## Worldview, religion, and urban growth: a geopolitical perspective on geography of power and conception of space during Islamization in Java, Indonesia<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

Discussion of Islamization is not only associated with the spread of religious values but also related to the activity of trade and the opening of the new lands. In Java, all three of these themes have occurred simultaneously and then experienced rapid development since the 15<sup>th</sup> century. During the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, many Islamic kingdoms rose and fell by turns with variuos ideology and their economic and political motives. As a result, Java experienced a complex of territorialization. By a spatial-historical approach, this article shows how territorialization affects the fashion of the emergence and collapse of the cities in Java. The spatial dynamics of urban growth reflected changes in political space

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production run by each ruling actor. The city played a significant role as a symbol and an identity of the political power of the dominant regime.

Pembahasan tentang Islamisasi tidak hanya terkait dengan penyebaran nilai-nilai agama tetapi juga dengan aktivitas perdagangan dan pembukaan wilayah baru. Di Jawa, ketiga tema tersebut terjadi secara bersamaan dan kemudian mengalami perkembangan pesat sejak abad ke-15. Pada abad ke-15 hingga ke-17, banyak kerajaan Islam yang bangkit dan jatuh secara bergiliran dengan beragam ideologi serta motif ekonomi dan politiknya. Akibatnya, Jawa mengalami teritorialisasi yang kompleks. Dengan pendekatan spasial-historis, artikel ini menunjukkan bagaimana teritorialisasi mempengaruhi cara kemunculan dan keruntuhan kota-kota di Jawa. Dinamika spasial pertumbuhan perkotaan mencerminkan perubahan produksi ruang politik yang dijalankan oleh masing-masing aktor yang berkuasa. Kota pun memainkan peran penting sebagai simbol dan identitas kekuatan politik rezim dominan.

# Keywords: Islamization; urban growth; political regime; dominant power; political space creation

## Introduction

The area of Java is about 132.000 km square or less than 10% of the total land area of Indonesia. Nowadays, Java is the most populated island in Indonesia. Almost 60% of the total population of the country inhabit this island. There were three cultural mutations that plagued the island.<sup>2</sup> The first mutation spurred on by Indianization was marked by the emergence of the concentric kingdoms of Hindu-Buddhist in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. These kingdoms chopped wilderness areas to develop settlements, build temples, and open farmland. The Indianization also introduced the pattern of statehood and traditions of writing in Java. When Indianization weakened in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, then

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Denys Lombard, Nusa Jawa: Silang Budaya, Kajian Sejarah Terpadu, vol. 1, Batas-Batas Pembaratan, Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama & Forum Jakarta-Paris, 2005, 4.

the second mutation came in along with Islamization. It coincided with an increase in maritime trade activities in Southeast Asia moving between two main poles, India and China. Under Islamization, numerous opened and plural communities generated on the north coast of Java. Trade was more prominent than agriculture. Islam tradition then colored community life as well as kingdom administration in Java. About two centuries later, westernization came in Java and stimulated the third mutation through colonialism and imperialism practices. Besides, it brought the Christian doctrine and European style as well. The Western power also changed Java's life through plantation commencing, infrastructure development, and foreign investment.

Regarding such processes, this article focuses on Islamization because it opened the door of modernization in Southeast Asia.<sup>3</sup> In the case of Java, the time of Islam's arrival became a civilization boundary between ancient and modern Java.<sup>4</sup> One of the characteristics of modern Java was the emergence of cosmopolitan culture in the north coast accompanied by city development<sup>5</sup>. Some of these cities have appeared since the Hindu-Buddhist period. When Islamization progressed in Java, several Hindu-Buddhist towns declined in their performance or even lost. By contrast, others instead elevated the role. New towns also sprung.

Two aspects of urban growth deserve consideration within a discussion about the geographies of power. First, it is principally to account for the dominant actor behind the transformation of cities.<sup>6</sup> Compared to the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Sumanto Al Qurtuby, "Southeast Asia: History, Modernity, and Religious Change", Al-Albab, Volume 2, Number 2 (2013), 150; Anthony Reid, Dari Ekspansi Hingga Krisis: Jaringan Perdagangan Global Asia Tenggara 1450-1680, Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1999, 152-153

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Supratikno Rahardjo, *Peradaban Jawa: Dari Mataram Kuno Hingga Majapahit Akhir*, Depok: Komunitas Bambu, 2011, 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Denys Lombard, Nusa Jawa: vol.1..., 39.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Shahab Fassal, Nasrin Banu, and Salma Sultana, "Expanding Cities, Contested Land: Role of Actors in the Context of Peri-Urban Interface", *Current Urban Studies*, volume 3 (2015), 197; Eduardo Marquez, "Government, Political Actors and Governance in Urban

Hindu period, the number of cities in the Islamic period in Java increased threefold.<sup>7</sup> However, the urban process in the Islamic period was more complicated than in the previous period.<sup>8</sup> The process involved three main actors; they were: the rulers, clergymen, and traders. In many cases, one actor played more than one role with various motives.

The second is the role of the city as political symbols.<sup>9</sup> It is an essential element for political actors to articulate their supremacy.<sup>10</sup> The appearance of the symbol indicates a particular rule of space production. <sup>11</sup> The symbols also indicate the ideology of political actors to manage territory through a particular conception of space so called territorialization. Location selection of cities, as well as the urban function, reflects a particular conception of space and belongs to the dominant actor. At these places, they build, develop, and promote a specific urban function such as palaces, fortresses, ports, and factories to ensure their existence. As a result, they make up geopolitical order.

