

“The Ups and Downs of Chinese Domination in Tuban City, East Java”

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Abstract

This paper is a study of the representation of power relations which starts from the study of signs and symbols attached to Tri Dharma Tjoe Ling Kiong Temple, Tuban, East Java. The purpose of this study was to explore the power relations related to the dominance of Chinese ethnic in the area of Tuban City related to the existence of Chinatown in the square symbolized by Tri Dharma Temple Tjoe Ling Kiong. The assumption is that the existence of a cultural symbol of the Chinese nation in the center of Tuban City basically communicates the power of cultural identity in shaping the identity of the city. This research is an explorative qualitative study using the method of social semiotics and refers to the concept of Representation from Stuart Hall and Episteme from Foucault. The results of the study showed how the power relations that emerged from the presence of the temple on the North side of the Square of Tuban City communicated the episteme ups and downs of the ethnic Chinese in the landscape of the power structure of Tuban City. Chinese ethnic conditions in the landscape of the power structure received a different distribution of power when the ruling regime was different. Meanwhile, contemporary discourse placed Temple as a commodified Chinese ethnic symbol in order to sharpen the differentiation of Tuban as a city in Java in order to form a city identity which would later lead to the global city discourse raised by capitalism.

Keywords: Representation; Power Relations; Social Semiotics; Landscape

1. Introduction

Communication is one of the important and complex aspects in human life. Human daily life is influenced by how we communicate with other people, even people we don't know, both alive and deceased, both near and far. But the understanding of communication itself is not easy, because communication is a unique phenomenon that surrounds human life. Most of our time is filled with communicating, both verbally and non-verbally. According to Jalaluddin Rachmat (1993), a study says 70% of our waking time is used to communicate.

In Stephen W. Littlejohn (1999), Edward T. Hall states that space communication is one component of non-verbal communication, a study that focuses on symbols represented by language and objects. Referring to the use of space in communication, Hall theorized about proxemics, a term created by Hall himself. Hall stated that proxemics is a study that shows how humans unconsciously make micro space structures - the distance between humans when communicating, organizing space in homes and buildings, as well as urban spatial planning. People will tend to feel possessive in some of the space they have such as rooms, cars, or pages. When we talk sometimes we sit or stand very close to the person we are talking to and at other times feel more comfortable to maintain a certain distance. These feelings according to Stewart and Logan (1993), are related to what is called proxemics, the study of the influence of space and distance for communication.

Furthermore, Stewart and Logan (1993) state that each of us lives in a personal room, bubbles that are relatively small, invisible, carried everywhere, and can be adjusted. We protect these bubbles to protect ourselves from physical and emotional threats. The size of the bubbles varies; how far we sit or stand depends on our cultural background, relationships with other people, situations or contexts, and how we feel about others at that time.

Meanwhile, space, according to Antoniades in Wulandari (2007), is the key to architecture. This opinion is supported by Louis I Khan who states that architecture means creating space in a way that is really planned and thought. Continuous renewal of architecture actually stems from changes in the concepts of space. Lawson (in Wulandari, 2007) also explains that space manifests in various forms of patterns and structures coordinated by

architecture. Proxemics is often used in designing space to create a certain impression both for users and for connoisseurs.

Portrait of a city is a picture of the community. That is, changes in cities mark human changes in them. How does a city represent its identity? The city represents its identity related to the community that gives meaning to the city. But in that meaning there is a contestation that arises, as explained by Barker (2004) that space and place are always problems of social relations about class, gender, ethnicity, and so on.

Every relation can always be released from power or power. Related to this, Foucault (in Hall, 1997) explains that power is not only in the form of ownership or source of power, but that power is a praxis that occurs in every relation. Power of attorney does not work repressively, but through the accumulation of knowledge and making that knowledge a truth regime formed through normalization and regulation.

A city wants to be imaged like what is a right that is owned by those who have the power to create absolute truth. Not only because they are placed in institutions that have the power of coercion, but also because their knowledge is claimed to be an absolute truth. But in the process, resistance may still occur. There is a discourse practice in which a battle of power takes place in determining that identity.

