

CITY AND ‘COLONIAL GOVERNANCE’ IN LATE COLONIAL INDONESIA: TOWARDS AN AGENDA FOR HISTORICAL RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

Urban history is a rich and challenging field of study, which is relatively new in Indonesia. In last decade, a body of literature have been produced which examine various aspects of Indonesian urban history of the colonial period. Yet, there are still many other aspects of Indonesian urban history that is still relatively unexplored and needs further research. One of them is that the concerns with the city management, institutional arrangement, and administrative system in general. These aspects are very important to be known not only to understand how cities were governed at the time, but also to see the continuity of their legacies in the subsequent period. Indonesian cities today inherit many kinds of institutional legacies, particularly from the colonial period. Through an extensive literature overview, this paper seeks to discuss several main aspects of city management system of urban Indonesia in late colonial period, based on which it proposes some important research agenda that needs to be carried out to complement our historical comprehension on Indonesian urban history.

Keywords: urban history, institutional arrangement, city management, colonial period.

ABSTRAK

Sejarah perkotaan merupakan sebuah tema kajian yang relatif baru berkembang di Indonesia yang cukup kaya dan menantang. Dalam dekade terakhir, sejumlah besar studi telah dihasilkan mengkaji sejumlah aspek sejarah perkotaan di Indonesia masa kolonial. Namun demikian, masih banyak aspek lainnya dari sejarah perkotaan Indonesia yang belum disentuh dan membutuhkan kajian lebih lanjut. Di antaranya adalah berkenaan dengan tata kelola perkotaan, tata kelembagaan, dan sistem administrasi perkotaan secara keseluruhan. Aspek-aspek tersebut sangat penting dikaji selain untuk mengetahui sejarah pengelolaan kota pada waktu itu, juga untuk melihat kesinambungan warisannya pada periode berikutnya. Kota-kota di Indonesia dewasa ini memiliki banyak sekali warisan kelembagaan, terutama dari periode kolonial. Melalui studi literatur yang ekstensif, paper ini membahas berbagai aspek penting dari sistem pengelolaan perkotaan Indonesia pada masa kolonial, dan kemudian mengusulkan berbagai agenda penelitian penting yang bisa dilakukan untuk melengkapi pemahaman historis tentang sejarah perkotaan Indonesia.

Kata kunci: sejarah kota, pengaturan kelembagaan, manajemen kota, periode kolonial.

INTRODUCTION

'Colonial City is a laboratory of Western life and a conservatory of Oriental life' (Leandre Vaillet 1934 in Wright, 1997: 322)

In the last two decades, there has been a remarkable development of researches and studies about Indonesian urban history. A great number of new studies have been produced and published by Indonesian historians using new approaches and examining larger aspects of urban life in modern Indonesia. Parts of the publications are resulted from scholarly works – thesis, dissertation, and research monographs – produced in several history departments of Indonesian universities (for examples Fakih, 2005; Santun, 2011; and Basundoro, 2013). This trend shows the increase of research interests among younger generation of Indonesian historians to study the history of Indonesian cities. This is not to mention the unpublished yet works of undergraduate and graduate students in several history departments in Indonesia. It goes without saying that this development really shows the importance of urban history as an increasingly important theme in contemporary Indonesian historiography.

Yet, I would argue that this blossoming trend of urban history researches and studies still leave some basic themes/topics remain unexplored. One of them, as will be discussed shortly in this paper, is the issue of city administration and other related issues with city management. Chiefly are the way and the quality of fiscal administration and 'governance' of Indonesian municipal cities in the late colonial period and their 'responsibilities'. The word 'quality' here refers to a political term that is currently popular and widely discussed in the context of state administration, namely 'good governance' or in *Bahasa Indonesia* often mentioned as '*pemerintahan bertatakelola baik*'. Thus, what this paper means as 'quality' is the extent to which urban municipalities in late colonial period sought to apply an accountable and transparent administra-

tive-fiscal management and to put their citizens as main subject of their policies. Thus, the paper tries to evaluate how far the idea of 'colonial governance' could be identified in the practice of city administration in late colonial Indonesia, Java in particular.