The term "geopolitical order" outlines a form of political spatial order associated with the mastery of space.<sup>12</sup> It is related to the degree of centrality and domination, which reflects the dependency relationship between

Policies in Brazil and São Paulo: Concepts for a Future Research Agenda", Brazilian *Political Science Review*, volume 7, issue 3 (2013), 31-32; Saskia Sassen, "The Global City: Introducing a Concept," *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, volume 11, issue 2 (2005), 34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Werner Rutz, Cities and Towns in Indonesia. Belin-Stutgart: Gebrüder Borntraeger, 1987, 46-51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Denys Lombard, Nusa Jawa: Silang Budaya, Kajian Sejarah Terpadu, Vol. 2, Jaringan Asia, Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama & Forum Jakarta-Paris, 2005, 213-215; Werner Rutz, Cities and Towns in Indonesia..., 46.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Peter J.M. Nas, Marlies de Groot, and Michelle Schut, "Introduction : Variety of Symbols" in Peter J.M Nas (ed.), *Cities Full of Symbols, A Theory of Urban Space and Culture*, Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2011, 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>Djordje Stojanovic, "Space, Territory and Sovereignty: Critical Analysis of Concepts", Nagoya University Journal of Law and Politics, volume 275 (2017), 137-38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>Freek Colombijn, Paco-Paco (Kota) Padang, Sejarah Sebuah Kota di Indonesia pada Abad Kedua Puluh dan Penggunaan Ruang Kota, Yogyakarta : Ombak, 2006, 8-10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>Peter J. Taylor, *Political Geography : World Economy, Nation-State, and Locality.* New York: Longman Scientific & Technical, 2011, 64.

the actors of power. Thus, it requires several underlying assumptions and political behavior orientation, which are propagated by dominant actors. Therefore, geopolitical order is always biased and dynamic. It always develops into a new regularity, either through coercive or consensus mechanism. However, the final result is not always expected due to the political resistance, disobedience, or negation against the notion of the dominant actor. Each actor always finds any chances to take over power from the other actors.

There is a strong relationship between city development, urbanization, and state-building.<sup>13</sup> Based on such idea, this article believes that the city is not a single and independent entity but is always connected with the macrostructure, which is organized by a dominant power. The rise or fall of cities always contains geopolitical dimensions.<sup>14</sup> As a political process, urban growth always involves various types of political bonds, territorial conflict, and socio-economic competition among actors. It is necessary to investigate the leading actors as the inspirators in shaping geopolitical order. The replacement the dominant actor by the new one may transform geopolitical order into a new form. It signifies a shift worldview as political power emerges and collapses in turn.

Based on Webber's argumentation that stated the city must have a degree of political autonomy,<sup>15</sup> this article concerns on how ideological features modify political-economic actions of dominant power to the urban growth. The focus is to understand political space production related to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Karl Polanyi, The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time, Boston: Beacon Press, 1968, 55; Gary Fields, "City Systems, Urban History, and Economic Modernity: Urbanization and the Transition from Agrarian to Industrial Society", *Berkeley Planning Journal*, volume 13 (1999), 105-106.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>John Agnew, "The New Global Economy: Time-Space Compression, Geopolitics, and Global Uneven Development", *Journal of World-Systems Research*, volume VII, issue 2 (2001), 149.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>Simon Parker, Urban Theory and the Urban Experience, Encountering the City, London and New York: Routledge, 2004, 11.

Islamization and its implication on the rise and fall of cities. It raises the question of who are the dominant actors behind urban growth. What are the effects of variation of worldview and Islamic tradition embraced by the actors on political space creation? How does the actor change the function and identity of cities as a manifestation of their political power? And what follows from the answer to these questions for the new urban geography? This paper addresses these questions.

This study focuses on the relationship between emerging power structures and urban growth based on spasio-historical perspectives. It relies on secondary data from various publications conducted by notable experts who put great attention on the study of Java and Southeast Asian as well, such as Denys Lombard, Anthony Reid, Nigel Mulder, H.J. de Graff, etc. This study adopts the narrative approach to scrutinize a "story" from various data and information within books, articles, working papers, or reports which had strong relevancy in this study.<sup>16</sup> After reading and compiling the stories, the next step is to arrange, interpret, and construct a new story corresponding to the scope and objective of the study. In line with that, the basis of this study is the definition of geography as an interpretative science.<sup>17</sup> It gives priority to hear and read the story about the rise and fall of cities as well as the political actors behind it and then provided the spatial interpretation referring to the theoretical background.

This study uses geographical and historical techniques such as maps, timelines, and other visualization methods to elaborate on dynamic sequences of events. All events are the results of the complexity of actions conducted by either a single or multiple actors. By looking at the actors,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>Anne Bell, "A Narrative Approach to Research", *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education*. Vol 8 (2003), 97; Margarete Sandelowski, "Telling Stories: Narrative Approach in Qualitative Research". IMAGE: *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, Volume 23, Number 3 (1991), 162.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>Keith Hoggart, Loretta Lees, and Anna Davies, *Researching Human Geography*, London: Arnold Publisher, 2002, 22-23.

the study concerned with discovering the ideological features belongs to a particular power in connection with political space creation. This study uses "inland" and "coastal" as a framework to explore the pattern of rising and falling of the cities in Java. Unlike previous studies, this study recognizes both inland and coastal not only as a reflection of geographical differentiation but as a representation of worldview differentiation as well. Thus, the study defined "worldview" as a set of assumptions, confidence, value, and perception owned by the people for imaging and creating reality.<sup>18</sup>

## Islamization in Java

Until today, the beginning and process of Islam arrival into Java are still in the debate by historians. Nevertheless, based on the finding of Fatimah Maemun's tombstone at Gresik with marked 475 Hijriah (1082 M), they agree that Muslim people have existed on the north coast of Java since the 11<sup>th</sup> century. They were more clearly in the 15<sup>th</sup> along with a momentous raising of maritime trade in Southeast Asia that controlled dominantly by Muslim traders. Hence, no wonder if many experts confirmed an intense relation between Islamization in Java and the golden age of maritime trade that passaged Bengal Bay, Andaman Sea, Malacca Strait, South China Sea, and the Java Sea.<sup>19</sup>

The Muslim traders came wavy into Java. They landed and settled for long days in the north coast for spending merchandise, filling supplies, and awaiting monsoon wind to bring them to the other places. They built settlements and expanded socioeconomic relations with local people.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>Bernie van der Walt J, "Culture, Worldview, and Religion: The Perspective from the African Continent", *Philosophia Reformata*, Volume 66 (2001), 34-35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>Anthony Reid, Asia Tenggara Dalam Kurun Niaga 1450-1680: Tanah di Bawah Angin, Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1992, 63-65; Uka Tjandrasasmita, Arkeologi Islam Nusantara, Jakarta: Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia, 2009, 38-43; Denys Lombard, Nusa Jawa: Silang Budaya, Kajian Sejarah Terpadu, Volume 2..., 31.

