

# Chinatown Growth in Surakarta from The Colonial Era to The Millennium Era (XVIII-XX Century)

Inayati Fatimah\*

\*Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Surakarta, Indonesia  
Email: [inayatifatimah@gmail.com](mailto:inayatifatimah@gmail.com)

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## Abstract

Chinatown is an area inhabited by Chinese. The old Chinatown is characterized by rows of shophouse facing each other with curved tiled roof with Chinese ornaments. This typical Chinatown building are disappearing as a city develop, replaced by modern buildings. The old typical Chinatown in Surakarta is concentrated in Kampung Sudiroprajan. The purpose of this study is to find out the Chinatown growth since the birth of Surakarta until present and what factors have influenced its growth. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative method using archival data sources, literature review and map observation. City theory is used to understand the city and Chinatown growth. The data was then analyzed using a comparative study with the technique of comparing three maps of Chinatown from three different periodizations: Colonial, Old Order-New Order and reform to present. The findings is that the Chinatown growth is influenced by political factors, it is a regime's policy towards the Chinese community. The Surakarta Chinatown continued to grow organically around economic, business and trade nodes and approaching main transportation path and nodes. Its landmark is a temple. Chinatown inhabitant is not only Chinese, there are natives and other ethnicities. The biggest Chinatown growth is around Solo's golden triangle, namely around Gede Market, Klewer Market and Legi Market. It also grows around Solo City landmark, the North-South cosmological axis in Kasunanan Palace. The second rapid growth is in the Solo Baru. The trading image of Chinatown was overlap with the cultural image of Solo City.

## Keywords

chinatown; growth; temple; solo; city.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the process of Surakarta Chinatown growth from the colonial period to the present. Chinatown has the physical characteristic of

row shophouse with a curved tiled roof decorated with Chinese architecture. In the old Chinatown, these characteristics are increasingly disappearing, turn to modern buildings. Since its existence, the Chinatown has been the center of economic growth most of big cities in Indonesia. Historically the Surakarta as a Javanese culture center cannot be separated from its position as the capital of the Kasunanan Kingdom and the Mangkunegaran Duchy (Kadipaten) which has the status of a special region (Vorstenlanden). In practice the Kasunanan Kingdom and the Mangkunegaran Duchy was under the supervision of the Dutch. The study to understand the Chinatown growth in Surakarta is important to complement the urban history study in Indonesia.

So far the writings that examine the Chinatown especially Chinatown in Surakarta have concentrated on three areas. First, a study that focuses on the Chinatown on the coastal area of Java Island, such as in Semarang, Demak, Jepara and Lasem which slightly mentions the Surakarta Chinatown. Pratiwo's article entitled "Chinese Traditional Architecture and Urban Development" can represent this category of writing. Second, a study that discusses the development of the city of Surakarta but in general is not concentrated in the Chinatown area. Qomarun's article entitled "The Morphology of the Solo City in 1500-2000" and Soedarmono's research entitled "The Fall of the Kraton Alit's power" can be included in this category of writing. Third, a study that focuses on the Chinatown area of Surakarta City but discusses Chinatown only in one area and in one time period. Based on the previous studies above, it can be said that there has been no specific writing on the Surakarta Chinatown in terms of urban growth from the colonial period to the present. The question in this study is how did the Chinatown in Surakarta begin? What was the growth pattern and what factors influenced it?

The purpose of this study is to complement previous studies that did not examine the Surakarta Chinatown growth from the colonial period to the present. The substance of this paper is to understand historically how the settlement pattern of the Chinatown area was formed and its growth based on urban analysis. This study concentrates on the background of the initial settlement of Chinatown, why it exists in one location and why it has been growing and spreading to another location.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This paper uses a qualitative descriptive research method. Data collection techniques used the library research method, document study and map ob-

servations. Sources of literature review data were obtained from books available at the library. Observations were made to see the Surakarta Chinatown. Data analysis was carried out using a comparative study, namely comparing three maps of Chinatown from 3 periodizations, namely the first map of the colonial period in the XVII century, the map of the Old Order-New Order period in the XIX century, then the map of the reformation period until present in the XX century. This stage starts with data reduction, literature review, observation and document study. Some of the theories used for data analysis include:

(1) Kevin Lynch's theory reveals that there are 5 elements that make up the image of a city physically, namely paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks. These five elements can represent the taste of an area and provide a strong image of the city. These five elements are used to form a mental map that is used to make it easier to remember or record the physical elements in a city.