This form of identity of a city can be represented through several things, both through language and through material culture. Through this material culture the meaning of city identity is communicated non-verbally to the public. One form of material culture is space, which is closely related to architecture and communication because symbols in architectural design represent abstract messages.

Assuming that the cultural symbol of the Chinese nation in the center of Tuban basically communicates the power of cultural identity in shaping the identity of the city, this study discusses the products of Tri Dharma Tjoe Ling Kiong Temple architecture, Tuban, East Java. Especially the representation of the ups and downs of Chinese domination of the temple is described. The aim was to explore the power relations related to the dominance of the ethnic Chinese in the area of Tuban in relation to the existence of the Chinatown in the square symbolized by the Tri Dharma Temple Tjoe Ling Kiong.

2. Method

This research is an explorative qualitative research using the critical-constructionism paradigm and methods of social semiotic research. The social semiotics method prioritizes semiotic analysis based on the sources of semiotic resources that arise. The principles used in the social semiotics approach are basically related to the social aspects around the sign. This approach has a context of practice and strong social aspects so that its use is inseparable from the surrounding and multidisciplinary contexts, the analysis of which is closely related to other social theories. Not only can it be applied to written texts or images, this semiotic approach can be used to analyze a social practice in the context of a particular location (building) based on the social construction attached to the building.

3. Result and Discussion

In this section we will explore the power relations related to the dominance of the Chinese in the area of Tuban in relation to the existence of the Chinatown in the square symbolized by the Tri Dharma Temple Tjoe Ling Kiong. The existence of a cultural symbol of the Chinese nation in the center of Tuban City basically communicates the power of cultural identity in shaping the identity of the city. Based on history, the existence of ethnic Chinese in the city of Tuban has been detected before 1292 or in the pre-colonial period. Being interesting when the dialectic of power speaks then destroys the symbol of Chinese ethnicity when Mataram dominates Tuban, but temples which are cultural symbols as locations for the social, cultural and economic interactions of the Chinese people remain firmly established today. In other words, the dialectic of Chinese Ethnic power in the formation of the identity of Tuban City will be clearly illustrated through the exploration of the meaning of Tri Dharma Tjoe Ling Kiong Temple in the episteme of the contemporary square.

Chronologically, it can be said that the Tjoe Ling Kiong Temple was the first building to be present in the Tuban City Square complex, even when the square did not yet exist. Indeed, there is no inscription left on the inauguration of the Tjoe Ling Kiong Temple building so it is difficult to know when it was established. There is an inscription inside the temple about the restoration carried out in 1850. So it was estimated that this temple had existed long before 1850. Just after that, the Tuban Jami Mosque was established based on the only written data around the square namely the inscription on marble found in the Jami Mosque in Tuban, that the mosque was founded in 1894 by a Dutch architect, H. M Toxopeus. The regent's office / house and assistant resident were established before the construction of the mosque was carried out (based on a photograph of the assistant resident's house in Tuban in 1880).



Picture 1

Tri Dharma Temple Tjoe Ling Kiong
Source: Researcher's documentation

The Tri Dharma Tjoe Ling Kiong temple still stands north of the Tuban Town Square, which should have been occupied by the offices of the resident assistants in the colonial period and was eliminated during the Javanese inland war against Coastal Java, identified as the first ethnic Chinese buildings to show their existence in this city. Since long ago, the Chinese have been known as merchant nations who have expedited to various regions of the world, traces of trafficking can also be found in ex-locations that have been inhabited, in Indonesian the location is called Chinatown. It became interesting to observe during the Mataram conquest where the temple was destroyed but not removed. There are restoration traces in the days of Mataram in power over the territory of Tuban. This indicates that the symbolization of Chinese ethnicity still manifests itself in the form of a temple in a downtown landscape that describes the distribution of power over a regional context.

Until now, although there is no definitive data regarding the number of Chinese businessmen from Tuban, the dominance of Chinese ethnicity in the Tuban economy in particular is still clearly visible. Most of them work as swallow businessmen and traders. Suspected, this is the force that causes each regime to need to maintain the temple as part of the square. Alun-alun as a city district that has a historical context related to the distribution of power symbolically shows this dominance. As stated by Hiser (2003, p.41):

Much of the city's wealth and political power remains concentrated around the historic district, however, and because the tourists who flock there do spend a lot of money, the identity of and prospects for the entire metropolitan area have come to rest largely upon the humiliated history we have described.