Cultural exposure between foreign traders and local people occurred in many ways. Many local people embraced Islam tradition and many international traders followed the lifestyle of Java.<sup>20</sup> As a result, there was a cosmopolitan lifestyle that characterized by the expansion of Islam and the presence of foreigners.<sup>21</sup>

A critical milestone of Islamization in Java was the establishment of the Sultanate of Demak in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It provided a political basis of Islamization. Therefore, the expansion of Islam was channeled by both economic and political motives. On the coast, Islamization developed along the coastline from Demak to the west (Cirebon and Banten) and the east (Gresik and Ngampel) **before penetrating the inland**.<sup>22</sup> It also infiltrated the territory of Majapahit, the most prominent Hindu Kingdom. Hinduism traditions such as the apotheosis of the king, the construction of temples, and the implementation of the caste system increasingly abandoned by Javanese.<sup>23</sup> At the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Islamic civilization finally dominated the socio-political life in Java.

#### Recognizing Islamic power: coastal and inland regime

The 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century was a golden period of the emerging of pre-colonial states in Indonesia. At the same time, there was rapid development of Islamic expansion in Java. Some noticeable Islamic kingdoms (the sultanates) appeared in Java, such as in Demak, Banten, Cirebon, Pajang, and Mataram. Some smaller kingdoms also emerged in Jipang, Tuban, Surabaya, and Pasuruan. Among these kingdoms, the Sultanate of Demak

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>Merle C. Ricklefs, Sejarah Indonesia Modern 1200–2004..., 27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>Denys Lombard, Nusa Jawa: Silang Budaya, Kajian Sejarah Terpadu, Volume 2..., 28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>Hermanus J. de Graaf and Theodore Pigeaud, Kerajaan Islam Pertama di Jawa: Tinjauan Sejarah Politik Abad XV dan XVI, Jakarta: PT Utama Pustaka Graafiti, 2003, 162; Denys Lombard, *Nusa Jawa: Silang Budaya, Kajian Sejarah Terpadu, Volume 2...,* 36.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>Slamet Mulyana, Runtuhnya Kerajaan Hindu-Jawa dan Timbulnya Negara-Negara Islam di Nusantara, Yogyakarta: LKIS, 2005, 202.

and Mataram were the two most prominent Islamic kingdoms in Java. In their periods, Java experienced a vivid transformation in social-economic and political life. The two sultanates represented two types of Islam in Java called "coastal" and "inland" Islam. While the first grew in the open and plural communities, the later appeared in the isolated and homogenous communities. Despite the nonexisting differences in substances, there remained much symbolic differentiation between them.<sup>24</sup>

Sultanate of Demak was the first Islamic kingdom in Java established in the 1500s. It existed at one strategic location around Mount Muria on the north coast. It closed to the port of Jepara and Rembang. The narrow strait of Muria provided a transportation line between Demak and Rembang. Because of the high rate of sedimentation, the large vassals had not passed it anymore since the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Due to the diminishing of Rembang, Jepara came out as the main gateway to Demak's territory.

The Sultanate of Mataram emerged on the fertile plain near volcanic mountains. It looked out southwardly to "empty" waters: the Indian Ocean. The rivers that broke through the mountain passes provided natural routes to make a spatial connection with the dynamic waters of the Java Sea in the north. As a whole, this region offered many resources for life and defense to support a sizeable social organization development. In the 8<sup>th</sup> century, this region also had been the center of Hindu and Buddhist kingdoms that marked by Borobudur and Prambanan Temples.

The Sultanate of Mataram was a political continuation of the Sultanate of Pajang, the first Islamic kingdom in the inland region of Java. There was a differentiation between Islam tradition in Pajang and Demak. While Pajang attached to Islam tradition that enlightened by Syekh Siti Jenar, Demak embraced the Wali Songo's enlightenment.<sup>25</sup> For noted, Wali

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup>Nur Syam, Islam Pesisir, Yogyakarta: LKIS, 2005, 22-34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup>Sudarno, "Tinjauan Singkat Asal-Usul dan Sejarah Kerajaan Pajang 1549-1589", in M.

Songo was a group of nine holy men known as the main political and religious sponsor of the Sultanate of Demak. In terms of spiritual matters, Wali Songo clarified Syek Siti Jenar's enlightenment as a sinful tradition; known as the "Islam Abangan" which was associated with the inland Islam.<sup>26</sup> Some believe this tradition was a result of religious and cultural syncretism between Javanese-Hindu and Islam.<sup>27</sup> After the collapse of the Sultanate of Pajang in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Sultanate of Mataram tried to retain and promote the syncretism as the main tradition in entire Java.

#### Traditional worldview in Java

Before the presence of the Europeans, the cultural-religious philosophy dominated the social life in Java.<sup>28</sup> The faith of Hindu and Islam came across to the agrarian traditions which evolved over the centuries and then produced a distinctive worldview. The worldview describes how the people conceive and interpret the world around them. As the foundation of Javanese worldview, agrarian vision contains many pearls of wisdom and myths, such as dependence on God, nature redeems, sense of harmony, and social integration.<sup>29</sup> The vision suggest a course of action in terms of settlement design, territorial control, and social communication.<sup>30</sup>

In the case of Java, there were two agrarian systems, namely "swidden"

Moenthadim (ed) Pajang: Pergolakan Spiritual, Politik, dan Budaya, Jakarta: Genta Pustaka & Yayasan Kertagama, 2010, 254.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup>Clifford Geertz, Abangan, Santri, Priyayi dalam Masyarakat Jawa, Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya, 1983, 153.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup>Slamet Mulyana, Runtuhnya Kerajaan HinduJawa dan...., 262; Denys Lombard, Nusa Jawa: Silang Budaya, Kajian Sejarah Terpadu, Volume 3, Warisan Kerajaan-Kerajaan Konsentris, Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama & Forum Jakarta-Paris, 2005, 22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup>Jo Santoso, Arsitektur Kota-Kota Jawa: Kosmos, Kultur, dan Kuasa, Jakarta: Centropolis-Magsiter Teknik Perencanaan Universitas Tarumanegara, 2008, 199.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup>Paul B. Thompson, *The Agrarian Vision : Sustainability and Environmental Ethics*, Lexington KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2010, 5-7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup>Jakob Sumardjo, Arkeologi Budaya Indonesia, Yogyakarta: Qalam, 2002, 20-28; Niels Mulder, Mistisme Jawa, Ideologi di Indonesia, 98-99; Jo Santoso, Arsitektur Kota-Kota Jawa..., 50-51.