The term 'governance' is a rising key concept in current literature of political and administration sciences. The concept has been used widely as a main reference to understand the practice of state administration in various part of the globe, especially in the developing countries where a new system of state administration that appeals for the principles of democracy, open access and public participatory are in progress of exercise. Yet, the scientist and the developmental organizations are still debating the best definition of the concept of 'governance' that can be applied on global context without ignoring the extant structural and cultural differences. In this regards, UNDP (the United Nations for Development Programme) is one of the most important concerned organization that has contributed to the debate in one of its publication in 1997, which apparently become perhaps the most cited one on literature. Here is the definition.

The exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences. (UNDP, 1997)

Historians of politics and state formation in particular have also shown their interests in using the concept of governance as an instrument of analysis in their works and researches. Many of them apply the concept to analyse the practice of state administration in the colonies before the blooming of democracy and human rights ideas. Some of them also use the concept to evaluate the continuities and discontinuities of those colonial institutions and legacies in the present day administrative

practice of the post-colonial states. The work of Marcel Maussen et al. is a good example of how historians use the concept of governance to understand the practice of the state management of the Islamic countries in the 19th until the mid-20th century (Maussen, et.al., 2011). For Asian context, James Jaffe applies the concept of 'colonial governance' to examine the praxis of British administration, law, and courts in colonial India (Jaffe, 2015).

In regard with the history of colonial Indonesia, there is a very few efforts to apply this concept to investigate and to evaluate the governmental practices of colonial state in Indonesia. Similarly, the growing studies of urban history in the last ten years show almost no single study that focuses on this institutional aspect of urban management. Theoretically, as Kuntowijoyo (2003, 64-71), a prominent Indonesian historian, has argued, the issue of urban fiscal administration is not part of the following aspects of urban history: urban ecology development, social economic transformation through industrialisation and urbanisation, social (system) changes, social problems, and urban social mobility. Nevertheless, I believe that a thorough study of colonial fiscal administration and urban management in Indonesia is important not only to understand the complexities of urban colonial institutions with their socio-political realities, but also to comprehend the continuity and discontinuity of 'these institutional memories' in present day Indonesian cities' realities.

This study aims to provide a brief review of the problems related with the fiscal policies, municipal administration and other issues related with city management, decentralization policy, and the practice of 'urban citizenship' in colonial Indonesia. The study seeks to contribute to the current discourse on the blossoming historiography of urban history in Indonesia. By perusing the existing literature and historiographical review this study highlights some important issue in the study of urban history in Indonesia that can be used as agenda for further research. To do so, it will start with a brief discussion on

the importance of city and urban areas in the colonial state formation and its modernization process since the end of nineteenth century in the Netherlands Indies, particularly on Java.

CITY AND THE COLONIAL (STATE) MODERNIZATION

Referring to the Western European experience, historians of institutional economy believe that city or urban developments have a strong connection with the development of urban economy and the growth of a country or region. In other word, urban area was the engine of national or regional economic development. Jan Luiten Van Zanden (2009: 292), for example, argued that one of the determinant factors of the industrial revolution and the rapid economic growth in the seventeenth century of Western Europe and North Sea region is the flourishing of urban areas with a distinct economic structure, market integration and work force quality compared to the rural areas. In line with this argument, David Harvey (1985), a prominent geographer, argues that capitalistic economy grows essentially along with the rise of urban areas, and the urbanization or the extension of urban capitalist sectors' influence upon the surrounding rural areas. This process, he further argued, is often initiated or supported by the state, through its apparatus, policies or favourites groups and allies.

