DUALISM OF URBAN FORM OF INDONESIAN CITIES IN THE PRECOLONIZATION PERIOD

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ABSTRACT

This article studies the dualism principles that were strongly adapted by the society were distinctively patterned in the urban form of Indonesian cities in the pre-colonization period. Religious beliefs, local traditions, and as well as natural environment were determinants that took great role making and shaping the urban form of Indonesian cities in the pre-colonization. Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic beliefs as well cultural and tradition were elements that influenced the establishment and the development of cities in the early period. These diverse ideologies of the societies were manifested in urban design as dualism principles.

Key words: urban form, urban design, architecture.

INTRODUCTION

The history of Indonesian cities is closely related to the articulation of their society. Politic, economic, and cultural norms played significant part in the drama of materializing the built environment. Religious beliefs, local traditions, and as well as the natural environments were determinants that took great role for establishing settlements human the pre-colonization. The built environment is not just a setting for political, economic, and social drama but is the manifestation of principles that the power holder and society professed. The establishment, changes and development of urban form in Indonesia cities in the early period has been influential by the effort to achieve both the harmony and idealized form dictated by cosmological and socio-spatial order.

The interest of authority on policy regarding the development of urban form of cities in Indonesia has been under way since the establishment of early cities. Historically, rulers in an early city under Hindu, Buddhist, or Islamic beliefs had certain rules to establish, to control, and to develop. The origin of the concept of cities and towns in Indonesia is inseparable from the history of institutions. Employing certain elements of belief, tradition, and ideology, societies in those geographical settings constructed the basis of harmony and balance in social relations, which emphasize hierarchy and order. Such

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ideology, which focuses on interpersonal relations, had a decisive impact on the internal structure and urban form of cities in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The dualism concept of the transformation and the development of urban form of Indonesian cities have been acknowledged my many scholars of Indonesian Urban Studies from economic and social, as well as cultural aspects. Actually, the dualism concept had been practiced by the indigenous society in order to design their settlement on the basis of religious and socio-cultural aspects from the early period. The indigenous society had practiced and developed cosmological dualism concepts in various aspects of life, and expressed it strongly in their dwellings and their urban forms. The ideas of sacred and profane, north and south, mountain and sea, center and periphery, low and high, were particular determinants in constructing their dwellings and setting their settlements. For example, cosmological concepts determine the setting of the temples, palaces, the squares and the living quarters (Figure 1 and Figure 2).
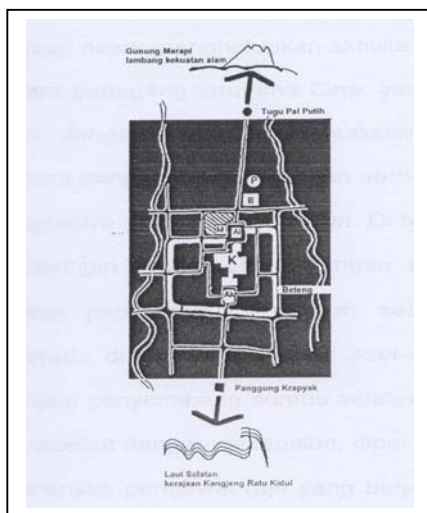
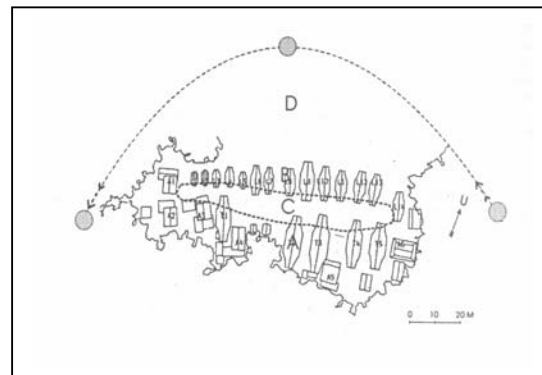Figure 1. Imagery axis of Yogyakarta Palace (Ikaputra, 1993).

Figure 2. Cosmological concept of Toraja houses (Sumalyo, 2002).

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Based on historical analysis, Nas (1986) described the structure of the early Indonesian town was derived from cosmological and socio-cultural order. Like other Southeast Asian cities, two types of towns can be distinguished from these orders: the sacred or inland city and the market or coastal town (McGee, 1967; Forbes, 1996). Inland towns relied on religious and traditional ways of life, and coastal towns were based on trade activities (Figure 3).

