



# The Metaphor of "Center" in Planning: Learning from the Geopolitical Order of Swidden Traditions in the Land of Sunda

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**Abstract.** *This study intends to open a new discourse about the role and position of the center in the field of regional and urban planning by using it as a metaphor. By using a metaphoric deconstruction method, the study examines the changes in geopolitical order and in the concept of the center in the Land of Sunda, which based on the swidden tradition as an implication of Hindu and Islamic influences. The study shows that from before the arrival of Hinduism until the height of Islamic power in the 15th century, the geopolitical order in the Land of Sunda has transformed from (1) an egalitarian system without center to (2) an egalitarian system with a hidden center and then to (3) a hierarchical-network system with noticeable and bold center. However, the swidden tradition remains, which is mainly evident from the use of the concepts of "inside" and "outside" for representing the principles of autonomy and alliance respectively. The two principles have been the main features of the geopolitical order in the Land of Sunda with its ecological and pluralistic nature. These principles teach that the center is not always identified as a dominant and absolute power. The center is not the only decisive point that determines the stability of a system as a whole. The stability is rather maintained by sharing power mechanism to advance the self-empowerment process of non-center entities, which allows them to emerge as new powers. This understanding indicates the urgency to re-evaluate the current planning approach that focuses mainly on the implementation of the size-based paradigm, which is deterministic and always positions the center as a major decisive power.*

**Keywords.** *center, geopolitical order, regional and urban planning, swidden tradition, the Land of Sunda.*

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**Abstrak.** *Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk membuka diskursus baru mengenai peran dan kedudukan pusat dalam perencanaan wilayah dan kota dengan menempatkannya sebagai metafora. Dengan memanfaatkan metode dekonstruksi metaforik, penelitian ini menelaah perubahan tatanan geopolitik dan konsep pusat di Tanah Sunda yang berbasis tradisi ladang sebagai implikasi dari masuknya ajaran Hindu dan Islam. Hasil penelitian memperlihatkan bahwa terhitung sejak sebelum kedatangan ajaran Hindu hingga masa kejayaan kekuasaan Islam di abad ke-15, tatanan geopolitik di Tanah Sunda telah mengalami transformasi, yaitu dari (1) tatanan egaliter tanpa pusat ke (2) tatanan egaliter dengan pusat yang tersembunyi dan akhirnya ke (3) tatanan jaringan-hierarkis dengan pusat yang berani tampil. Transformasi tersebut tidak sepenuhnya menghilangkan tradisi ladang, yaitu melalui pemberlakuan konsep "dalam" dan "luar" yang merepresentasikan prinsip kemandirian dan kebersamaan. Kedua prinsip tersebut merupakan ciri utama tatanan geopolitik di Tanah Sunda yang bersifat*

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*ekologis dan plural. Pembelajaran yang dapat ditarik dari kedua sifat itu adalah bahwa pusat tidak selalu identik dengan dominasi dan absolutisme kekuasaan. Pusat bukan satu-satunya titik yang menentukan keseimbangan suatu sistem. Keseimbangan sistem diwujudkan melalui mekanisme pembagian peran antara pusat dan non-pusat yang memungkinkan terjadinya proses penguatan diri secara spontan pada entitas di luar pusat. Pemahaman ini mengisyaratkan perlunya penilaian ulang terhadap paradigma perencanaan berbasis ukuran yang bersifat deterministik serta senantiasa memposisikan pusat sebagai kekuatan besar yang menentukan.*

**Kata kunci.** *pusat, perencanaan wilayah dan kota, tatanan geopolitik, Tanah Sunda, tradisi ladang.*

## Introduction

The study of regional and city planning is constantly faced with the complexities of life. Planners, therefore, often use models adopted from various disciplines such as economics, physics, engineering, geography, and ecology. From the 1960s, modeling has shifted from reductionist rational decision models to complex systems and agent-based models that emphasize interdependence, complexity, and spontaneous events (Rickwood, 2011; Capra, 2007; Batty, 2007). This shift reflects the epistemological changes in urban and regional planning in understanding the complexities of life and its consequences for policy making (Roy, 2005).

In addition to models, complexity is also understood through metaphors. If models aim to simplify complexity, then, according to Ricouer (2008), metaphors aim to compact complexity. If models explain the interrelations between elements of complexity, then metaphors emphasize the meaning behind such complexity. Therefore, Ricouer defines a metaphor as the compacting process that involves the event and its meaning. In contrast to models that have limited scope and possibilities of interpretation, the interpretation of metaphors is much more free and open. For Ricouer, this openness can trigger dialogues that are interdisciplinary as well as between actors.

Metaphors play an important role in urban and regional planning. Besides facilitating public understanding of complex issues, metaphors are also useful in clarifying a planning ideology (Todoli, 2007). Metaphors are not just rhetoric that produces imagination but can also open minds and lead to action (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Metaphors derived from everyday language also provide opportunities for wider public engagement. Thus, the metaphor is the link between planners and the public (Pickett, 2004). Metaphors also enable creativity to generate new synthesized ideas about planning (Pickett, 1999).

In planning, metaphors are often used to narrate urban complexity, either politically, economically, and socially. In *What is a City*, Mumford (1937) looked at the city as a "theater of social action". Howard (1945) used the metaphor of "garden city" to combine nature and culture. Berleant (2000) and Vicezotti and Trepl (2009) promoted the metaphor of "wilderness" to understand freedom, irregularity, and neglect of city life. Allmark (2002) illustrated the paradoxical nature of cities with "masculine" and "feminine" metaphors. Pickett (2004) used the metaphor of "resilient cities" to integrate the ecological paradigm into urban planning. Kusumawijaya (2008) used the metaphor of "womb for the arts" to elaborate the city as a trigger of creativity. Novelist Nukila Amal uses the metaphor of an "old prostitute" to illustrate the hidden ugliness of the city behind its glamor (Budiman, 2008). Akkerman and Cornfeld (2009)

used the metaphor of "greening" to explore aspects of nature in urban design. Wu and Silva (2011) selected the biological term "DNA" to elaborate the identity of the city. Finally, Milliken (2013) used the metaphor of "resilience" to construct social conflict resolution in urban communities.