In the context of Nusantara, town and cities had developed mostly along the coast and around the centre of mainland kingdoms of Java and Sumatra long before the coming of Europeans. Yet, in later period most of these cities developed under influence and often became parcel of the colonial state formation project of the Dutch East Indies, especially since the nineteenth century (Vlekke, 1955: 75). Nevertheless, from a social economic perspective, up until the mid nineteenth century, the number of cities and the scale of urban-based economy in Java was still relatively limited let alone in the outer islands. The majority of population was in

the principle living and working in rural areas, in agricultural sector, and under a more or less feudalistic social structure. Consequently, Java and Sumatra up until the mid nineteenth century had a low urban development and a limited market-oriented economy in urban areas, which overall contributed to a slow economic development (Van Zanden & Marks, 2012, Chapter 3: 29-45).

It was only in the second half of the nineteenth century, then the growth of urban areas in Java in particular received a strong incentive from the flourishing export of agricultural economy (thanks to the Cultivation System), the rise of service sector and industry, and the extension of transportation system, infrastructure and colonial administration (Wertheim, 1999: 145). In the same time, cities and urban areas in Java but also in the outer islands, developed or were developed as main site and fore front of the modernization projects of the colonial government, which sought to transform itself from a 'relatively weak' into a 'strong state'. According to Robert Elson (1992: 153-156), the transformation of colonial state in that period can be seen in the five following aspects: (1) the increasing 'body' of bureaucracy and management requirements; (2) the expanding scope of authority and task of that newly developed bureaucracy; (3) the escalating governance intensity with a growing number of apparatus, the increasing frequency of bureaucratic intervention, and the bigger efficiency; (4) the establishment of the Western-style administration which was more rational, impersonal, and sophisticated with burgeoning use of paper; and (5) the installation of a more centralized surveillance system with a more rigid, systematic and fixed hierarchy.

In practice, however, not all aspects of the modernization process of the colonial state were solely at the hand of Dutch bureaucrats and the state apparatus. Their number was indeed growing, yet still far from sufficient to manage the entire colonial territory and the whole administrative levels. At that stage, the colonial state finance was simply incapable to pay the

expensive salary of Dutch officers to fill in the entire administrative ranges of the colony. The Dutch officers were imported from home only to occupy the highest civilian positions such as resident, assistant-resident, and controller. The remaining positions were allocated to local elite (*priyayi*), who was treated as 'younger brother' through a system of indirect rule (Sutherland, 1979). In daily practice, the Dutch officers should live and work their functions in the city, and only in a limited certain condition. They dealt with rural areas – which was often indirectly – mediated through those local-indigenous officers. In the view of most of these Dutch officers, rural area or hinterland is a 'dangerous', 'dirty', and 'wild' area that can be very harmful to their safety, either from its nature or its people. For some observers, such racial prejudices was among typical character of *colonial common-sense*, which arose basically from fear, ignorant and *epistemic anxieties* of those white people (Guha, 1997; Stoler, 2009).

In the context of urban administration, the indirect rule politic mentioned above was clearly manifest in the colonial government policy to establish a system of community leadership based on race-line and known as 'kapitanship' among Foreign Asiatic (*Vreemde Oosterlingen*), which was applicable to Chinese, Indian, Arabs, Persians, and many more (except Japanese). In almost every big and important city, Java in particular, such as Batavia, Semarang, and Surabaya. This communal leadership system had been established since the VOC period. Through this system, the colonial authority intended to have an easy and practical way to control those 'foreign' people (Lohanda, 1994). For the Chinese community in those cities, aside the kapitanship system, the colonial government created another special institution called *Kong Koan*, a kind of representatives and an advisory body for Chinese community, which consisted of prominent figures and businessmen including *kapitein*, *major*, and other elites. This institution has a task to provide advice and guidance to the communal lead-

ers, when they deal with socio-cultural problems that happened among their fellow-country men living in that city. Interestingly, in the early twentieth century Batavia, this institution was also assigned to conduct certain economic and administrative functions, such as to collect taxes and to do demographic registration (Erkelens 2013). How far such kind of institution with similar complex functions can also be found among Arabs or Indian community is something that needs a further investigation.