The temple which had a history of being obliterated by the Mataram regime and left as needed for the needs of ethnic Chinese worship, then in the pre-colonial period he was renovated again and perpetuated until the colonialists needed to change the grip of the Mataram duplication square to the assistant resident's office to oversee the Bupati's performance but still allocated symbol of the existence of the Chinese ethnic. Here we can detect the strong influence of ethnic Chinese in the colonialist regime relating to racial segregation in order to strengthen the administrative distribution of power which places it in the second class in the hierarchy of colonialist power while the natives are in the lowest class.

On the other hand, leaving the temple by Dutch Colonial was also intended to perpetuate Dutch rule at that time. This is because at that time the Dutch colonialists needed the support of the smooth distribution of goods, trade and economics which in fact was mostly run by ethnic Chinese people. In addition, as explained in the introduction, he left the temple when the square was built by colonists in the 1800s as well as for the sake of control of power and monopoly of China's trade by the Dutch, as revealed by Gayung Setiawan, historian from Airlangga University:

The Dutch were cheating, Ma'am ... it was deliberately let there be a temple there, and it did not rule out ethnic Chinese, who were made Amtenaar, yes there must be shrimp behind the rock. In order for the Chinese to remain in control, be supervised by the Dutch, their actions, what trade they are, until they obey and obey not pay taxes, and are difficult or easy for extortion. Yeah ... Londo was just like that, if it's Chinese, especially if there is a Chinese who runs the opium business, it was an opportunity for them ... it was just like that, as the proverb once paddled, two three were surpassed, all took Chinese hearts, all controlled and watched them

The importance of the existence of temples in the square landscape of Tuban City itself, if explored as Hiser's approach (2003) in the American urban area, can be interpreted as an urban area effort to show its historical conservation efforts through symbolizing buildings in the city center. This historical conservation effort boils down to the city's ambition to increase its selling value through differentiating identity with other cities. However, this historical conservation effort cannot stem the needs of urban cities for infrastructure as happened in the Tri Dharma Temple Tjoe Ling Kiong. The front of the temple which survived the attack of Mataram and the dominance of the colonialist regime had to give up most of its territory in the name of improving urban

infrastructure in the form of urban road expansion in 1980. However, city identity would not be of much value if the infrastructure did not invite investors and tourists to visit it, based on discourse legible capitalism is dominating the Indonesian economy in general and is related to city identity as a form of marketing to 'sell' the city.

The dominance of the Republic of Indonesia Government regime, especially during the President Suharto, in the distribution of power in contemporary Tuban City was evident with the sacrifice of the temple front for urban infrastructure development to fulfill the criteria of Tuban as an urban city in accordance with the constellation of contemporary discourse. Using a frame of social semiotics in the form of permanence can be interpreted that even though the temple is in the form of a permanent building, the Government has the power to do so by removing part of the permanent building. This means that if we trace Stuart Hall's opinion, even though it may be when the Orde Baru government embraced various ethnic groups but not for ethnic Chinese, which more or less represented the phenomenon that Hall said as an attempt to negate ethnicity by ignoring the existence of other ethnicities, including in the context of Tuban research location (1999, p.227).

In the Reformasi era, when the government began to embrace Chinese Ethnicity, especially during the reign of President Abdurahman Wahid who considered that Chinese Ethnicity were part of Indonesia, stakeholders and perhaps some people in Tuban then entered an anomaly stage which negotiated identifying a cultural identity. This represents the opinion of Hall (1994, p.393) that: "Cultural identity is a matter of "becoming" as well as being. It belongs to the future, as much as to past."