Sumalyo (1991), based on Lombards's findings, described the evolution of city in Indonesia in the pre-colonization period started with the 5th to 9th Century, the second period from the 9th to the 15th century, and the third period continues from 15th to the 17th century. In these periods each of the reigning forces, through their urban design policy, influenced the urban form of the cities. Each period engraved the building forms and layouts, street patterns, as well as the spatial structures of cities in Indonesia before independence.

Like their counterparts of Southeast Asian cities, the characteristic urban form Indonesia cities and its transformation, have been interesting features for study by some scholars. Some of them were lured by the historical development (Wertheim, 1956; Keifetz, 1961; Beg, 1985; Nas, 1986, Morris, 1994), and other scholars were interested in observing the urban forms of some Southeast Asian cities on the basis of economic, politic, and cultural forces that structured their urban patterns (McGee, 1967; Ginsburg, 1976; Yeung and Lo, 1976; Forbes, 1996). During those periods several factors have influenced the course of the development during the pre-colonization period.

METHODE OF ANALYSIS

In their writings, several scholars in urban studies state that in order to understand the urban form, several determinants have to be considered such as building form, street patterned, land use, open spaces, and other urban element that engaged with people's activities. Based on these elements the urban form of cities is readable and ideologies effect forms. Grady Clay (1973), JB. Jackson (1984), Allan Jacobs (1985) among others asserts that the urban forms of the city are readable. It is this concept of readable urban elements that offers the best approach to understanding the dualism of urban form of cities.

The dualism concept of the transformation and the development of urban form of Indonesian cities have been acknowledged my many scholars of Indonesian Urban Studies from economic and social, as well as cultural aspects. Actually, the dualism concept had been practiced by the indigenous society in order to design their settlement on the basis of religious and socio-cultural aspects from the early period (MacGee, 1976; Ginsburg 1976; Forbes, 1996)).

The indigenous society had practiced and developed cosmological dualism concepts in various aspects of life, and expressed it strongly in their dwellings and their urban forms. The ideas of sacred and profane, north and south, mountain and sea, center and periphery, low and high, were particular determinants in constructing their dwellings and setting their settlements (Ikaputra, 1993; Sumalyo, 2002).

DISCUSSION

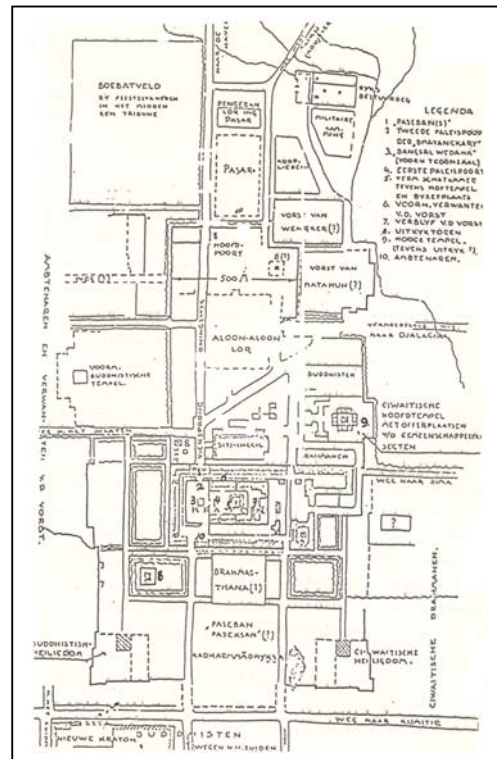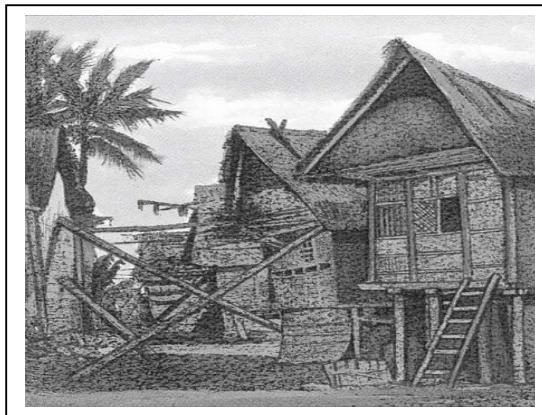### Budhist And Hindu Soveiregnity In Making The Urban Form

It is very hard to describe the morphological form of cities of the early Hindu and Buddhist kingdoms. Most of the important buildings that delineated these cities generally were constructed from temporal and perishable materials, such as bricks and stones (Nas, 1985). The absence of brick walls in the indigenous city probably was also due to the spaciousness of the area of the city, according to (1983). He stresses that in this period it was hard to distinguish between city and state. Unlike the Western concept of city, the indigenous Indonesian city was structured by the concentrations of houses that spread out in spacious lands. Another difficulty in tracing the form of indigenous city was due to the custom of certain ethnic populations: houses could be carried off to new sites when they were sold, since land had no essential value (Reid, 1953) (Figure 3). However, like ordinary capitals of many kingdoms in Indonesia, the *kraton* or palace was the only place surrounded by walls (Figure 4). Beyond the brick walls were the clusters of villages where the subjects lived. The remnants of such structures were the only material that became historical artifacts. For a coastal city, like Srivijaya, generally the people built their living space on rafts or stilt houses on the waterfront of the river. Because they were made of perishable materials that were easily destroyed, most of the Hindu and Buddhist cities left

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behind few artifacts when they fell to the Islamic states which began to rule in the 15th century.