From the brief discussion above, through a top-down approach focusing on state perspective only, we can easily see the complexity of urban administration in Java during the period concerned. As a matter of fact, in the subsequent period, the urban management in the Netherlands Indies was becoming 'complicated', especially after the introduction of decentralization policy that was manifested in the formation of semi-autonomous municipal government (*gemeente*) and municipal councils (*gemeenteraad*) in the second decade of twentieth century. In principle, this new policy was at odds with the previous centralistic approach to an extent that it brought about the certain consequences and changes to regional and local level of state administration, including the municipal administration. There are studies that evaluate the implementation of decentralization policy and its consequences, particularly on the urban planning and infrastructural development in several cities in Java and elsewhere (see for example Roosmalen, 2014: 87-119). Yet, this paper argues that there are still many aspects of the city administration and management in the late colonial Indonesia that needs to be investigated. The following section reviews several related issues that might be relevant for further research.

SOME ISSUES OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATION IN LATE COLONIAL PERIOD

According to John Darwin (1999: 75-76), in the early twentieth century, the colonial

states in Asia and Africa, including the Netherlands Indies, showed different governmental and administrative characteristics that were contrast to the preceding ones. He calls it as a typical 'the late colonial state', which in general contain or perform the following characteristics: it was proactive and tended to be developmental in many ways, having a condense and complex institutional structures, a bigger bureaucracy, emphasizing a security – peace and order – approach (*security-state*), opened to external influence and to the market economy, and, last but not least, having tendency to be a self-destructive due to a repressive approach it applied toward its colonial subject. In the context of colonial history of Indonesia, the new character of the colonial state mentioned above can be seen primarily through the Ethical Policy, a new more benign colonial policy to compensate for the previous 'exploitative and detrimental' ones, which contains 'developmental programmes' and decentralization policy, introduced respectively in 1901 and 1903, and some of them were directed to the urban areas.

Decentralization

One of the important questions concerning the introduction of Decentralization Bill in 1903 is how and in what way did the policy change the structure of colonial administration in regional as well the local level and to what extent did the implementation of the policy change, the fiscal and financial arrangement, and the relationship between the central and regional/local government?

To answer the questions, we should look at the reason, objective and the implementation concept of the policy in the first place. In his classic work, Furnivall (1938, reprinted 1976: 261) states that the idea of decentralization had actually been developed long before 1903, but had even been there since the early 1870s, when the idea of liberalism was introduced, denouncing administrative centralization as an obsolete system, which was no longer compatible with the new circumstance

and policy directed to improve the living standard of the colonial society. The idea of decentralization concerns two basic principles, namely efficiency and autonomy that in practice can hardly be differentiated yet complement each other. It has, Furnivall goes further, three aspects: (1) the transfer of authority from the 'Mother country' to the government of Netherlands Indies, from the Netherlands Indies government to departments and local administration, and from European (Dutch) officers to indigenous officers; (2) the formation of autonomous units/bodies, which would cooperate with the central government but having a self-management authority; and (3) the separation or partition of public finance and personal financial matters in the indigenous local-states (*zelfbestuuren*) (Furnivall, 1976: 264)

The first aspect, according to Furnivall, was administrative decentralization intended particularly to create a bigger efficiency, while the second aspect was more political decentralization designated as instrument partly to stimulate efficiency of control and partly to create a political autonomy. Unfortunately, Furnivall did not go further to explain the third aspect. The main objective of decentralization policy was actually – in Furnivall's view – to enhance trade and economy in the colony, to provide the Netherlands Indies' government a degree of autonomy from the Mother country. Nevertheless, gradually the autonomy element was becoming more prominent feature of the policy, which has likely to do with the blossoming Indonesian nationalism activism and other related activities. Since its introductory inception, administrative and political reform as an essential part of the decentralization politics was indeed closely related to each other (Furnivall, 1976: 264).