Like the examples above, this paper also uses metaphors. Using metaphors, this paper aims to open up new discourses in planning studies. In line with this objective, this paper follows Adian (2006) to choose a metaphor that has been widely used in planning studies but tends to lead to a dead end of interpretation because of its final and singular meaning. Based on this, this paper chooses the metaphor of the "center" as its main substance. The metaphor of the center has been used extensively by experts in the fields of development, geography, economy, politics, architecture, and social studies to examine the various phenomena of life. However, the meaning of the "center" seems to occupy the position as one of the most essential and most decisive among other entities.

Referring to Ricoeur (2008) and Araya (2008), this paper applies a metaphorical deconstruction approach to explore the symbolic meaning embodied in the idea of the center as a spatial entity. The symbolic meaning of the center is used in a geopolitical context. The center is understood as a product of mutual relations between three geopolitical components, i.e. power, power actors, and space. Such relations form a distinctive pattern of dominance in a geopolitical order (Taylor, 1993). As a spatial entity, the center represents the basic idea of the formation and control of space. A study by Suryanto et al. (2015), for instance, shows the dominance, stability, and continuity of the palace as the center of power in shaping urban planning in Yogyakarta.

This paper presents the metaphor of the center in the geopolitical order of fifteenth-century Sunda, which is shaped by the primordial swidden tradition. As a tradition of power, the swidden tradition is full of paradoxical and ecological properties (Sumardjo, 2002, Ekadjati, 2009a). Both of these properties reflect the unique way of viewing the world as the cornerstone of the spatial arrangement of power. This tradition represents most of Indonesia what Geertz (1983) calls "Outer Indonesia". This term suggests that the swidden tradition is a peripheral tradition, especially when compared to the paddy field tradition of "Inner Indonesia". Based on this, this paper takes the opportunity to explore the important contributions of this peripheral tradition on contemporary planning processes.

## **Literature Review**

### *The Center as a Spatial Categorization*

The center is an ever-present concept in discussions about urban and regional planning. Many planning approaches require central involvement as an important element for the accumulation and distribution of economic and social benefits. The concept of the center is often played by big cities with many functions and a high status. In the Indonesian planning practice, the notion of the center is justified not only scientifically, but also legally and culturally.

The scientific justification for the concept of the center is firmly rooted in the Diffusionist Modernization tradition as formulated, among others, in the Growth Pole Theory, the Growth Center Theory, and the Center-Periphery Theory. Despite heavy criticism by Marxist theories, the concept persists to this day. This view is also adopted by Law Number 26 Year 2007 on Spatial Planning, which provides the legal basis for the application of the concept of the center in the Indonesian planning practice. Through this law, the concept of the center is manifested in

the form of National Activity Centers (PKN), Regional Activity Centers (PKW) and Local Activity Centers (PKL) arranged in a hierarchical manner.

Culturally, the center has also been practiced in local traditions in Indonesia. In the Nias Islands, the concept of center refers to the sacred values of a place (Santoso, 2008). The Javanese also recognize the spatial order of the unity of five, which has a midpoint, which serves as a reference as well as an element of synthesis for the other four points (Sumardjo, 2002). The Indian tradition which infiltrated Indonesia, introduced the mechanisms of *Vastu Purusha* and *Vastu Sashttra* that emphasized polarized spatial relationships to a single center in a particular cosmological field (Suryada and Idedhyana, 2009; Rahman, 2003).

From a critical geopolitical perspective, the center is not merely a spatial categorization, but also a spatial representation. The center represents the identity of power inherent to a single, regulating power. The center reflects a particular power context that contains a number of basic notions of spatial reconstruction. This reconstruction leads to another entity known as the "periphery", thus reinforcing the dichotomous center-periphery view. The formation of the center creates a structuralist-mechanistic order that is full of spatial stereotypes of the periphery (Shields, 1996). The center situates the periphery in a relationship opposite to it (Smith, 2005). Centers can redefine these placements to establish hegemony over the periphery.

#### *Center, Geopolitical Code, and Geopolitical Order*

Taylor (1993) defines the geopolitical code as a set of basic ideas underlying a political entity in interpreting itself in relation to its environment. For Taylor, the geopolitical code is the basis for forming a geopolitical order; the spatial order of a power system. Such regularity is reflected in (1) the degree of centralization of a place, (2) the degree of dominance of a place over other places, (3) the spatial scope of the various activities and political actors spread over various places, (4) the spatial interrelation between political actors, and (5) the effects of various spatial interactions between political actors (Agnew and Corbridge, 2003). Referring to Althusser (2008), the geopolitical code can be synonymous with the mode of power production through the use of space.

As a geopolitical code, the notion of the center originates from a unique tradition of power. An awareness of the importance of the center is essential to the articulation of power (Storey, 2001). Any practice of power associated with the existence of a center is the product of the relation between the "consciousness" of power and the "space" where that consciousness is formed. The center, thus, illustrates the link between "consciousness", "practice", and "space" (Capra, 2007). Such links result in imagining the character of space that is deemed capable of preserving and asserting power (Evers and Korff, 2002; Soja, 2000). Based on this image, a power regime will shape and interpret the center. The formation and meaning giving to the center will affect the political practice of a power in constructing and controlling its territory.