Islamic Influences In Shaping The Urban Form

The urban form of traditional or pre-colonial cities under Islamic particularly was still influenced by Hindu beliefs as well as local tradition. Urban design principles according these beliefs have a clear structure as is made evident by the cosmological order and socio-cultural patterns that are reflected on building form and the urban spaces. As mentioned earlier, two types of cities can be distinguished in the pre-colonization period from economic, cultural, political as well as geographical point of view: the sacred or administrative inland city and the market or coastal city (McGee, 1976; Reed, 1976; Yeung and Lo, 1976; Brunn and Williams, 1993; Forbes, 1996). On the basis of religious and cosmological beliefs, the early inland city had a circular pattern which went from the center to periphery. This concept is associated with the diminishing of sacredness and the decreasing status of the Hindu-Javanese cosmological concept. Cosmological tenets were inherited from the local tradition. Hindu and Buddhist beliefs that were still influenced in the Islamic era were manifested in the urban form in most pre-colonial cities by the kraton or palace that is surrounded by a wall as the core of the the initial development of a city (Figure 5). North-south orientation, as well as mountain and sea were cosmological determinants that were still used for designing buildings during the Islamic period, when Islam was at its peak.

Other important buildings besides the *kraton,* during the Moslem influences, are the mosque, houses for the relatives of the ruler, the main square with two Banyan trees, and other supporting facilities. The only differences between the Hindu and Islamic spatial pattern are in the settings of religious edifice. A mosque is always on the western part of the main square since it should be pointed toward the *Qiblat*, while a temple is sited on the eastern side (Sumalyo, 2002).. Outside the walls lie housing for particular citizens and merchant citizens, and supporting facilities such as market and shops. Residential structures, for ordinary citizens and subjects, which gradually spread out toward the south and north parts of the city, were influenced by the established tradition. Since the inland cities functioned as administrative capitols and served as religious places of the kingdom,

most of the populations were the subject of the ruler. Only a small number of the population served as merchants, although the Chinese, Arabs or Indians held such occupation the most. Therefore, most of these cities can be categorized as *orthogenetic* or parasitic city, since the structure of the socioeconomic life was very unprogressive (Redfield and Singer, 1984).

Figure 3. Perishable timber structures that was common in the early cities (Tjahjono and Miksic, 1998).

Figure 4: Site plan of Majapahit based on Maclaine Pont's observation (Sumalyo, 1991).

Unlike the inland or sacred city, the coastal or market-city were existed by trade activities. Since trade was its major activity, the coastal city became a gathering place for people from various ethnic origins from the outer islands as well as foreign lands (Figure 6). The market becomes the important place in the city for people who bought and sold and goods. Besides being a place for trading goods, the market was a place for socialization for

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the citizens. The coastal city usually adopted a strip development along the seaside or a river's waterfront. This classical ribbon pattern developed, as transportation became a mode in the economic system in distributing goods and collecting agricultural products of the regions. Like the inland city, the coastal city also has several important structures, such as the palace, the temple or the mosque, and the main square. The emergence of Islamic kingdoms the place of worships became one of the significant determinants in shaping the urban form of cities (Figure 7). However, urban elements in the core of the city are the ports, markets, and shop-houses of the merchants. Those commercial facilities and housing that exist alongside the main streets are the typical urban elements of the city.
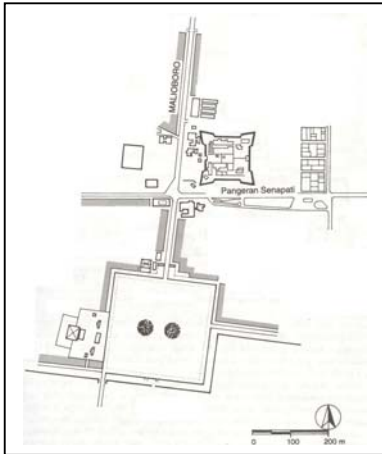

