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The Built Environment Element of Economic Development in Post Conflict Response in Indonesia

Wisnu Setiawan^a*, Peter S. Barrett^b

^aDepartment of Architecture, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Indonesia, 57162 ^bSchool of Built Environment, University of Salford, UK, M5 4WT

Abstract

The recent violent communal conflicts events at the end of 1990s in Indonesia has appointed to the importance of relationship within the community and linked to the role of economic sector and built environment. This paper presents some findings from interviews with four groups of stakeholders related to urban development on a recent study in the context of the communal conflict that occurred on three cases: Solo (Central Java), Poso (Central Sulawesi), and Sambas (West Kalimantan). The finding suggests that the economic development needs to seriously consider the role of traditional market place and informal sector, as well as urban heritage conservation.

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1. Introduction

Violent conflicts in Indonesia mostly have involved ethnicity and religious differences at the communal level. Researchers have been trying to explain how or why the incident happened. The current studies suggest that social

 $^{^{*}}$ Corresponding Author. Tel.: +0 000 000 0000 ; fax: +0 00 0000 0000. $E\text{-}mail\ address$: Wisnu.Setiawan@ums.ac.id

cohesion becomes an issue in the rural and urban environment. In response to this, it seems that the post-conflict environments need sometimes to recover. Even after more than 15 years, some of the affected urban environment remains untouched. This situation partly links to the complex situation; no comprehensive understanding can define the concept of conflicts (Marfo, 2013). On the other hand, the global examples present on how post-conflict development could begin with. This includes some elements such as education, environment scarcity, housing, energy resources, human security, and so on (Marfo, 2013). However, the current studies tend to overlook the role of built environment. In short, the literature invites urban and community planners to pay more attention to the role of built environment in transforming communal behaviour in reducing conflicts at various level in the community (Shirotsuki et al., 2010).

This paper presents the dynamic between communal conflicts and the built environment. It begins with a brief overview of violent conflicts in Indonesia. Some examples have been listed as a lesson learnt which eventually appoints to the socio-economic development. The case study then discusses how the dynamic also touches upon the development of traditional and informal marketplace, along with urban heritage.

2. Literature context

2.1. Social conflicts in Indonesia

Following the economic crisis at the end of the 1990s, physical clashes turned into violent conflicts and spread over across the country. For instance, the people of East Java (especially in South Malang and Banyuwangi) lynched suspected 'witches' (Herriman, 2006). In Ambon (Maluku) and Poso (Central Sulawesi), open conflict occurred between Muslims and Christians which triggered by a clash between youths (Klinken, 2006). In West Kalimantan, local war exploded between Madurese and Dayak people (Peluso, 2006). In Solo, formally Surakarta, the local people were suspected of targeting Chinese people; the riot became the scapegoat of the food crisis (Purdey, 2006). Jakarta experienced big violence riot in 1998, but the violence in Solo was proportionally bigger due to the comparative town scales (Purdey, 2006). In fact, most of the conflict across the country appeared in communal level and involved different ethnicity and religious groups (Varshney et al., 2004). This phenomenon indicates how local factors under-laid most of the conflict among communities (Barron et al., 2009). This also highlights the importance of understanding the social elements that entail cultural gap within an urban setting (Purdey, 2006).

Researchers have been trying to explain how or why the incident happened. Some scholars attempt to explain, on a larger scale, why conflicts happen (e.g. Bertrand, 2008), but it cannot sufficiently explain why conflicts do not always occur in some other places. On the other hand, research on much smaller scales can better understand the circumstances under which conflicts have arisen (Loveband and Young, 2006), but only at a smaller level. However, researchers acknowledge that both research and development responses have paid less attention to the role of built environment to mitigate the conflicts (e.g. Matthew, 2011). The issue of conflict tends to be attractive to social researchers from the political point of view. In response to this, the future study needs to approach research on violent conflict with similar characteristics to better understand the complexity (Bertrand, 2008).

Therefore, this paper highlights how responses to the conflicts appoint to the role of economic sector and built environment, particularly in encouraging not only the economic activity but also the interaction among the communities. This paper presents a partial finding from a recent study in the context of the communal conflict that occurred in three cases: Solo (Central Java), Poso (Central Sulawesi), and Sambas (West Kalimantan). The study was initially based on a hypothetical question whether or not built environment has a significant role to the violent conflicts.

2.2. Research on conflicts and the built environments

Whether the urban development practice has the possibility to transform the communal behaviour into a more social cohesive community still leave space to explore further. Research focusing on the relationship between the community with anti-social behaviour, particularly in the context of developing countries, often link to crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) (e.g. Sakip and Abdullah, 2011; Shibata et al., 2011). Although such study touch upon the role of community, it rather approaches on the crime event that involve 'criminals' at the

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