Spatially, the center is a place of power that contains symbolic meaning (Monnet, 2011). The center is the result of a ruler's interpretation in summarizing the complexity of his power into a distinctive sign (Shields, 1996). Through symbols embedded in the center, rulers seek to strengthen the identity of their power to make other parties believe in or even submit to it (Fashri, 2007). The emergence or destruction of a center indicates the strengthening or weakening of the power it represents. The characteristics of the location of a center will affect the strengthening or weakening of the identity of power (Hauge, 2007, Piliang, 2005). Relocating a center from one location to another indicates a process of redefining the space of

power, the identity of power, and the idea of the center itself. This phenomenon implies a change of geopolitical code that goes hand in hand with the changing tradition of power (Taylor, 1993).

## The Tradition of Swidden and Geopolitical Order in the Land of Sunda

### *Primordialism of the Swidden Tradition*

Physiographically, the term Land of Sunda refers to the highlands in the interior of the western part of Java. The eastern boundary is the Ciamis Plain with the Ci Tanduy stream. Its inhabitants are often referred to as *Urang Sunda*. Because they live in a mountainous region, *Urang Sunda* are known as *tiyang gunung*, which means "mountain people" (Ekadjati, 2009a). Sumardjo (2010) states the following about the swidden tradition:

"The geography of Pasundan is hilly and rainy. The Sundanese deal with these natural challenges by developing the agricultural technology of swidden. *Huma* is a shifting cultivation field because (...) the fertility of the land is limited to about 4-5 years. Thereafter new land should be sought by clearing the forest again. (...) This mobility does not allow for the formation of large groups, perhaps there were only 40-50 families in one group".

The term *huma* has the same meaning as the Javanese *omah*, which means home. Therefore, for *Urang Sunda* a swidden is not just the land for cultivation but also serves as the foundation of life such as a home (Sumardjo, 2002). Their home moves along following the swidden. This custom is expressed in an Old Sundanese expression reported by JF Kools in 1935 and interpreted by Iskandar and Iskandar (2011) as follows:

"(...) the Sundanese in the past often moved places. They made houses only for a while, made of wooden poles, so the color is still green. Then in the next year they '*mabur*' to another place"

The term "*mabur*" describes the freedom of a flying bird. The term describes freedom of movement of *Urang Sunda*. They settle from one part of the forest to another. This interpretation alike the image of Raffles (1817) about the *Urang Sunda* as "lively highland population".

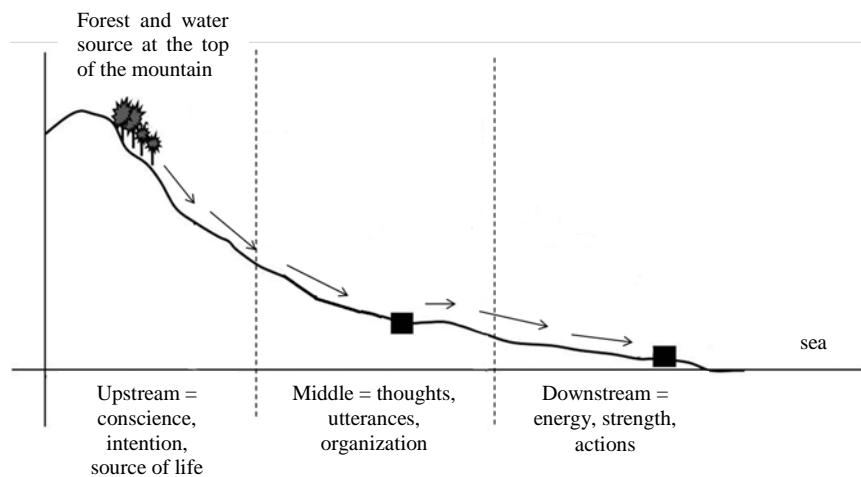
The swidden shapes the lifestyle of the *Urang Sunda*. Considering that swidden involves an activity that is integrated in the natural ecosystem (Geertz, 1983), *Urang Sunda* always live in harmony with nature and restrict themselves from utilizing nature. They "cultivate on limited land, for limited groups, and allow nature to process their former fields" (Sumarjo, 2010). Their behavior of moving around reflects an awareness of the limitations of nature to support human life.

### *The Absence of a Center and the Concept of Egalitarian-ecological Space*

The nomadic lifestyle indicates that every swidden location has equally important value. There is no prime location and each location will be used and utilized in turn. The rotation of swidden also indicates the ease of switching roles between locations. When a location acts as a swidden, other locations act as forests mutually interchangeable. Equality and the changing roles between

locations mean that no single location has the opportunity to grow and develop into a major center.

The implication of the absence of a "center" is the formation of an egalitarian spatial pattern in the Land of Sunda known as *tritangtu* or unity of three (Permana, 2015; Sumardjo, 2007). The basis is a spatial orientation aiming at both directions; "upstream" and "downstream". If "upstream" is interpreted as the source of life, then "downstream" is interpreted as a place of development of life (Figure 1). The "middle" is a factor that enables the source of life can reach places where life should flourish. The imagination of space is essentially an ecological circuit of "upstream-middle-downstream" or "top-center-middle". All three have equally important value despite having different roles. Without the presence of "middle" and "downstream", "upstream" would lose its existence. Without the source of life that originates "upstream", the existence of "middle" and "downstream" also becomes meaningless. This Sundanese spatial pattern is very different from the hierarchical and single-centered Javanese spatial pattern (Lombard, 2005c) in which the periphery has meaning as the basis of protection for the center (Santosa, 2016).