The 1903 Decentralization Bill was implemented partly by the formation of 32 municipal administrations (*gemeente*) and 15 regional governments (*gewesten*), mostly located in Java, along with them the autonomy of fiscal and administration. How this autonomy policy was operated in daily basis and the complexities of its practice

was still unknown and was a subject for further investigation. Another follow-up of the decentralization policy was the administrative reform programme (*bestuurhervorming*) launched in 1922, through which the *gemeente* status was changed into *stadsgemeente* (municipality), and Java was divided into three provinces: West Java, Central Java and East Java that was officially commenced respectively in 1926, 1930, and 1927. Meanwhile, two former territories of Sultanate Yogyakarta and Surakarta (*vorstenlanden*) retained their status as special areas of Principalities, which had fiscal and administrative autonomy (Cribb & Kahin, 2004: 108).

The implementation of decentralization policy outside Java was much more complicated. The authority of colonial state in most of these areas was based on the political treaties and charters, originated partly from early colonial period, with local kingdoms or strongmen through which they gained a self-ruled status (*zelfbesturen*). In 1922, for example, three governors (stationed in Aceh, East Sumatra, and Sulawesi), 15 residents, and one Assistant-Resident represented the colonial authority of Batavia. Generally speaking, through the 1922 reform programme, the colonial government established the state administration in Sumatra, Kalimantan, and 'Great East' (*Grote Oost*), although due to the financial reason the policy was effectively at work only in July 1938, except for the Great East administration that includes Maluku and West Papua that have been worked since 1926. In addition, the colonial government also introduced the so-called the customary law communities (*adatrecht gemeenschappen*) in Minangkabau and Banjarmasin in 1938 and in Palembang in 1941 (Cribb & Kahin 2004: 109).

Another interesting aspect of the practice of decentralization policy is the formation of the house of representative at municipal level (*gemeenteraden*), which was assigned to have a role in the process of policy making and budgeting at municipality level. This bodies consisted of mem-

bers that were selected through a stringent process, to be approved by the governor general, out of three existed racial groups: Europeans (Dutch mainly), Foreign Asiatic, and Indigenous. In general, the membership composition represented the colonial social pyramid, in which European representatives dominated the house. Yet, the actual number of representatives from each respective group of society was varied depending on the number of their respective constituents. Since 1924, indigenous representatives became the majority element in almost all of the local House of Representatives at regency level all over Java, which was generally led by a local administrative head (*bupati*). These local representative members had an authority to select a member of the central house of representative (*Volksraad*) through electoral vote mechanism (Cribb & Kahin 2004: 109). By far, the practice of 'colonial democracy' and the socio political realities around it are still a neglected subject that gains no academic attention it deserves, and therefore is still a lank spot in Indonesian historiography. The work of Colombijn about Padang's municipal parliament (1995) is the only exception so far. This piece of work can be a good example, of how local parliament can be a sample to understand 'democratic experiment' that the colonial government introduced since 1920s.

Taxes and its socio-political ramification

Taxation is an important administrative institution/instrument that touches upon directly public interest of a city or a state and its citizens. Theoretically speaking, taxation has at least two interrelated functions: *first*, as an instrument or formal mechanism for the state to collect revenue to finance administration and governmental agendas; and *second*, as a main bureaucratic instrument for the state or government to control its subjects or citizens, through which it measures and controls the loyalties of its citizens. For some social theorists, taxation system can even be seen as a kind of manifestation of state characteristic, as a reflection of its ideolog-

ical reference. Following this logic, for this social scientists, taxation becomes a site of political contestation and power struggle between state/government, its agents and tax-payer subjects; a locus where state and society interface directly (Althusser 2006: 90-92). In the context of city administration in colonial Indonesia, this paper seeks to understand the two generic functions of the municipal taxation as mentioned before.

The colonial taxation system, applied in Java particularly, is basically a mixture of various old taxes introduced by and under traditional political system and new taxes formulated and introduced by the colonial government to respond the socio-economic development of the colony. Land tax (*landrent*) exemplifies the first type of tax that has been collected in its simple form by the Javanese traditional state, while business and income taxes (*bedrijfs en inkomstenbelasting*) are examples of the latter type of tax that was introduced by the colonial government in the second half of nineteenth century. The colonial government retained and extended the collection of land tax to collect revenue from agricultural sector and from indigenous population living in rural areas. It also introduces income tax as a main instrument to collect revenue from urban areas, and from those working in modern sector of urban-based economy (*Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indië-ENI* 1917: 24).