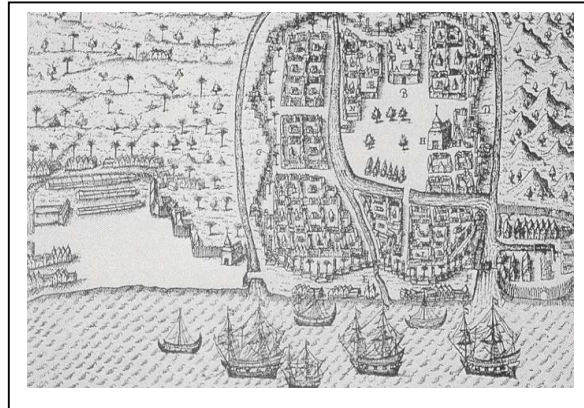Figure5: Yogyakarta with its environ (Wiryomartono, 1995).

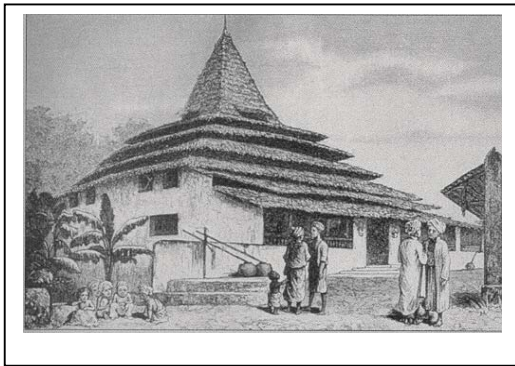Figure 6: Banten in the 1620s before the Dutch conquest (Santoso, 1998).

Figure 7. Hindu-Javanese design principles that influences in some of mosques in Indonesian cities (O'Neil, 1998, Wiryomartono, 1995).

As a trading place, the coastal city accommodated Europeans, Arabs, Chinese, Indians and other outlanders that generally lived in different and often separated parts of the city. In these parts, a mix of activities like living and working existed, manifested by of shop-houses. The ports and markets were two important places where the foreigners and local citizens could exchange their goods and views. It was a melting pot for economic, social, cultural as well as religious tenets for the foreigners and native people (Figure 8). These places were the centers where faiths, cultures, and knowledge were transferred from the foreigners to the local people and spread throughout the archipelago... Hence, as places of cultural and technological changes, these cities belong to *heterogenetic* order (Redfield and Singer, 1984). As a cosmopolitan place where the economic activities generate the welfare of its people and its surrounding, the coastal city in the pre-colonization period was also fitted into the generative order.
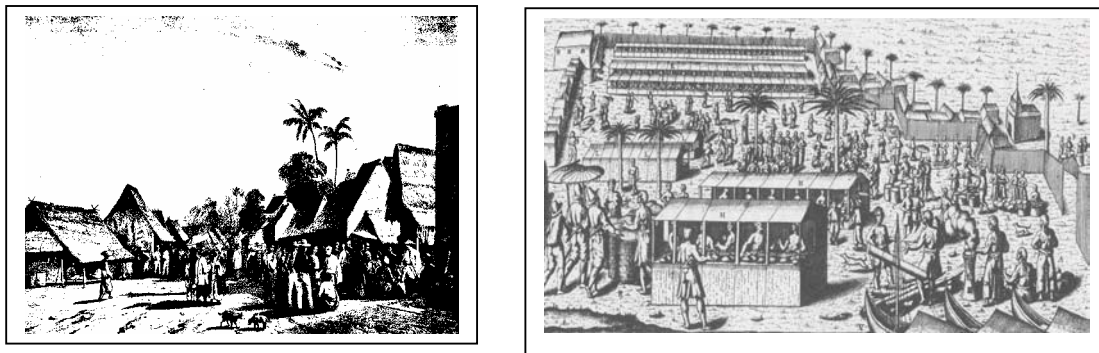

Figure 8. Markets as important place for social, cultural and technological changes between the natives and the foreigners (Nas, 1986; Reid, 1993; Gill, 1998).

CONCLUSION

The development and transformation stages of Indonesian cities are unveiled by the manifestation of their urban form. The cities' eminent position in politics, culture and regional economics provides for a diversity of population groups. Several sources reveal that early kingdoms used methods of planning and designing the city. Religious, cosmological, and environmental beliefs of early kingdoms were determinants for

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designing and planning their cities. These determinants provided codes and standards in using urban space and building their living and working places.

These ideology and principle of designing the city that has been known since early civilization have proved that urban design provides several products that are associated with the shaping and making of the built environment. Numbers of development guidelines that are anchored in the local environment as well as foreign principles that are transferred to the society have direct impact on the development of urban form of Indonesian cities in the pre-colonization era.

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