**Figure 1.** The spatial concept *tritangtu* in the Land of Sunda  
(Source: the author's interpretation)

The tradition of *swidden* places great importance on the ownership of territory by a group. Groups may not enter other group's territories except under certain conditions. Territory signifies a firmness of boundaries between "inside" and "outside" (Sumardjo, 2002). Within these limits, each group establishes a rotation route for *swidden*. Routes and territories serve as connectors of dispersed fields. Based on the principle of "land is a free good, tenure is usufruct only" (Spencer, 1966), they give equal attention to the relationship to the "inside" and to the "outside". If "inside" relationships reflect the principle of autonomy, then "outside" relationships reflect the principle of togetherness (Sumardjo, 2007). This principle illustrates non-aggressive and non-expansive behavior. Each basic unit in the geopolitical order has the internal independence to develop itself, but externally each unit is also bound by the principle of alliance with other units. Both principles are indications of an egalitarian social system.

#### *The Influence of the Indian Tradition: The Emergence of the Center*

Indian culture began influencing Java in the fifth century, an era dominated by Classical Hinduism (Ali, 2010, Lombard, 2005c). One of the main Indian influences is the formation of

kingdoms, which went hand in hand with the introduction of deities as the regulators of life (Lombard, 2005a). The "world of the deities" emerged as an important element in the life of the inhabitants of Java replacing the "soft world" (Ricklefs, *et al.*, 2013). In the world of the deities, *Brahma* is the most important deity and simultaneously the center point of a concentric spatial arrangement (Ambarwati, 2009). In India, the notion of deities is also related to the mythology of Mount Meru as a symbol of sanctity and perfection (Heine-Geldern, 1942). This mythology underlies the concept of "Holy Mountain" which plays an important role as the point connecting the world of the deities (macrocosm) and the human world (microcosm).

The sacred mountain is the axis for the deities to "move down" into the human world as well as for humans to "move up" towards the world of the deities (Sumardjo, 2007). Through this axis, certain human figures will seek to achieve the perfection, holiness, and authority of the deities enabling them to proclaim themselves the center and the representation of the deities among humans. This axis legitimates the position of the king as a descendant of the deities, which underlies the process of connecting regions through the mechanism of the kingdom (Lombard, 2005a). The kingdom is, thus, a miniature macrocosm. The kingdoms that were formed were concentric with the king as its center. The king was a sacred, powerful, and perfect entity who had an important role as the builder of harmony and stability of life. The king's palace was located near the top of a mountain that was considered sacred.

When entering the Land of Sunda, the Hindu concept of deities merged with the concept of *Hyang*, giving birth to Hindu-Sunda teachings (Sumardjo 2007; Guillot, 2008). *Hyang* is the highest singular spiritual entity. Based on these beliefs, deities are positioned in between *Hyang* and the king (Ekadjati, 2009b). Deities and kings are two separate entities (Sumardjo, 2007). The existence of a king is not to represent deities, but an extension of their hand. Albeit regarded as a sacred and authoritative figure, the king is still human. Due to his privileges, the king can communicate with the deities. Thus, the concept of "the king as descendent of the deities" is modified to "the king as a connector of deities' power".

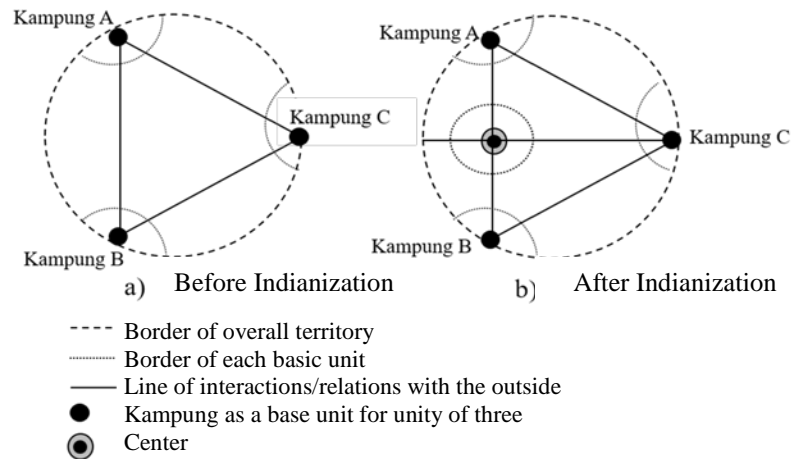
The emergence of kings in the Land of Sunda became a sign of the acceptance and integration of the concept of center in the swidden tradition. The concept of space in a "unity of three" pattern was modified in the end (Figure 2 and 3). The modified pattern is as follows:

Unity of three persists, with the addition of the "center", but the center remains powerless over the unity of three authenticity. The center is only adhered to and acknowledged as long as it does not interfere with the original culture of space, freedom, and equality (Sumardjo, 2002: 27-28)

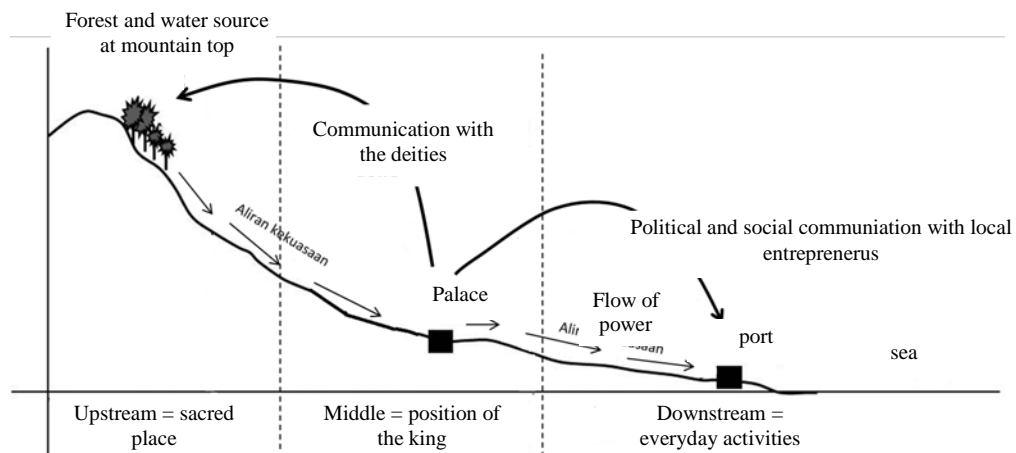
Referring to the above opinion, the emergence of the "center" amidst the swidden tradition is non-dominant. The center does not eliminate the basic units of a unity of three pattern but is a new unit that was deliberately introduced to reinforce the unity of three concept. The pre-existing basic units remain of equal standing. They are mutually independent and complementary. The acceptance of the center is limited to recognition, not total compliance and there is no dependence on the center.