and "paddy" systems (Fig 1). The two systems had appeared before Indianization. The presence of Hinduism and Buddhism from India had profound implications for both, especially regarding the sacred relationship and integration between the God and human sphere.<sup>31</sup> However, there were some critical differences between the two systems in production means, ideological basis, social organization and conception of space as well.<sup>32</sup>

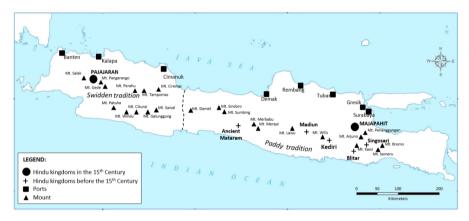


Fig 1. Spatial division of traditional worldview in Java: swidden and paddy tradition

In Java, the swidden system is attached to the Sundanese people in the western part.<sup>33</sup> The primary nature of the system is a nomadic behavior. The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup>Robert Heine-Geldern, "Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Volume 2, Issue 1 (1942), 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup>David R. Harris, "Swidden System and Settlement", In P.J. Ucko, R. Triangham, and G.W. Dimlebly (eds.), *Man*, *Settlement, and Urbanism*, London: Gerald Duckworth and Co, 1972, 245-262; Douglas Nakashima, and Marie M. Rouè, "Indigenous Knowledge, Peoples and Sustainable Practice" in P. Timmerman (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Global Environmental Change Volume 5 Social and Economic Dimensions of Global Environmental Change*, Chicester: John Wiley and Sons Ltd, 2002, 315; Matti Sarmela, "Swidden Cultivation in Finland as a Cultural System", *Suomen Antropologi – Finnish Anthropologist*, Volume 4 (1987), 7-9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup>Denys Lombard, Nusa Jawa: Volume 1..., 23; Edi Suhardi Ekadjati. Kebudayaan Sunda Jilid 2 Zaman Pajajaran. Jakarta : Pustaka Jaya, 2009, 148.

swiddeners **do not depend on one particular location**; they are easy for moving even tend to return periodically to the original site. At every location, they build impermanent settlements and disperse in many small groups. They do not need a large social organization to maintain their life. Because of that, that they do not recognize the centralized power.<sup>34</sup> The power of control come from a natural hierarchy based on individual position and personality in a particular group or family.<sup>35</sup>

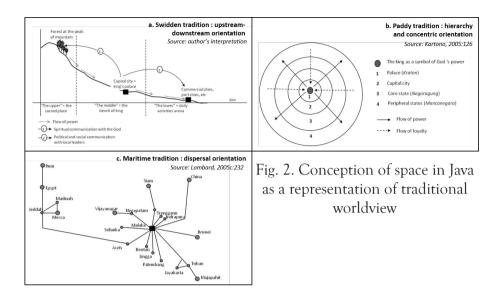
The swiddeners have a power conception known as a trinity or *tritangtu* wisdom. They distinguish the actors of power into three parties; they are: God as the source; king as the holder, and local leader as the executor.<sup>36</sup> This wisdom then translates to the conception of space. They perceive the world space into three sections: the upper, middle, and lower (Fig. 2a). "The upper" is a sacred place as the house of God. It always refers to the top of the mountain. As a representation of the power holder, the locational basis of the king's palace is at "the middle." The king is just a symbol of God's power, but does not run that power. Then, "the lower" is for daily activities, such as the public market and ports. The middle and lower point to the hilly terrain at the foot of the mountain and the coastal region respectively.

On the topographical relief, the wisdom shows an "upstreamdownstream" orientation. According to Fig.2a, it represents the flowing of power continuously from the source to the holder, then to the executor. It means the three parties are not separated but complement each other as an organic unity. Subsequently, it describes the concept of plurality in power relations..

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup>Hafid Setiadi, Hadi Sabari Yunus, and Bambang Purwanto, "The Metaphor of Center in Planning: Learning from the Geopolitical Order of Swidden Traditions in the Land of Sunda", *Journal of Regional and City Planning*, Volume 8, Number 2 (2017), 116.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup>Matti Sarmela, "Swidden Cultivation in Finland as a Cultural System"..., 13.
 <sup>36</sup>Jakob Sumardjo, Arkeologi Budaya Indonesia..., 32.

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By contrast, the paddy system is the permanent and intensive cultivation. The farmers develop a large settlement and live collectively in a sizeable social organization. They need a centralized power to maintain regularity and stability of organization, especially when sharing life resources.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, they adopt the principles of the universe order into human life. For them, human life is the universe on a smaller scale<sup>38</sup>. The universe is God's sphere. There must be a major axis to harmonize between the gods and human speheres.<sup>39</sup>

The axis represents the formation of the centralized power in human sphere as a result of the incarnation of God's power over the universe. It stances the king as the holder of absolute power at the center point to inspire and control social organization entirely.<sup>40</sup> All of the changes are only possible to run from the center to the periphery. But, the more

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup>Denys Lombard, Nusa Jawa: Volume 3..., 100; Niels Mulder, Mistisme Jawa..., 99.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup>Robert Heine-Geldern, "Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia"..., 17.
 <sup>39</sup>Jo Santoso, Arsitektur Kota-Kota Jawa: Kosmos, Kultur, dan Kuasa..., 42-43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup>Jakob Sumardjo, Arkeologi Budaya Indonesia..., 22-24.

toward the edge, the spout of the king's power will continue to weaken. Therefore, the king needs to establish some smaller centers to control remote places and to ensure regional integration. All the smaller centers domicile hierarchically surrounding the king in the concentric pattern (Fig. 2b).