Hall's identification process will never be stable, in fact Tuban has undergone various negotiation processes and choice of identity, at least according to historical records, beginning in the Majapahit era, as administrators of the White Kambang Museum, Tuban, who are also archaeologists graduated from Universitas Udayana, Roni Firdaus said the following:

So this way, Ma'am, according to Tuban tripe that I have read, actually Tuban was in the Majapahit era, Tuban was multicultural, especially Tuban was a coastal city as well as a bustling trading port city, even though Majapahit had experienced siltation ... the port, but still the city trade with various ethnicities and religions, moreover we are close to the bustling port city too, there is Rembang, Jepara, Gresik ... Well this is what lasted until the days of the trustees to spread Islam on Java. Although Islam but the Wali still respect and invite people from other religions to run their worship, build a place of worship. This proof is there, later, can you see it in our museum, there is a Kalpataru tree artifact, a tree of life that has been identified made in the era of Sunan Bonang, even this we saved from the tomb of Sunan Bonang. If we observe wood carvings, even if we need observant observations, that is, in one wood, there are houses of worship for mosques, wihara (temples), klenteng (temples), and pura (temples), there are even sculpted carvings, which are people with the beliefs of Animism-Dynamism, Ma'am. So for me it symbolizes both the recognition of the authorities, community leaders, including the majority of religious leaders here when the Wali said that Tuban was a multicultural region. All tribes, including Chinese, and religion have the same rights and obligations, even many Chinese are married to local residents. Don't tell me, we also don't know for sure, it could be the Tuban people now, their 5th descent, their 6th descent, there were Yemeni people, Indians, Chinese, or whatever, his name was also a coastal trading city. In the Dutch era, there were cultural separations, so there was Chinatown, there was Kauman. In Sukarno era, the alun-alun in the 50s, was once used by him to deliver his speech, a return to identity like Majapahit and the days of the Wali supported by the Governor. Suharto's era for the Chinese case, may return to the Dutch era again ... because Chinese are everywhere discriminated against ... (interview on 13 May 2014)

Then after going through the dynamic process of identifying identities from the Majapahit era to the Suharto regime, in the post-revitalization period of Tuban City Square as it is today, is China in Tuban considered part of the identity of Tuban City, just like when Majapahit and Wali?

In the Tuban slogan now which is also socialized by the Tuban Regional Government, including in the book Bumi The Wali, The Spirit of Harmony issued by the Regional Government, is actually intended to create an identity like that of the Wali. As Roni Firdaus explained the following:

The current government, if you want to be seen from the slogan, wants to create an identity that Tuban must be a city like in the days of the Wali. So even though the religion is predominantly Islamic, but it is not a fundamental Islamic style ... but Islam in the Indonesian style, especially in the days of the Wali, lives that is full of tolerance and recognizes diversity. But frankly the process is rather difficult huh? Especially now that Islam is highlighted rather Middle East instead, maybe yes, especially if you look at the architecture of the Great Mosque which was completely changed, I am always sad to see this. Then later we walk around, you can see what symbols are made in Tuban City at this time, you will know better, even though compared to the Orde Baru era, the Government of Tuban City has begun to open up to diversity. Especially for ethnic Chinese. (interview on May 13, 2014)

The slogan of the City of Tuban, as the Earth of Wali The Spirit of Harmony, can be seen in the following photo, which is a photo of a giant banner, in the middle of the Square of Tuban City:



Figure 2
The slogan of the City of Tuban,
Earth Wali, The Spirit of Harmony
Source: Researcher's documentation

However, as explained by Roni Firdaus, relating to Chinese Ethnicity in Tuban more or less represented the issue of identity identification as stated by Stuart Hall (1994, p.393) below:

The first position defines "cultural Identity" in term of one, shared culture, a short collective, "one true self", hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed, "selves", which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common.

This means that in the construction of cultural identity choices, among the processes of "cultural sharing", on the other hand there is also the process of "cultural concealment", which in the context of Tuban City is still more or less experienced by Tuban Chinese Ethnicity. Even in the book compiled and published by the Tuban City Government for the current period, entitled in accordance with the slogan Tuban, Tuban Bumi Wali, The Spirit of Harmony (2013), ethnic Chinese are only mentioned in the celebration sub section in Tuban City (Kwan Sing's Anniversary Tee Koen) on page 49, the debate that those who spread Islam in Tuban and Java were ethnic Chinese on pages 95-97 where the book was said to be less proven, then Chinese news which was the source of the story of the development of Tuban City page 53, and that Serat Babad Tuban was actually compiled by a Chinese man named Tan Khoen Swie on page 54 without being really touched on who Tan Khoen Swie was and what the contents of the Babad Tuban were themselves. Although the government of Tuban Regency has included the Kwan Sing Bio Temple in a tourist destination on page 23, there is no information in the book about why Kwan Sing Bio Temple is used as a tourist attraction in Tuban, what is interesting about the temple.