The Tarumanegara Kingdom was the first kingdom to be formed in the Land of Sunda, in the 5th century around Bekasi. After the fall of the Tarumanegara Kingdom in the 7th century, west of the Ci Tarum stream another Hindu kingdom emerged, i.e. the Kingdom of Sunda (Lubis, 2003). Based on the records of Tom Pires, the territory of the Kingdom of Sunda covers the area up to the Ci Manuk stream (Ekadjati, 2009b). Most of the territory consisted of highlands with

dense mountain peaks. Until the 18th century, this plateau still consisted of dense and uninhabited forest (Lombard, 2005a; Furnivall, 2009).



**Figure 2.** The concept of unity of three in the swidden of *Urang Sunda*; a) before the presence of a “center” and b) after the emergence of a “center” (Source: modification of Sumardjo, 2002: 21, 27)



**Figure 3.** Emergence and position of the palace in the spatial concept of *tritangtu* (Source: the author's interpretation)

In the Kingdom of Sunda, the non-dominant nature of the center is reflected in the behavior of the king and his princes as described by the two quotes below:

The true power of Sunda is (...) at Pakuan Pajajaran. Its king did not move from his palace. The ones leaving the palace were his sons (...) in turn, the Pajajaran princes also behaved like their father in Pakuan. The princes were passive at the center of their new country. The one actively exercising power is the local king who became part of the Pajajaran family (...). This way, (...) the one in power does not exercise his power, meanwhile, the one exercising power does not have the power that he exercises" (Sumardjo, 2002).



The Kingdom of Sunda was (...) established using the Indian concept of kingdoms based on the teachings of the Hindu religion (...) Thus, the kingdom's infrastructure (capital, palace) was built, which caused the king to not socially interact with his people. The king and his family moved themselves to the royal capital and settled in the palace (Ekadjati, 2009b).

The name *Pakuan* comes from the word "*paku*" meaning "nail" so it is a symbol for a sacred center that plays an important role as a stabilizer. However, the word *paku* also forms the basis for the term "*terpaku*" which means silent or without reaction. *Pakuan* can thus be interpreted as a passive entity. *Pakuan*, as the center of power, is not oriented at dominant and absolute power.

Both quotes also confirm that in the Land of Sunda concentric spatial patterns only apply to the inner environment of the palace. The king established a concentric pattern of power as suggested in Indian Hindu teachings. The princes and court officials that gathered around the king and obeyed his commands but had limited autonomy. In the "outside" environment such concentric pattern was not visible. Everyday life outside the court took place freely, independently, and in equality in accordance with the original character of the farming community.

One of the "outside" areas was the port of Banten, which was a subordinate kingdom. Its king was named Prabu Pucuk Umun whose palace was located in Banten Girang. In Sundanese, *girang* is the upstream area of a river. In the concept of *Tritangtu*, upstream is associated with sanctity. Thus, the palace of Banten Girang can be interpreted as a holy place so it should not be contaminated by foreign elements. Banten Girang was located at a considerable distance from the port, about 10 km, in order to maintain its sanctity. As the center of power, Banten Girang was separated from the trading crowd; its king tended to stay at the palace.

When the king's power is more "inward" oriented, port traders gain the freedom to build relationships with the "outside". Periodically, port managers face the king to hand over taxes or produce as a sign of recognition (Ekadjati, 2009b). The autonomy and independence of these traders were still felt until the 16th century at the port of Banten (Guillot, 2008; Lombard, 2005b). Ports embody the point of contact of the Kingdom of Sunda with other places outside the kingdom through trade activities. Thus, if the palace represents an "inside" relationship, then the port represents an "outside" relationship. Both operate in an egalitarian geopolitical order.

The above description shows that the emergence of the center from the Hindu tradition modified the geopolitical order in the Land of Sunda, which is based on the principle of unity of three. On the other hand, the concept of the center was also modified by the principle of unity of three. One effect is the separation between deities, kings, and everyday life. Deities apart from the king, and the king apart from everyday life as well. The centrality of the king only applies to the environment of the palace. The king also does not play a dominant role in regulating everyday life. However, the separation does not mean disconnection. Deities, kings, and everyday life remain interconnected based on the "upstream-downstream" pattern as in Figure 3.

### *The Influence of the Islamic Tradition: The Center in a Hierarchical-network Geopolitical Order*

The Islamization in the fifteenth century, which went hand in hand with the advancement of maritime trade in the Indonesian archipelago, introduced a new concept of power to the Land of Sunda. This process started in the coastal area when the Port of Banten fell into the hands of the

Muslim Sultanate of Demak. This was a kingdom that inherited the ambitions and traditions of the Hindu-Javanese Majapahit Kingdom (Ricklefs, 2005; Graaf and Pigeaud, 2003). The emergence of the Sultanate of Demak is a sign of the political awakening of coastal areas in Java (Lombard, 2005b).