In parallel with the progress of Muslim domination in maritime trade since the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the traders brought maritime tradition and Islamic values as well into Java. A new culture infiltrated social and economic life in Java, especially on the north coast. The people became more open and outward-oriented.<sup>41</sup> Social and economic competition was more noticeable. The sacred relationship between man and gods no longer became the determinant factor of power identity. Struggle for obtaining power was based on the ability to develop social and economic networks.<sup>42</sup>

Such a situation awakened several forces with equal power. Hence, a plurality of power became the main characteristics of the maritime tradition.<sup>43</sup> Its primary basis was accessibility to beneficial places as the ability to use the seas and oceans for commercial purposes.<sup>44</sup> This tradition also regarded inland water routes and equal distance of transit points as essential elements.<sup>45</sup> Thus, port and commercial centers replaced the king's palace as focal points. It caused the demand for dispersal movement, which was higher than the forces of centralization. The spatial organization developed into an intricate pattern consists of hubs and spokes (Fig. 2c).

Based on their uniqueness, each of the three systems - swidden,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup>Merle C. Ricklefs, Sejarah Indonesia Modern..., 47; Adrian Vickers, Peradaban Pesisir, Menuju Sejarah Budaya Asia Tenggara, Denpasar: Pustaka Larasati and Udayana University Press, 2009, 63.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup>Denys Lombard, Nusa Jawa: Volume 2..., 173.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup>Adrian Vickers, Peradaban Pesisir, Menuju Sejarah Budaya Asia Tenggara..., 63.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup>Colin S. Gray S, "Sea Power: The Great Enabler", *Naval War College Review*, Volume 47 Number 1 (1994), 21-22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup>Christer Westerdahl, "The Maritime Cultural Landscape", *The International Journa lof Nautical Archaeology*, Volume 21, Number 1 (1992), 7.

paddy, and maritime – became a foundation to take loactional decision for establishing cities to strengthen the identity of power. The cities then appeared at those locations, such as capital and port cities also revealed the subjectivity of the ruling actors in creating and organizing their political space. However, the three systems were not isolated. A complex of social as well as political interactions among people and places had blended them. It means that Islamization did not remove all traces of Hindu-Buddhist.

#### Dominant actors, territorialization, and cities

Concerning the above circumstances, it is critical to identify the dominant actor behind the rise and fall of the cities in Java during Islamization. What kind of system did they embrace? How did they perform such a system in relation to city development as part of dominant space creation?

Before the 15<sup>th</sup> century, two Hindu kingdoms still existed in the interior region of Java. While the Kingdom of Sunda lay in the west, the Kingdom of Majapahit lay in the east. Those kingdoms built and maintained some ports cities on the north coast of Java, such as Banten, Kalapa, Tuban, and Gresik, to develop economic and political relations with the overseas. When trading activities in Southeast Asia experienced a remarkable improvement in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, these cities became more crowded by the presence of Muslim traders.<sup>46</sup> As a result, more than 30 new cities appeared on the north coast region.<sup>47</sup> As shown in Fig. 3, during Islamization, the region seemed more infested by the cities than the previous period, especially in the north coast. At that time, the spatial distribution of cities was also more balanced between the western and eastern part of Java. The change of city distribution indicated that there was a new trend of city development in Java during Islamization. To elaborate on this new trend, we need to understand the changes in the political regime.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup>Uka Tjandrasasmita, Arkeologi Islam Nusantara..., 43-44; Claude Guillot, Banten, Sejarah dan Peradaban Abad X-XVII, Jakarta: Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia, 2008, 26-28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup>Werner Rutz, Cities and Towns in Indonesia..., 50.

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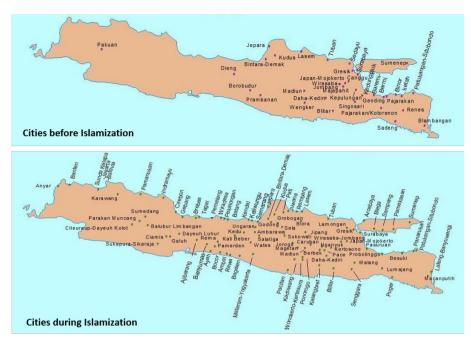


Fig 3. Spatial distribution of cities in Java before and during Islamization (source : Rutz, 1987:48-50)

According to Fig. 4, we can see that all Islamic kingdoms in Java, either inland or coastal regime, had social and political relations to Majapahit Kingdoms, mainly under the lord-vassal mechanism. Moreover, they claimed themselves as the successors of Majapahit. Because of that, they had an obsession with being a powerful kingdom, just like their predecessor. No wonder the Kingdom of Demak, Pajang, and Mataram tried to perform in Majapahit's way of reaching political and economic glory.

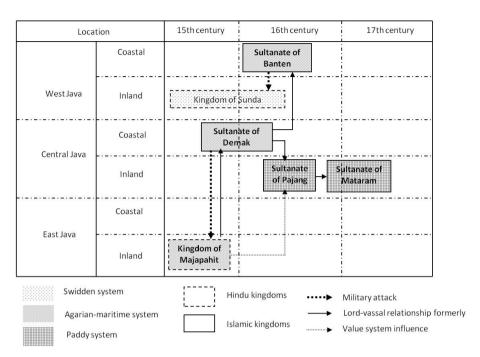


Fig 4. Cultural and political relations between Hindu and Islamic Kingdoms in Java during the 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century

In connection with worldview characteristics, the Kingdom of Majapahit seemed to combine the paddy and maritime systems. It allowed a mixture of river-based and coastal culture then created a more diversified culture. This logic provides a reasonable explanation of the high ability of the inland regime of Majapahit to control many overseas places in Southeast Asia. Of course, the paddy system was still dominant in coloring the political ideology of Majapahit. <sup>48</sup>

After devastating Majapahit, the Sultanate of Demak became a dominant power in Java. Unlike Majapahit, the political foundation of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup>N Claire van Setten van der Meer, Sawah Cultivation in Ancient Java: Aspects of Development During the Indo Javanese Period the 5th to 15t Century, Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1979, 135.