With regard to temples that are used as tourism objects, through further reading it can be observed that Tuban's need to articulate his city's identity is related to the discourse of capitalism which states that a city must have differentiation to be 'market' as Hiser stated in the previous section. Tri Dharma Tjoe Ling Kiong Temple which is located just north of the Square of Tuban City fulfills this requirement. The differentiation of the Square of Tuban City when compared to other Javanese Square which has been touched by the colonial practice lies in the location of the temple which should be inhabited by the office of the assistant resident. This temple has become one of the distinguishing signs of the city that shows the 'selling price' of the city to be marketed to tourists and investors. This is the embodiment of contrast concepts in the frame of social semiotics. The temple as a city differentiator and the differences that arise through the use of space and buildings and the relative lack of rhyme with other buildings within the Tuban City Square complex.

In addition to the discourse of capitalism, it can be observed that the need for the government of Tuban City to articulate the identity of the city through revitalizing the square as a symbol of the city's existence in relation to the discourse on 'global cities'. Basically, globalization is an illusory discourse provided by capitalists in order to forgive the sins of multinational corporations in exploiting each individual in this world which then creates a system that perpetuates the dominance of the owners of capital. But it cannot be denied that the discourse on the city of 'global' then operates also on understanding a new class in society, namely the global community. This raises consequences for global identity that lives in the locus of global cities, as stated by Block (2006, p.221):

1. Global cities are the sites of multiple and massive migrations of people from all over the world; 2. Global cities are diverse in every sense of the word: ethnically, racially, religiously, culinarily, culturally and so on; 3. Global cities have reached a point in their development that they are de-nationalized as regards lifestyle and points of reference (London is not really England (or Britain), New York is not really America and Paris is not really France)

The global community is actually another form of perpetuating modern ideology which speaks of rational society based on certain standards, which in this case is a standard era of enlightenment outlined by the colonialists. Thus, it can be observed that global city discourse basically talks about repetition of new forms of colonialism or neocolonialism operating in the ideological realm. Forming a city identity through structuring buildings around the city center is a form of manifestation of city identity that distinguishes it from other cities. In the context of the Square of Tuban, the temple is one of the markers of differentiation.

Furthermore, it can be observed, temples which are philosophically a sign of the existence of Chinese ethnicity, as a center of religious, social, economic, political and cultural activity show the strong segregation of colonial inheritance in dividing community class hierarchies which leads to uneven distribution of power. However, this segregation also has a positive impact, namely the development of the character's own ethnicity and the perpetuation of culture created by the colonialists and still reproduced today. The equalization movement of power distribution to show the struggle of the people of Tuban as a postcolonial society should start from the point of awareness of the existence of other ethnic groups which led to a shared awareness to resist the dominance of power in operation. This was stated by Block (2006, p.38):

This move means that there is a self-conscious adoption of membership in a distinct community with a distinct culture by those who self-identity with that community and an overt recognition of the community's existence and its differentiated culture (but Crucially not necessarily the right to exist) by those who do not self-identity with it. However, as Gayatri Spivak (1990) notes, members of a particular group may, in some cases, decide that it is in their interests to adopt such an essentialized view of community as a means of political resistance to dominant and hegemonic discourses of citizenship and ethnicity.