The Hindu-Javanese tradition is associated with inland paddy field-based life. The Sultanate of Demak combined this inland tradition with a maritime tradition that gave birth to a maritime-paddy-field tradition. This tradition is characterized by dual politics of stimulating dispersed outward movement, but it also demands a centrifugal movement toward one center. Spatially, dual politics is oriented toward the coast as well as inland. The Sultanate of Demak then inherited the maritime-paddy field tradition to the Sultanate of Banten; an Islamic kingdom at the western tip of Java founded by the Sultanate of Demak. Through the Sultanate of Banten, the Sultanate of Demak introduced two new traditions to the swidden tradition in the Land of Sunda, i.e. Islam and the maritime-paddy field tradition.

Both the paddy field tradition and the maritime tradition have a very different concept of space than the swidden tradition. The main features of the concept of space in both traditions are as follows:

1. Maintaining paddy fields is a lot of work that requires centralized organization (Gertz, 1983; Braudel, 1979; Van Setten Van der Meer, 1979). Consequently, the spatial concept of paddy fields emphasizes the presence of a great center that is singular, centralistic, and dominant in order to maintain stability, harmony and social order. The result is a concentric-hierarchical spatial structure that emphasizes "inward" movement so the status of all "outside" elements becomes "inside" (Sumardjo, 2007). All elements are obliged to show loyalty to the center.
2. The maritime spatial concept is based on network ideology (Lombard, 2005b). This ideology is open to outside stimuli and interests (Wasterdahl, 1992). The tendency to move "outside" is greater than to move "inside". Economic prosperity is not determined by static capital in the form of land, but rather by moving capital in the form of money with enormous social transparency (Leyshon and Thrift, 1997; Lombard, 2005b). The pattern of movements is like a molecular process that is able to penetrate the barriers of space (Harvey, 2010).

Merchants are not foreign to thinking in networks. Since the reign of the Kingdom of Sunda, they are in charge of developing trade networks to boost the kingdom's economy. The merchants do not depend on the power of the king and live in an open and heterogeneous cosmopolitan atmosphere on the coast. They only need to combine their trade networks with the paddy field tradition in the ideology of the Sultanate of Banten. One principle is that of centralized power.

In addition to the influence of the paddy field tradition, the principle of centralized power is also influenced by the concept of *khalifatullah* in Islam. This concept has shifted the position of the king, of "the king as the connector of the power of the deities" to "king as the representative of Allah" (Burhanuddin, 2014). Sanctity is no longer interpreted as a result of the reincarnation of deities but is rather translated as a perfect human being (*insan kamil*). The order of perfection is symbolized by the roof of a mosque that resembles a mountain and is equipped with a *mustaka* at its peak as can be seen in the Mosque of Banten. The *mustaka* itself symbolizes *haqqiqat*, i.e. the spiritual perfection of religion (Ashadi, 2002). Thus, perfection to be achieved by moving upwards like climbing a mountain.

The "mountain" also re-emerges as an important element in the geopolitical order in the Islamic period. However, the mountain is now represented by the shape of the roof of the mosque. Thus, the mountain can appear in many places, including at the coast. As a symbol of sanctity, the mosque was erected near the palace. There are two explanations for the spatial proximity between the palace and the mosque.

First, proximity reflects the consolidation of the concepts of *khalifatullah* and that of the center in the paddy field tradition, which places the king as the holder of absolute power. The king at the same time holds the political and religious power. The dissemination of Islamic teachings becomes part of the political realm. Therefore, the mosque emerged as the center together with the palace. If the palace represents the role of the king, then the mosque represents the role of the religious scholars. In this situation, the king and religious scholars collaborate to build power.

Second, coastal life is characterized by fragmentation of interests and dispersion. The plurality of power might appear and potentially undermine the hierarchical power structure (Vickers, 2009). The high intensity of the relationship to the outside also potentially weakens loyalty to a single center. Therefore, the power centered on the coast requires a medium that is capable of creating a social bond without disturbing the network ideology. To respond to these needs, the mosque is presented as the "center".

The social reality that occurs (...) is one of extreme plurality. However, the kingdom, which certainly does not appreciate this diversity, strives to hide or absorb it into metaphors of unity. It is almost certain that the greater the contractual autonomy in society (...) the stronger is the view of maintaining the centrality of the king in the relationship between man and the universe (Reid, 2004).

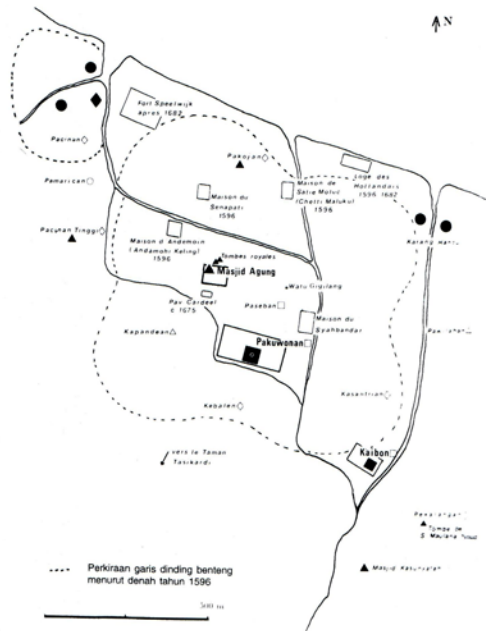
One can imagine the existence of a core of pious people around the mosque in the port cities that has international connections, a constant flow of non-Muslim Javanese in the interior, and the palaces seeking the support of both Islam and the Javanese (...) (Reid, 1999).