In line with the big agenda of colonial state formation and modernization of administration the Dutch colonial government strived to reform the taxation system to improve its efficiency to keep up with the socio-economic development and state's needs. One of the most important tax reforms was carried out in the end of nineteenth century when the colonial government decided to abolish cautiously the revenue farming system (*pachtstelsel*), which had been in effect since early colonial period involving the role of Chinese businessmen, to be replaced by a new system that was fully operated by the colonial bureaucracy (*regiestelsel*). The reason for

such a complete overhaul was that the previous system had been uncontrollable, prone to corruption and financial breach, benefitted the tax-license holders (*pachters*), exploitative and burdensome for population contributing to the declining of their welfare. In accordance with the spirit of Ethical Policy, the colonial government intended the new tax system to be more efficient and be able to minimize the problems resulted from the old system (Wahid 2013: 151).

In fact, the new tax system could not solve the old problems however, especially the problem of tax assessment inequality that existed among the population. For that reason, the colonial government introduced a unified and proportional tax assessment system in 1914. Yet this policy was also failed, simply because the colonial government retained the racial-based tax assessment that had been in use since early colonial period. Under this tax assessment, Europeans had to income tax, property tax, and various consumption taxes; the Foreign Asiatic, Chinese in particular, had to pay income tax, poll-tax, property tax, and various consumption taxes, and indigenous people had to pay land tax, poll-tax, and various consumption taxes. Consequently, each of these groups of society expressed their resentments as they felt that they paid more taxes due to unjust assessment. Things were getting worse when the decentralization policy granted authority for the municipal government to collect new taxes for their own benefit to strengthen the financial basis of the municipality. Among new taxes collected by *gemeente* and *stadgemeente*, they are vehicles taxes (upon bicycle, motorcycle, and car), pet taxes (upon dog and cat), market tax, movie theatre tax, entertainment tax, and many more. It is no wonder if urban settlers (particularly Europeans and Foreign Asiatic), were complaints that they had to pay multiple taxes: 'national taxes' imposed by the central government and 'local taxes' collected by local government. These complaints appeared often in local newspapers but also recorded in the minutes of *gemeenteraad*

meetings (Wahid 2013: 288).

Tax related problems concern not only with the collection process of the taxes, but also with the expenditure, the channelling of tax revenue. The most important issue here is that to what extent the colonial government (national as well as municipal) spent its tax revenue for the benefit of its constituents, the taxpayers. Literature of economic history shows the possibility of how to assess this issue in a colonial context. Anne Booth (2007), for example, suggests that from their *budgeting* system, including revenue expenditure, the colonial state can be classified at least into three categories: *predatory-extractive state*, *night-watchmen state*, and *developmental state*. The first category applies to the state, which extracted revenue without giving any returns (expenditure) to its society in the forms of public goods. The second category applies to the state, which spent larger part of its expenditure for defense or war, to strengthen its military force. The last category applies only to the state, which spent its expenditure for the development purposes, to provide public goods for its citizens. In her evaluation, Booth concludes that the Netherlands Indies showed the character of a night-watchmen state during three decades of mid-nineteenth century, but steadily moved towards a developmental state in the first three decades of twentieth century. Yet, it reversed back to abandon its developmental characteristics after the 1930s economic crises and took repressive measures to the nationalist movement of Indonesians (Booth 2007: 261-62).

It is quite a challenge to examine whether Booth's analysis is justified and applicable to evaluate the practice of local state administration, particularly the budgeting politic of municipalities in the late colonial Indonesia. As discussed in previous section, under the decentralization scheme introduced since 1903, municipal governments or municipalities had an authority to collect taxes from its citizens in addition to what they gained from the central government. Concerning this 'fiscal autonomy', there are several issues that

need to be examined further. First of all, how actually those fiscal decentralization was implemented, how was actually the collected revenue shared between central and local government, and to what extent did the municipalities channel its tax income for the sake of public interests. For example, how much fund the municipal government did allocate to contribute to the populist program of national government like *kampong* improvement (*kampongverbeteringen*) in 1910s or public housing project, market and other public facilities in 1920s. Similarly, the same questions can be asked to analyse the fiscal policy of local government and municipalities in strengthening such urban infrastructure and facilities as schools, police department, courts, prisons, waste management, and various festivities and entertainments that were commonly held and found in urban Java like night market (*pasar malam*), annual exhibition (*jaarbeur*), movie theatre, art performances, and many more. These administrative aspects are very important to be included in research agenda of Indonesian urban historians.