Demak was dominated by maritime tradition as a product of Muslim-Chinese penetration into Southeast Asia. <sup>49</sup> For this reason, Demak was known as the initiator of the coastal Islam regime in Java. Nevertheless, Hinduism from the Majapahit era still existed in Demak.<sup>50</sup> It was no surprise, given that the founder of Demak–namely Raden Patah–was descendants of the count of Majapahit Kingdom.<sup>51</sup> One of the Hindu elements was the centralization of social and political authorities in one single power .<sup>52</sup> This element indicated Demak also embraced the paddy system that was proved by the existence of large irrigated-paddy fields.<sup>53</sup>

One of the main factors that made a significant differentiation of the urban process between Hindu (Majapahit) and Islamic (Demak) period was the change of clergymen's role. In the Hindu period, there was a firmly functional division between political rulers and religious leaders. Although there was a good relationship between the two of them, the Hindu clergymen were rarely involved in political matters, but in judicial affairs.<sup>54</sup> When Islam came into Java, it was changed fundamentally. The changes had begun at the end of Majapahit's era when the clergymen tried to strengthen their territorial identities by opening new lands.<sup>55</sup> The progress of maritime trade activities and the introduction of money economics also accelerated the changes due to the weakening of agricultural culture as the primary basis of social life at that time. But the primary

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup>Hermanus J. de Graaf and Theodore Pigeaud, Kerajaan Islam Pertama di Jawa...,29; Denys Lombard, Nusa Jawa: Volume 2..., 52; Slamet Mulyana, Runtuhnya Kerajaan Hindu-Jawa...,197-198.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup>Hermanus J. de Graaf and Theodore Pigeaud. *Kerajaan Islam Pertama di Jawa...*, 78. <sup>51</sup>Slamet Mulyana, *Runtuhnya Kerajaan HinduJawa...*, 94-95.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup>Denys Lombard, Nusa Jawa: Volume 2..., 187-188.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup>Hermanus J. de Graaf and Theodore Pigeaud, Kerajaan Islam Pertama di Jawa..., 38-39.
<sup>54</sup>Supratikno Rahardjo, Peradaban Jawa: Dari Mataram Kuno Hingga Majapahit Akhir..., 100-101.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup>J. Burhanudin, Ulama & Kekuasaan : Pergumulan Elite Muslim dalam Sejarah Indonesia. Jakarta : Mizan, 2012, 84; Denys Lombard, Nusa Jawa: Volume 2..., 131.

cause was the fusion of political, economic, and religious symbols in Islamization of Java. The evidence was the foundation of Demak, which was sponsored politically by *Wali Songo*, a group of nine famous clergymen who were responsible for initial Islamization in Java. Indeed the first ruler of Demak, namely Raden Patah, was also their student. Thus, the emergence of the Sultanate of Demak not only strengthened maritime traditions but also presented the clergymen as a new actor in political life. This tendency was also visible at the Sultanate of Banten, as a Demak's vassal state in the western part of Java.

Therefore, while the maritime-trade system reflected the aggressiveness of territorial expansion, the paddy system demonstrated the stability of power order. In Demak, this combination emerged three geopolitical symbols; they were the palace, the port, and the mosque. Each of them represented political, economic, and religious power separately. "The palace" or capital symbolized a powerful entity that performed as a hegemonic ruler over the entire organization as well as territory. On the other side, "the port" represented a behavior tendency that possed strength and spirit to compete with outsiders.

In comparison, "the palace" was still more important than "the port." Moreover, "the mosque" was the center of Islam's dissemination. However, the three were presented together in the capital city of Demak. The same tendency also found in several main cities on the north coast, such as Banten, Cirebon, and Surabaya. It was a signal for the unity of political and religious interest in managing territory. Collectively, they showed the aggressiveness of territorial expansion that controlled by a dominant center. The main motives were to spread out Islamic tradition and expand commercial networks. By contrast, this tendency had never been in the Hindu period.

In the inland region, territorial expansion conducted by the Sultanate of Demak provided different features on urban symbolizing. After attacking and destroying the capital city of Hindu kingdoms in Pakuan and Trowulan, the ruler of Demak left them behind at all that caused two cities to collapse permanently. Then the ruler of Demak occupied the former capital city of Hindu kingdoms in Madiun, Kediri, and Singosari (Malang) not only to deactivate Hindu powers but also to gain political control on the fertile valleys for paddy production. Economically, paddy had strategic value for maintaining the existence and reputation of the Sultanate of Demak on international trade in Southeast Asia.<sup>56</sup> To some "empty lands" in the inland region, the ruler of Demak sent some clergymen mainly for religious purposes.<sup>57</sup> In this way, Islamic communities began to appear dispersedly in the inland region.

Besides the clergymen, the traders also played a vital role in Demak's territorialization. The movement of traders was smoother than that of the clergymen. They were able to overcome political, religious, and natural barriers. Viewed from "the port's" interests, the traders established trade routes to the hinterland area of Pengging, one of the concentration points of Majapahit's loyalist. They also reached some critical places on the overseas, ranging from Borneo to Maluku Islands. It means that the traders allowed the rulers of Demak to control trade routes from the mountains to the sea.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Demak began to weaken due to a power struggle between members of the kingdom. Several vassal states also tried to detach their political dependence on Demak. The Majapahit loyalist was based in the inland region, especially in Pengging and Pajang, then exploited this situation to build a new power center led by Jaka Tingkir. Finally, in the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century, Jaka Tingkir attacked and took over the political power of Demak. He moved the capital city from Demak to Pajang. Subsequently,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup>Hermanus J. de Graaf and Theodore Pigeaud, *Kerajaan Islam Pertama di Jawa...*, 39.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup>Denys Lombard, Nusa Jawa: Volume 2..., 128-129.

the Sultanate of Pajang emerged as a new ruler replacing the Sultanate of Demak.

Since the collapse of Sultanate of Demak, the political tradition in Java was more colorful by the agrarian culture based on the paddy system. The maritime system no longer existed at that time. The conception of space became a more concentric pattern that relied on the supremacy of the center. The apathetic of Pajang's political vision to control Bengawan Solo had disappeared maritime tradition.<sup>58</sup> Based on the experiences of Majapahit and Demak as well, the mastery over the river was the key to success for having political and economic dominancy in Java.