The above quotations show the attachment between the palace and the mosque. The mosque is part of the metaphor of territorial integrity where the mosque contains the values of piety and thus gives an impression of "soft center" that invites people to gather. However, in contrast to the palace, the mosque, as a symbol of power, can be located everywhere. The distribution and relationships between mosques illustrate the network of scholars connected with the king as the center point. Through the network, the interests of the king can be disseminated to the residents.

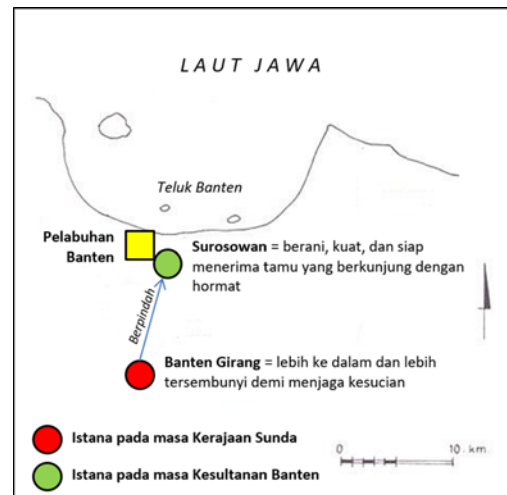
The mosque also became a counterforce against the port. When the port pushes movement outside, then the mosque strengthens inward social integration. When the port creates a tendency to move away from the palace, then the mosque builds closeness with the palace. When the port has the potential to undermine the hierarchical structure of royal power, then the mosque strengthens this hierarchical structure. As a representation of the religious scholars, the mosque not only provides religious legitimacy for the power of the king but is also the social basis for such power.

The palace, the port, and the mosque finally appeared together at the center in the Land of Sunda, respectively representing the power of the king, merchants, and religious scholars. The palace, named Surosowan, was located near the port. This was a new palace and was built by

the Sultan of Banten after having destroyed the Banten Girang Palace, which belonged to the Kingdom of Sunda. Together with the port and the mosque, Surosowan Palace shapes a new spatial identity that became the main characteristic of the network ideology. The type of relationship between them can be seen in Figure 4.



**Figure 4.** The palace, mosque and port in Banten (Source: Lombard, 2005b: 220)



**Figure 5.** Change of location and change of identity of the center in Banten (Source: the author's interpretation)

Figure 4 shows the separation between the palace and the mosque on one side and the port on the other side, distinctly marked by walls. This indicates the influence of the swidden tradition with its strict boundaries between "inside" and "outside". Consequently, the management of the port is left entirely to an autonomous harbormaster (Guillot, 2008). The palace and the port not only reflect the difference in function of the locations but also show the difference in mentality of power (Lombard, 2005a). Power in the port is based on a trader mentality, while in the palace an agrarian mentality prevails.

In this way, the inclusion of Islamic teachings and paddy field traditions did not fully eliminate the swidden tradition. The port, as a representation of the "outside", is separated from the palace and mosque that represent the "inside". In this new tradition, "inside" focuses not only on autonomy but also on loyalty to the center. Further, "outside" not only emphasizes commonality, but also the expansion of trade networks.

The collaboration between the palace and the port places the king on top of the hierarchy of power. In this position, it is in the king's interest to show his influence on the harbor. As an "outside" element, the port should not be free from the king's power, so the king should present himself. This desire is reflected in the palace's name Surosowan. *Suro* means strong or brave, while *sowan* means facing or present oneself (Figure 5). Surosowan showed courage and at the same time the openness of the Sultan of Banten in facing the competition with the outside world. The Sultan of Banten was also ready to receive guests from outside as long as they recognized and respected him for his power. Therefore, the identity of the center of power in

Banten was formed jointly by power behavior and the meaning of the place; not merely by physical elements. This phenomenon is different from the study of Setiyaning and Nugroho (2017) that highlights the role of physical elements and the community in shaping place identity.

Surosowan is the anti-thesis of Banten Girang. The emergence of Surosowan shows not only the displacement of the center from the "upstream" to "downstream", but also represents a new identity as a center of power. The center attempts to strengthen its position at the top of the hierarchy of power while pushing the expansion of trade links to the outside world. Albeit fundamental, the emergence of this new center did not undermine the principle of solidarity and autonomy in the swidden tradition. Despite its hierarchical nature, the Sundanese geopolitical order in the Islamic period still reflects its non-dichotomous characteristics.

### **Deconstruction of the Center in the Context of Planning**

The above analysis shows that the notion of the center in the Land of Sunda has changed from before the arrival of Hinduism until the reign of Islam; that of an "absence of a center" to a "hidden center" and then a "center brave to show itself". The behavior of the center changed from passive to active. The changes in existence and behavior are the implications of a changing geopolitical order, i.e. from an egalitarian to a hierarchical order. All of the above changes are responses of a self-regulatory mechanism in the face of outside influences.

These responses were realized through the restructuring of identity taking place simultaneously with the restructuring of the space. In this case, the formation of a new center can be understood as a reconception of a power regarding its territory. Soja (2000) called these reterritorialization symptoms, which can take place through a new interpretation of territory and through the creation of symbols. According to him, these symptoms will go hand in hand with the deterritorialization symptoms or territorial reorganization.

The transformation of the geopolitical order, the appearance of a center, as well as changes in the Sunda identity have provided a new perspective for understanding, interpreting, and meaning given to the center. This new point of view is related to the primordial swidden tradition that underlies the lives of *Urang Sunda* in the past, especially the concept of "inside" and "outside". If the concept of "inside" reflects the principle of independence, then the concept of "outside" reflects the principles of togetherness.

Independent but together. Two conditions that seem paradoxical, but, in fact, are major pillars for the egalitarian geopolitical order in the Land of Sunda. The principles of independence and unity reflect an ecological worldview. In the case of the Land of Sunda, this ecological nature is also reflected through the upstream-downstream spatial orientation. If "upstream" tends to be hidden behind the forest, then "downstream" always presents itself. The hidden upstream is freer from contamination.