Participation and the role of 'civil society'

Aside from the governmental aspects mentioned above, the urban societal respond towards municipal policies, including taxation, is also important part of the practice of urban administration in the late colonial period. Various responses from the city inhabitants, who were taxpayers at their own rights, are useful indicators to evaluate the 'governance' quality of the local city/municipal authority. Sartono Kartodirdjo (1999: 60-81) has shown that in the early twentieth century, urban society in Java (but also outside Java) showed an increasing participation in responding the emerging socio-political issues at micro as well as macro levels. This 'urbanism' phenomenon reflects an increase of a political literacy among urban population in Java, which had likely to do with the extension of education access, information and telecommunication ser-

vices, and the birth of a progressive urban-based indigenous 'middle class'. By the same token, Schulte-Nordholt (2011: 435-57) goes further by saying that indigenous urban elite emerged as a middle class group, who were progressive in term of cultural vision and politically literate. Yet, unlike Indonesian nationalistic historiography has claimed, according to Schulte-Nordholt, the part (but even majority) of this indigenous middle class showed a stronger cultural orientation rather than political since they projected (colonial) 'modernism' as their aspiration or expectation, and not 'nationalism'. Their ultimate desire was to be part of a 'cultural citizenship' offered by the colonial state through its media and programmes. Putting Schulte-Nordholt's thesis in the perspective, it is interesting to know how far were such 'urbanism' and 'progressivity' of urban population articulated in the connection with their political position as 'citizens' demanding their civil rights to the municipal government, whose policies were 'apartheid-like' favouring Europeans at the cost of discriminated indigenous.

As of course, the responds and participations of urban citizens first of all should be seen within the framework of formal institutions, particularly in *gemeenteraad* in which representatives of the different groups of society (Europeans, Eurasians, Chinese, Arabs, and indigenous) sought to influence the policy making and budgeting process of municipal government. Despite the fact that representational level of those members of municipal parliament and 'democratic' quality of the institution was considerably low, the ongoing dynamic inside this institution represented the bargaining politics between the executive authority and 'the representatives' who attempted to voice out the interests of the city's population in general. Referring to the case of Semarang, Wahid (2013: 279) for example, shows that in the 1920s indigenous representatives in the local *gemeenteraad* were actively negotiating the fiscal plan of the municipal government that thought to be at odds with the interests of indigenous people, alt-

though at the end such populist aspiration was not accommodated. Colombijn (1995: 263-288) shows a similar process in his study about political dynamics in the parliament of Padang municipality. From these examples, it is worth to note that despite the composition of the municipal house of representative was far from balance and the quality of representational politics to a modern standard was considerably low, the entire political process was a significant 'democratic' experience that can be indispensable for Indonesians to formulate their own 'citizenship idea' in the subsequent independence period.

Participatory and popular political activism were much more vibrant outside the formal institutions. The burgeoning mass organizations and social associations since the first decade of the twentieth century manifested the rise of popular political activism in Javanese urban areas, signifying the period as 'an age of motion' (Shiraishi, 1997). The official colonial report of 1940 reveals that during the period of 1890-1939, in total there were 3995 social organizations registered from all over the Netherlands Indies. Out of this number, 2315 organizations belonged to European, 986 belonged to Chinese, 628 belonged to indigenous, and the remaining 66 belonged to other Foreign Asia. These organizations had various basis, motivations, and objectives; ranging from hobby to philanthropy and even politics (*Kolonial Verslag 1940*).