Witnessing the imbalance in the distribution of power created by administrative segregation in the colonialist period is still reproduced until now discusses the strong dominance of colonialist discourse on postcolonial countries. As stated by Spivak quoted by Block (2006), that the affiliation of segregation of community groups created by the colonialists which were basically created through the hegemony of discourse on citizenship and ethnicity must be resisted using political resistance. However, it is difficult to carry out this resistance politics when looking at the reproduction of Indonesian ethnic identity which sharpens this segregation of identity. It was seen that during the Soeharto regime the name 'national' to be used by the ethnic Chinese actually created a new name caste which was only inhabited by ethnic groups and sharpened its differentiation with the name 'Indonesia'. Chen (2010) explains this as an attempt to postcolonial ethnicity which is actually not substantial considering that this difference in identity was actually created by the colonialists and perpetuated by the next ruling regime.

This can be understood if reflected in the discourse of identity politics which states that the perpetuation of power is closely related to the reproduction of the dominant discourse pattern in a community context using material signs that can be seen everyday, such as buildings. According to Ra'n, the arrangement of city buildings by the owners of power basically shows racial organization in order to smooth out the functions of the city, "Cities have to be organized in order to function smoothly. Such social separation between races was grounded on ideological discourse based on the fear of moral contamination. (2011, p. 38) "This condition was also evident when looking at the context of Tuban City Square where the segregation of community groups was clearly visible. In addition, the temple building which is full of Chinese symbols in red which signifies the dominance of Chinese ethnicity gives the impression of selective permeability. These signs are separated from the temples against other buildings in the Alun-alun Complex that communicate their affiliation with certain groups.

Unfortunately if a form of culture, which in the context of this research is Tri Dharma Tjoe Ling Kiong Temple, has become part of industrial culture, what happens is a human work which is simply that commodities become dry even without meaning other than sources that bring profit financial. As explained by Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer in the following Dialectic of Enlightenment:

In culture industry, culture is a paradoxical commodity. So completely is it subject to the law of exchange that it is no longer exchanged; it is so blindly consumed in use, that it can no longer be used. There is fore it amalgamates with advertising The more meaningless the latter seems to be under monopoly, the more omnipotent it becomes. The motives are markedly economic. (1944, p.161-162)

Meanwhile the impact of the dryness of the meaning of Tjoe Ling Kiong Temple, which is located in the North Square of Tuban City, was seen as a tourist destination, that it also failed to attract tourists to visit the temple, as explained by Roni Firdaus below:

Yes, with the existence of temples, intended as part of a tourist destination, it is expected to be able to socialize to the younger generation that ethnic Chinese, as well as parts of Tuban, even contribute to building Tuban. But unfortunately, the young generation of Tuban city only looked at the Temple, as a place of worship for Confucian Chinese, I also noticed tourists rarely went there, I don't know ... for example, I suspect, attracting investors from various religious or ethnic backgrounds. that with the maintenance of Temple in the middle of Tuban Square, indicating Tuban is safe tentrem kerto raharjo for all circles. So don't worry, if you invest in Tuban, but I personally just guess

it. In fact, the temple has been deserted until now, except for the Chinese New Year and the cap go meh. (interview on May 13, 2014)

Based on Mr. Roni Firdaus's narrative and observations of researchers in the field, the lack of visitors in Tjoe Ling Kiong Temple, even after being part of the commoditization of culture, can be seen from the comparison of the tombs of Sunan Bonang's atmosphere with Tjoe Ling Kiong Temple's. There is a contrasting atmosphere in front of the two places of worship in Tuban City, in the Tri Dharma Temple of Tjoe Ling Kiong and in the mosque in the funeral complex of Sunan Bonang. In front of the temple, empty of visitors, while in front of the mosque almost never empty of visitors.

Referring to Stuart Hall's opinion, it does not rule out the possibility that this phenomenon was the impact of Chinese "concealment of identity" during the Orde Baru period whose effects were felt until this research was written.

4. Conclusion

It can be concluded if the power relations raised from the presence of the temple on the North side of the Square of Tuban City communicate the episteme ups and downs of the Chinese ethnic in the landscape of the power structure of Tuban City. The tidal title used also illustrates the ethnic Chinese conditions in the landscape of the power structure that gets a different distribution of power when the ruling regime is different. Meanwhile, contemporary discourse placed Temple as a commodified Chinese ethnic symbol in order to sharpen the differentiation of Tuban as a city in Java in order to form a city identity which would later lead to the global city discourse raised by capitalism.

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