The same is true for the center. Its hiddenness does not mean it annuls its existence. Hiding is a conscious choice of the center to assert its identity as a sacred and perfect entity. "Being" does not have to be visible. The willingness of the center to act solely as a source of power in the interior without having to appear to exercise this power, in fact, reinforces its identity and existence. The executors of power located on the coast are always aware of the presence of the center. Therefore, the separation and hiddenness of the center did not shake the territorial unity.

because it is built upon the pluralistic swidden tradition. This plurality is reinforced when the center relocates and presents itself openly at the coast in a hierarchical geopolitical order.

Thus, in the Land of Sunda, the notion of the center is always part of a pluralistic geopolitical order. In this plurality of power, the center does not need to grow into the largest and most powerful. The existence of the center will be stronger when it is willing to share roles with other entities. This willingness reflects the consistency of the center in maintaining its identity. It also signals the readiness of the center to accept and recognize the emergence of other entities in its vicinity that have specific advantages. The balance of the geopolitical order is not determined by a single center, but by the adaptive capacity based on the togetherness of all elements.

This understanding is in line with the writing of Delauze and Guattari (1987) on complex systems that resemble a rhizome structure. According to them, the rhizomes are complex inter-life component relationships with difficult to trace base or edges. Through this analogy, Delauze and Guattari emphasize two main characteristics of complex systems, that they are non-hierarchical and nonlinear. The meaning of the non-hierarchical feature is "lack of centralistic organization", while the nonlinear feature implies "full of spontaneity".

Based on both traits, the rhizomes mechanism does not recognize deterministic behavior triggered by one main cause and runs according to one rule of the game. The starting point is not the main cause, but only the first occurrence that will be followed by new occurrences. Each occurrence has its respective roots, thus, its force does not depend on the other occurrences. Each occurrence is unique and can, therefore, not be substituted. Each occurrence is open to outside influence and has the freedom to define itself and respond based on that definition. Each occurrence will establish a new order and balance in the whole system.

Rhizomes illustrate system togetherness that is based on an awareness of the uniqueness, diversity, independence, and ability to adapt. This system does not recognize dichotomous-hierarchical concepts such a center-periphery, forward-backward, or strategic-non-strategic. Each component has equal importance despite having different roles. This entanglement reflects their reciprocal connection and dialogue without compromising the independence of each component. None of the components desire dominance over the other components.

The center in a rhizome structure is the antithesis of deterministic thinking that understands the center as a representation of the totality of a system. W.J. Reilly emphasizes this deterministic pattern when adopting Newton's law of gravity to explain the attraction between two cities (Klapka, *et al.*, 2013; Mathieson, 1957). Reilly compared the cities to solid material dispersed in a space with a different mass. Among these cities, gravity works in response to differences in mass and distance. The greater the mass and the closer the cities, the stronger the interaction between the cities to form a system.

The center is the entity with the greatest mass and strongest gravity in this deterministic pattern. Places that are close to it will have the greatest benefit. Cities will be encouraged to get increasingly close to the center. Such strong gravity from the center allows for the formation of a stable spatial structure with a center as its main axis. The entire system is subject to the center's dominant power and the radiation of power from the center is energy for other entities to live and move. All entities in the system are dependent on the center.

Satellite or buffer cities are the realization of this rationality. Their status reflects the application of hierarchical-dichotomous criteria to distinguish clearly between the center and the periphery.

These criteria indicate values of colonialism in a spatial arrangement (van der Klei, 2002). The center and periphery form a binary opposition and are positioned in a structure that exhibits superiority of the center over the periphery. The periphery is liquidated by the center that controls the entire system. This mechanism is the essence of the size-based planning paradigm.

The geopolitical order the Land of Sunda has an ecological nature and contains the message to reassess the concept of size-based planning, especially if only emphasizes economic strength such as capital, labor, and goods. Harvey (2010) has warned that the real coherence of the spatial structure surpasses the area of economic exchange. Inside this domain, each place continues to transform and redefine its existence. Identity, symbols, and meanings attached to a place can be removed and replaced with new ones. Places in the periphery continue to strengthen themselves and to break away from their dependence on the center.

## Conclusion

From before the arrival of Hinduism until the glory days of the Sultanate of Banten in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the geopolitical order in the Land of Sunda has undergone a transformation from (1) an egalitarian order without center to (2) an egalitarian order with a hidden center to (3) a hierarchical-network order with a center that is brave to present itself. The first order is based on the primordial swidden tradition and the second order is based on a combination of Hindu teaching and the swidden tradition. The foundation of the third order is a combination of Islamic teachings and the maritime-paddy field tradition. However, these three orders still exhibit the primordial swidden tradition with its concept of "inside" and "outside", which represents the principle of independence and togetherness. Both of these principles are characterized by an ecological nature and a plurality in geopolitical order in the Land of Sunda. The geopolitical order in the Land of Sunda and its transformation show that the center is not always synonymous with the dominance of power. The center also does not always present itself; depending on the image and identity of power it wants to develop. The center is not the only point that determines the balance of the system.

Concerning urban and regional planning, the above insight suggests a need to reassess the size-based paradigm, which is both deterministic and sees the center as the sole decisive power. Center and non-center have equal importance, albeit a different role. Relations between the two are reciprocal and dialogical without diminishing their respective independence. Spatially, the balance of a system is no longer determined by the dominance of a large center, but through the division of roles between the center and non-center, which allows for self-reinforcing processes of entities outside the center. This balance reflects the unity formed by an awareness of the uniqueness, diversity, independence, and the adaptive capacity of each spatial entity.

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