Why did the apathetic vision emerge in Pajang? There were two points of the answer. First, the hidden location of Pajang behind mountains provides a topographic barrier to reach all of the focal places along Bengawan Solo. As noted, Bengawan Solo is the longest river in Java that finishes at Gresik. The distance from Pajang to Gresik is about 600 km. Second, there was Hindu mythology that believed the inland region as a sacred place for God or king bench.<sup>59</sup> It caused more attention to the inland rather than to the coast. It was a contrary worldview compare to the Demak's one. Such mythology was a legacy of the Javanese-Hinduism. Before Islam came to power, Pajang was the crown land for the Kingdom of Majapahit.<sup>60</sup> Although the people of Pajang had embraced Islam, the legitimacy of their political power still derived from the Hindu tradition.<sup>61</sup>

The next regime, the Sultanate of Mataram, still applied the above conception. The main idea was the king as an absolute power holder. The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup>Martin Moenthadim S.M, *Pajang: Pergolakan Spiritual, Politik, dan Budaya*, Jakarta : Genta Pustaka and Yayasan Kertagama, 2010, 54.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup>Denys Lombard, Nusa Jawa: Volume 3..., 96 ; Niels Mulder, Mistisme Jawa..., 140; Jo Santoso, Arsitektur Kota-Kota Jawa: Kosmos, Kultur, dan Kuasa..., 77-78.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup>Hermanus J. de Graaf and Theodore Pigeaud, Kerajaan Islam Pertama di Jawa..., 232.
 <sup>61</sup>Merle C. Ricklefs, Sejarah Indonesia Modern 1200–2004..., 96.

Sultan of Mataram proclaimed himself as "The King of Java." Under this idea, the whole territory and the people of Java should be subject to the king's power. Hence "the palace" in the inland region became the most critical place in the political organization of the kingdom. In other words, while the inland was core, the coast was periphery. "The palace" was an ultimate source of positive energy, while the north coast turned out to be a concentration zone of negative energy. The core had an absolute superiority over the periphery. The motion of development always ran from the center to the periphery. It means "the palace" was the only actor in the politics of territorial.

However, the king was not entirely confident that people would obey his commandments. It was necessary to establish the nobility of the king. The conquest over peripheral powers was a must. Moreover, the ruler of Mataram believed to protect entire Java from foreign elements through controling the coast. In line with that, the ruler repeatedly sent military expeditions to occupy the north coast, starting from Demak to Surabaya. The occupation was success in 1625. But, after that, the northern coast was likely to be ignored. Almost port cities suffered a setback. Thus the strategic role of "the port" was misplaced.

As an agrarian state, the political expansion of Mataram also aimed to control water resources and fertile lands as well. For the sake of such intent, the ruler of Mataram conquered strategic places in the Madiun and Brantas valleys. Several inland cities fell into the clutches of Mataram in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Besides developed agricultural activities, the ruler of Mataram also set these areas as a basis for attacking Surabaya and the easternmost of Java.

To the west, the forces of Mataram also infiltrated the Sundanese area through the inland area for attacking the coastal city of Batavia. At that time, the foreign power of the Dutch had conquered Batavia. Along with this infiltration, the forces of Mataram at once introduced paddy culture into the swidden system of Sundanese. The paddy fields began to flourish in Garut, Sumedang, and Karawang.<sup>62</sup> The paddy barns in those areas were prepared as a food supply for Mataram's soldiers on their way to Batavia.

## Geopolitical process of urban growth

The above description described the conception of space and the actors behind urban growth in Java during Islamization in the 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Table 1 provides some fundamental aspects related to the conception of space in the geopolitical context that was conducted by each regime. In that period, there was a significant shifting of geopolitical code, such as from plural to a single power. However, the need for a dominant center always existed in all regimes. In the case of Java, the dominant center must be "the palace." It was one of the Indianization features that had rooted in Java since the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Also, it was a necessary element of feudalism in Java's paddy culture.

	Before Islamization (Majapahit era)	Coastal Islamic regime (Demak)	Inland Islamic regime (Mataram)
Cultural base	Paddy-maritime tradition	Maritime-paddy tradition	Paddy tradition
Most important place	Top of mountains, inland valleys	Coast	Spacious and fertile inland low land or valleys
Need of center	Powerful center	Powerful center	Powerful center
Type of power	One single power	Pluralism power	One single power

Table 1. Fundamental aspects of conception of space

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup>Denys Lombard, Nusa Jawa: Volume 3...,36-44.

	Before Islamization (Majapahit era)	Coastal Islamic regime (Demak)	Inland Islamic regime (Mataram)
Power symbol	Palace	Palace, port, and mosque	Palace
Pattern of spatial division	Segmented: sacred place and real-life place	Network: political, economic, and religious collaboration	Concentric and radial: center and periphery
Type of social organization	Sizeable organization with hierarchical structure	Dispersed organization with loose hierarchical structure	Sizeable organization with strict hierarchical structure
Territorialization modus	Kinship relation, political conquest,	political conquest, develop new political entities, holy men delegation, trade network	Expansion of the rice field

There are some interesting topics related to the above table. The first is about pluralistic power. This kind of power had various manifestations, such as domination, resistance, hegemony, heterarchy, authority, identity, collaboration, collusion, and creative action.<sup>63</sup> It was very obvious in Demak. Besides the rulers who held political-administrative power, the traders have also had an important role through their economic potential. They were able to control power by establishing a trade network. Religious interests also colored the plurality of powers fueled by the clergymen. They were based at mosques and raised themselves as the holy men and the scholars at once. Although they had a different position, habitually,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup>Sarah Cowie, The Plurality of Power: An Archeology of Industrial Capitalism, New York: Springer-Verlag, 2011, 8.

they acted role as the others. For instance, two clergymen, namely Sunan Kalijaga dan Sunan Gunung Jati were also known as the military commanders of Demak.<sup>64</sup> They always involved actively in the political process of decision making.

