ethnic, particularly those in Solo City.²⁰

The impacts of these confrontative and dualistic policies victimized the local community as the objects of the national development. The Chinese ethnics in Solo got the opportunities to develop their business activities limited by the government, but this

Chinese ethnics had some heterogenous stratifications on the basis of economic power. A small group of Chinese ethnic could manage to have creating a mutual relationship with the local, regional, and even national government elites; and this cooperation led them to dominate the economic sectors for the sake of individual benefits. Meanwhile, the most numbers of Chinese middle-class people stayed neutral or depended on their elites' friendship. The other small groups of lower level Chinese people got along with the local people through settlements or marriage, including those economically poor people and were out of the system with transactional and exploitative urban.

With the capital strengths and support from the government, the Chinese economic elites in Solo City developed their power and controlled its city space by building big shopping centres at strategic locations whose lands and letters of permits were obtained through the cooperation with local elites. They did not care the regulations on lands and space divisions separating the economic sectors between those who had big capitals and those with traditionally poor economic levels.

Besides the location problems, the acquisition of the shopping centre and manufacturing lands did not follow the existing regulations. The expropriation of the existing lands owned by the first owners broke the rules by using the security teams prepared by the local government. The manufacturing areas also led to serious conflicts due to the environmental pollution instead of land ownership competitions, for example, a number of big fabrics built in Palur were facing the problems of how the wastes from the big fabrics were thrown, leading to the environmental pollution. The protests were done; however, such protests were not listened by the local government due to being bribed.

The above illustration was totally different from the fact that the poor Chinese people got along with the native people as seen at Kampong Balong. An expression like

¹⁹Indonesian military, especially the armed force, who had power at that time, suspected that Peking (Beijing) of China and travelling Chinese were involved, at least they supported the Indonesian Communist Party as their rival. Therefore, when the Peking problem was finished by being diplomatically frozen in March 1967, the problems of Chinese ethnic became the future problems on the policy of the *Orde Baru* (New Order) regime. See, for example, Leo Suryadinata (1978:17).

²⁰The factor encouraging some Chinese conglomerates into the mutual cooperation system established by the native businessmen elites is a cultural approach. A number of Chinese economic elites, particularly in Java, understand how they directly serve the government officers and guarantee the future benefits through long-term cooperations. This strategy is not possessed by the local businessmen who prioritize family-based approach without considering financial benefits. Actually, the economic cooperation that the Chinese have built is vulnerable because the guarantee from the authority is not well recorded in the legal procedures, but just in the political forms. See, for example, Khoon Choy Lee (1999:249).

“*ampyang*”, a type of food with soya bean as its raw material mixed with Javanese (brown) sugar showing their close relationship. Their status and economic levels did not show any significant differences between them, leading them to not have social jealousy or unequal life.²¹

The unequal condition also illustrates the life and performance of middle-class Chinese community who shows exclusive in their social life and becomes a typical characteristic of a city social community despite without different exploitation as the capital elites. Regarding the difficulty of differentiating to what extent they were involved in the activities of the big capital groups or not does not recognize something behind their physical appearances because the middle-class Chinese elites are usually equally treated with high-class Chinese ethnic.

The above view and image lead the established conflicting conditions to easily explode due to economic inequality and the unjust principles. This chance can be considered successful when it is followed by overthrowing the existing political regime who supports them. Therefore, the riot which took place in May 1998 was considered to achieve the target more than the previous ones which had taken place or the existing regime kept their own authority.

CONCLUSION

The riots from which Solo City had suffered during the XX Century become a historical phenomenon with different perceived conclusions. The political approach gives an answer that the riots have taken place due to the loss of political and cultural identities in line with the disappearance of feudalistic structures which have mastered Solo for ages. The economic approach tends to use Marxist analysis, i.e. the existence of the exploitation of the production facility owners toward the majority; meanwhile, the sociological

²¹The existence of Kampong Balong has existed since the Dutch colonial era, commonly called the first *Pecinan* (Chinese area) in Solo. In this kampong, the Chinese people and native people experience to direct acculturation. See, for further information, Rustopo (2007:63).

approach concludes that there is a conflict thinking pattern in the community to cope with the problems considered as the foundation for their collective memory.

This writing uses a different approach,²² called *space approach*, which shows that the city morphology plays an important role to investigate cultural changes and their connection with its society who lives in the city. In this process, not only the widening programmes of the city or the spreading of its population, but also space arrangements and buildings in the city with direct and indirect influences become the focus of this approach. The direct influences mean the existence of the marginalized or those who get advantages; while, the indirect one refers to the existence of the collective views reminding us with the same phenomenon of public community. The collective view can function as a social strong form of the city which can be radical and prophane.

For Solo itself, regardless the structural and regime changes, space city has experienced to change a city space much earlier due to colonial intervention power. The city topology according to cosmology ruins by the colonial city development plans at *kutharaja* centre, especially in term of politics. Meanwhile, the national regime worsens this condition by merely doing the national development on the basis of economic sectors. When these two steps are taken, Solo City community, who loses its cultural identity, accepts it as a new burden and considers it with their disputes ending with conflicts.

²²This article is based on my research concerning on “*Perubahan Posisi dan Identitas Etnis Cina Sesudah Kerusuhan Mei 1998 di Jakarta dan Solo*” (Changing of Chinese Ethnic Identities and Positions After the May-1998 Riots in Jakarta and Solo) funded by Main Research Grant of UI (Indonesia University) in Depok, West Java, Indonesia, in 2012; and done with the cooperation of Endah H. Wulandari, M.Hum. and Dewi Anggraeni, M.Hum. as the research members. Accordingly, I would like to thanks to the research members for helping me, especially in collecting the data, although all contents as well as interpretation about this article is solely responsible academically to my own self.

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Solo Tragedy in 1998

(Source: www.google.com, 6/8/2013)

In two days, on 14-15 May 1998, a massive racial chaos took place in Solo City, Central Java, Indonesia. Looting, burning, destruction, violence, humiliation, and other physical actions leading to racial assaults occurred in Solo City and this was predicted as the impact of the destruction which had taken place in Jakarta a day before. This tragedy reminded us to think of what had previously happened in two centuries and half, commonly known as "Angke tragedy" in Batavia in 1740 and *bedah Kartasura* (Kartasura surgery) in 1742.