A few organizations, mostly led by indigenous elite, actively engaged in the political movements and were becoming radicals, such as demonstrations, strikes, congress, public meetings, and many more. Yet many other organizations strove for social, cultural and philanthropic missions. They actively filled the empty 'spaces' abandoned by the colonial state and its local agencies, for example by providing public goods such as medical facilities (hospitals, clinics, pharmacy, and other medical services), education facilities, social care (orphanage, rehabilitation centres, etc.), publishing houses, newspapers, and many more. There were also

organizations which were active only for hobbies and recreational purposes. Overall, these organizations constituted a certain element of 'colonial civil society', which was not necessarily politically-oriented, but their activism in a period of distress such as in the Depression years of 1930s, when the colonial state weakened, they came forward to provide alternative solutions to the problems existed within society (Wahid 2009).

Concerning the political capacity of indigenous population in the bargaining process against the colonial authority, the case of Surabaya in the end of 1920s as reported by Remco Raben (2010) is quite illustrative. It was reported that as a response to the programme of kampong improvement (*kampongverbeteringen*) initiated by the central government in Batavia in cooperation with Surabaya Municipality, the inhabitants of Surabaya (mostly indigenous) created an organization, *Comite Perasaan Pendoedoek Soerabaya* (the committee for representing the feeling of Surabaya inhabitants). By June 1928, this organization was able to mobilize hundreds people to gather and to protest the municipal government of Surabaya, which had tried to take over the leadership of kampongs around the city to ensure the implementation of the programme. The issue might seem trivial, but this event really shows how these people on one hand took their liberty to resist any kind of annexation and intervention from the colonial state whatever programme or agenda it offered in the name of people's welfare. On the other hand, these people could freely express their discontent and dissatisfaction with the incapability of their representative sitting in the parliament in voicing out their interests. There may be more examples similar to this event from other cities all over the Netherlands Indies, which really show the political dynamic within the framework of state-society relationship in a colonial context. In other word, this was part and parcel to the daily practice of 'colonial citizenship' in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

From this brief survey, it is clear that the practice of urban management and its related administrative institutions in colonial period of Indonesia are a complex and challenging theme for historical research. This paper is not intended as an in-depth study about this subject, yet it is an effort to enlist some interesting issues concerning the administration and the management of Indonesian cities and their municipal institution in colonial Indonesia, particularly after the colonial government introduced a 'developmental' approach, manifested among others in the forms of fiscal decentralization and urban municipality formation. By presenting a discussion about the implementation of decentralization policy, the collection of taxes and its expenditure politics, and the contribution of popular political participation in urban policies, this paper shows a clear red line and frame work that can be used to evaluate the level of 'governance' of the colonial cities in Indonesia.

In general, this paper argues that the administration of Indonesian cities in the colonial period tended to ignore the basic socio-political rights of its citizens (the majority of them were indigenous), because of their 'apartheid' politics focused more on the interests of European and the Foreign Asiatic at the cost of impoverished indigenous. On an institutional level, however, the Dutch colonial government had laid the foundation for a better and more systematic city management. This allowed in certain degree of the representative politic and participatory cultural politics among urban citizens, which can be seen from the formation of the political parties and myriad mass social organizations based on social, politic, culture, professions; and in the form of mass-activism such as demonstration, strike, petition, and many more.

Such urban dynamic, city governance, and popular participation can be understood differently through a non-nationalistic perspective, which often see such kind of phenomena as a collateral effect of political dynamic in Batavia or a

part of political activism of indigenous political elite who fought for political independence. Historical realities show that at least until the end of 1920s, urban dynamic had its own political logic and trajectory. The essence of the political relation between the city inhabitants and their municipal government largely concerned with the actual problems in daily basis, not so much about such abstract idea as nationalism yet. For that reason, an attempt to understand the history of city administration offers is needed although this is not without challenge that is typical for historians, namely the lack of sources. Changing urban symbol, public space contestation, and other socio economic changes in urban areas can be better understood if historians of urban history also comprehend the institutional context, which turns out becoming determinant factor of those processes.

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