

From Individual to Collective Thuggery in Coastal Environment Semarang (from Dutch Colonial Period to Post Independence Revolution)

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Abstract. Semarang is one of the Dutch colonialism and capitalist center from the 19th century to 19th the mid-20th centuries. This economic environment created a financial gap between the indigenous people and the foreign ones. Hence, crime emerged as a result of the hole. This study analyzes the criminal pattern that occurred in Semarang from the colonial period to the post-independence revolution—collecting and analyzing data using the historical method by four stages, namely heuristic, critics, interpretation, and historiography. The sources were from contemporary newspapers. The results show that there is a different criminal pattern from the colonial era to post-independence. Crime in the colonial period was individual-based. The crime scenes were on roads and markets, and the targets were the rich people regardless of ethnicity and nationality. On the other hand, criminal patterns in the post-independence era carried out in groups by robbing the houses owned by foreign people, such as Europeans or Chinese. Thus, the study concludes that the situation during the period influences the criminal pattern. The economy is the factor that triggered the crime during the colonial era. However, the anti-foreign movement caused crime activities during the post-independence period.

1 Introduction

Semarang is a coastal environment as the capital city of Central Java whose position is geographically very strategic, connecting the big cities on the northern coast of Java to the towns in the hinterlands. Semarang was the center of a transportation network that connected the harbor and coastal and hinterlands area. At the Dutch Colonial time, Semarang was to be the center of railway transportation across Java. Besides that, Semarang was also the center of road transportation that was connected between coastal areas and hinterlands.^[1] By clicking vehicle, people and the products of crop plantation can be exported through Semarang harbor.

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This position led the city to become a big industrial city in the early twentieth century. Additionally, industrialization caused many people to flock to Semarang to earn a living as factory workers, employees informal sectors, services, etc. Some workers lived permanently, and some temporarily migrated because they preferred to live in buffer zones such as Demak, Kudus, Jepara, Salatiga, Grobogan, Kendal, and others.^[2] Semarang is one of the industrial cities developed in the twentieth century. The life gap between the capital owners, citizens from other cities, and the workers is portrayed. Hence, mobility led to social problems, namely crime. A crime that occurred from the twentieth century to the post-independence revolution will be the study of this paper.^[3]

2 Research Methods

This research uses historical methods. This research collects data through heuristics in the National Library, Gadjah Mada University, Central Java Regional Library for secondary sources. For primary sources, as are collecting data from Depo Suara Merdeka Archives and other essential sources. Then, the collected data was criticized and analyzed to assist the researcher in writing the paper.^[4]

3 Research Finding and Discussion

As a big city on the northern coast of Central Java, Semarang became a magnet for the job seekers to the surrounding buffer zones. Urban and infrastructure developments required many workers from urban residents as well as other areas. The highway was infrastructure means, especially transportation which was highly important for the city's development. Furthermore, the road was used to transport goods and humans easily and fast from one place to another. As a result, this convenience had a negative impact: crime occurred on the highway, namely robbery, pickpockets, and other crimes during the twentieth century.

Highway also created various symbols which signified their identity. The signs could be buildings, spatial planning, the behavior of road controllers and crossers, road situation, etc. [5]. The highway culture is constructed from interrelation between space, human use, and historical experiences. The emergence of the highway created pathological culture. This culture could reflect from the emergence of street thugs. This action is committed individually as theft and robbery on the road to the passing vehicles at night[6].

Based on the findings from the sources, crimes committed during the twentieth century were individually-based, that was, general robbery and passing motor vehicles. Hence, in anticipating criminal acts at night, the colonial government recommended that the transportation company use the train, especially transporting goods because the train had stop points or stations that had extra security, especially for long routes, for example, from Surabaya to Semarang, Batavia, or Bandung. The prohibition of operating motor vehicles to long distances also applied to bicycles, trains, and two-wheeled bullock carts or *cikar*[7].

Crime in the post-independence revolution was divided into three classes [8] based on the means used in committing the actions. The *first* class is the robbers who used four-wheeled vehicles and were armed. *Second*, the robbers used two-wheeled cars or bicycles and were armed. *Third*, robbers who were unarmed and on foot committed their crimes. Classification of social classes of the victims is divided into three classes: company or individual belonging to the Netherlands, Arab, China, and natives. The category is based on the incidents that are reported in the mass media (*Harian Suara Merdeka* and *Kedaulatan Rakyat*). The criminal act occurred at home or on the highway, and the targets were cars, trucks, motorcycles, bicycles, money, jewelry, and other valuable goods[9,10,11,2]. The criminal targets during this era were primarily committed to the Dutch, Chinese, and only a few natives. The motor vehicles were valuable goods for individuals or companies, so to find back the lost cars, they

advertised them in mass media by competing with prize money[813]. An example of the competition advertisement was as follows:

“Bagi masyarakat yang dapat mengembalikan truk dodge tahun 1948 dengan nopol H 2105 milik sebuah firma “Tjiat Tjhlang” di jalan Jaga Koping 7 Semarang yang telah hilang tanggal 31 Agustus malam akan diberikan uang sejumlah f 3000.”

(For anyone who can return the dodge truck year 1948 with the police number H 2105 belonging to a firm “Tjiat Tjhlang” in Jaga Koping street 7 Semarang, lost on 31 August at night will be prized money in the amount of 3000).

The environment of Criminal areas in Semarang focused on Tanjung Emas Harbour and Johar Semarang Market. Meanwhile, based on the information from credible sources, the origins of the criminals in Johar Market were from Solo, Jepara, Sayung, Genuk[14]. In addition, the Pedamaran area for Semarang people was prone to crimes and gambling. Adults mostly committed the criminals^[15].

4 Conclusion

Semarang from the Colonial to Independence time was a criminality environment. Crimes committed individually or in groups are the results of economic inability from people to achieve establishment. In other words, criminality is due to the economic gap in the community in Semarang as one of the industrial cities in Java in the twentieth century. For people who have an opportunity in receiving financial benefits, they can support their life. However, people who could not get proper formal jobs committed criminal acts to meet their economic needs by pickpockets and robbery.

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- [12] *Suara Merdeka*, dated 1 September 1950.
- [13] *Suara Merdeka*, dated 12 September 1950.

- [14] Interviews with Mr. Soekardi dated 27 March 2014.
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