Because of that, for the coastal regime, the hierarchical structure among the power holders was very loose.<sup>65</sup> It seemed more as a heterarchy structure, which was full of instability. Under that circumstance, the mosque emerged as a vital component. The ruler required the presence of the mosque not only to accommodate religious-social concerns but also to guarantee the stability of political power. The mosque integrates political as well as social interests of various powers into a single bond. The Great Mosque of Demak became the central pole in the Islamic world of Java.<sup>66</sup>

Consequently, although "the palace" still existed as the dominant actor, the determinant factor of regional integration was "the mosque." It means that dominant space creation did not aim to define either the size and boundary of territory but to strain social-religious relations among the people at various places. Furthermore, "the palace" used such a relationship to run its political and economic dominance over the people and the territory as well.

There was even a complicated situation due to Indianization and Islamization in Java. However, by placing the mode of space created as the primary consideration, we can still identify some preliminary pieces of evidence of urban imposition in Java during Islamization. The opening paddy field in the inland region of West Java conducted by the Sultanate of Mataram had changed the agrarian tradition of Sundanese people from the swidden to paddy system. For example, some main features

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup>Slame Mulyana, Runtuhnya Kerajaan Hindu-Jawa..., 100-105.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup>Supratikno Rahardjo, *Kemunculan dan Keruntuhan Kota-Kota Pra-Kolonial di Indonesia*, Depok: Fakultas Ilmu Budaya Universitas Indonesia, 2007, 80.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup>Hermanus J. de Graaf and Theodore Pigeaud, Kerajaan Islam Pertama di Jawa..., 36.

of the paddy system appeared in the swidden city of Sumedang, such as "the palace" as the main center and the banyan trees at the town square. In the paddy system, the banyan tree represented the sanctity, solidity, sturdiness, and guardianship of power.<sup>67</sup> So the existence of banyan trees at the downtown of Sumedang could be seen as a sign of a new cultural identity impression. The city of Sumedang appeared as a symbol of the paddy system in the middle of the swidden systems.

Similar phenomena also appeared on the north coast. Islamic forces invaded the Kingdom of Sunda and destroyed its capital in the inland (Pakuan). Then they developed the new capital on the beach, namely Surosowan (Fig. 5). Along with locational shifting, the new capital became the basin of three kinds of power at once: politics, economics, and religion as well. The appearance of Surosowan as the new capital removed the role of Pakuan and brought new identity as well as new political order on the north coast. The location displacement and changing of political and cultural identity confirmed that the Sultanate of Banten had detached entirely from the political order of the Kingdoms of Sunda. As a new dominant power, the Sultan of Banten progressed actively to expand its territorial through political or economic channels.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup>Jo Santoso, Arsitektur Kota-Kota Jawa: Kosmos, Kultur, dan Kuasa..., 174.

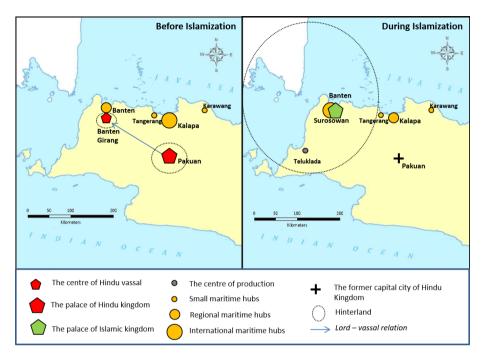


Fig. 5. Urban imposition over Hindu Kingdom on the north coast by coastal Islamic regime

Another example also happened at Tuban. As I have already mentioned, in the Hindu period, Tuban was the most dynamic port city of Majapahit. But, during Islamization, Tuban became the bench of a clergyman, namely Sunan Bonang, who acted as *Wali Songo* member. Because of that, the ultimate function of Tuban changed into the center of Islam dissemination. "The mosque" seemed to had replaced the role of "the port" as a dominant actor. That new function reflected the symptom of declining in political and economic positions. However, the environmental factor, mainly coastal sedimentation, also caused that decline.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup>Samuel Hartono and Handinoto. "Alun-alun dan Revitalisasi Identitas Kota Tuban", *Dimensi Teknik Arsitektur*, Volume 33, Number 1 (2005), 132.

The process of dominant space creation in Java during Islamization also showed a geopolitical symptom known as political spill-over. It was related to the political or economic behavior of "the palace" that allowed the outside entities to run and develop a separate power. The emergence of Banten as a new political and trade center in the westernmost of Java was a good example of such a symptom. Under the swidden system, "the palace" of the Kingdom of Sunda in the inland region was more preferred to be a passive actor and perform inward-looking orientation.<sup>69</sup> Consequently, the external entities such as "the ports" or "the mosques" had many opportunities to reinforce their power. They grew to be the more active and aggressive entities and then declared themselves as a competitor for "the palace." Another example was that the decisions of the Sultanate of Demak to overlook the inland region caused Pajang to have a chance to grow as Demak's competitor. Along with that, the people of Kedu Plain moved their allegiance from Demak to Pajang. Finally, we can see that the rise and fall of cities in Java were a product of political spill-over.

## Conclusion

This study showed various patterns of space production during Islamization in Java, which were related to the features of a worldview that was embraced by a particular political regime. The different worldview among political regimes affected the pattern of space production to the role of dominant actors, type of power, type of organization, and mode of territorialization. The alteration of worldview followed the change of political regime then shifted the pattern of political space creation.

In any political regime, "the palace" always performed as a dominant actor in creating political space. Meanwhile, "the port" and "the mosque"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup>Hafid Setiadi, Hadi Sabari Yunus, and Bambang Purwanto, "The Metaphor of Center in Planning"..., 118-119.

also played some crucial roles only in the maritime tradition of the coastal regime. In this regime, "the mosque" ran a pivotal role as social integration. In some cases, "the mosque" also took action as "the palace" and "the port" at once. By contrast, in the inland regime, the role of "the mosque" in such development was insignificant. That difference had an impact not only on the changing of the urban function but also on power symbolization in some main cities.

Along with such tendency, the geopolitical-economic symptoms (pluralistic power, urban imposition, and political-spill over) colored urban growth in Java during Islamization. They were related to the behavior of political actors in shaping their identities and territories. It confirms there was a relationship between urban growth, power identity, political ideology, and the behavior of dominant actors.

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