(2) Yunus' City Classification Theory which explains the characteristics of cities based on function, physical characteristics, growth characteristics, city hierarchy, and several other basic city classifications. Using the theory of city characteristics above will make it easier to explain of the Surakarta Chinatown characteristic.<sup>2</sup>

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Arrival History of Chinese People in Indonesia**

The existence of the first Chinese to set foot in Indonesia is found in Faxian monk's note, who visited Indonesia after traveling to India during the fifth century. In his note there is a writing about the Tarumanegara Kingdom, few people have embraced Hindu-Buddhism and only limited to the royal environment.<sup>3</sup> The next written were found during Cheng Ho's sailing expedition, Cheng Ho's secretary noted that in Java there were three groups of people, firstly Muslims from Western foreign kingdoms as traders in Majapahit, secondly Chinese from the Tang Dynasty (618-960) many of them were Muslim, thirdly were barefoot local people, worshipping ghosts.<sup>4</sup>

In 1292 in Karimun Jawa, thousands of Chinese Kublai Khan Troops during Yuan Dynasty landed brought envoys who were tortured by King Kertanegara of the Singasari Kingdom. They returned home but then revisit Singasari with a military expedition led by Kau Hsing. Unfortunately King Kertanegara had died and was replaced by Jayakatwang. Kau Hsing's troops were persuaded by Kertanegara's son-in-law to support him take

back Singasari with the lure of half of Singasari's power, but it turned out that after helping and winning, they were instead betrayed by Raden Wijaya. The Chinese troops were then scattered and the remaining settled on the East Java coast and married natives and had children.<sup>5</sup>

In 1405-1433 during the Ming Dynasty, Admiral Cheng Ho held a friendly voyage.<sup>6</sup> On board there weren't many killer weapons, but mostly "weapons of kindness" that would be presented to the kings on his voyage. Cheng Ho visited many areas in the archipelago, starting from Samudra Pasai in Aceh, Sriwijaya in Palembang, Cirebon, West Java, Semarang, Central Java, Surabaya, and East Java. His arrival brought progress in various fields, such as farming, iron tools, animal husbandry, trade, sculpture, architecture, and other cultural arts. Evidence of Cheng Ho's arrival in Cirebon is written in the book of the Kasepuhan Palace in Cirebon.<sup>7</sup> The place where Cheng Ho landed later developed into the Chinatown.<sup>6</sup> Since the arrival of Cheng Ho's expedition, Chinese immigrants living in Java increased rapidly.<sup>5</sup>

Chinese massive migration to Java began in the early 14th century. The beginning of Chinese settlements in Java was on the north coast. Settlements formed due to the influence of trade between India and China by sea. Between the time of departure and return there is a hurricane season. While waiting the season to change, the trader stopped at various ports in Southeast Asia including in Java such as in Tuban, Gresik, Surabaya, Demak, Semarang, Cirebon, Banten, Sunda Kelapa, etc.<sup>4</sup>

Another proof of Chinese existence in Java around 1660 was in Wouter Schouten's voyage notes. There was a wooden mosque construction similar to Chinese Pagoda. It has five floors surrounded by a moat, the roof is pointed, decorated with ornaments, and each floor can be reached by wooden stairs in the inside. In the note there was a mosque picture and Jepara City picture from the sea. The mosque building was the tallest building in Jepara at that time. This mosque was thought had been built by Kalinyamat Queen.<sup>4</sup>



Mosque resemble Pagoda in Jepara at the year 1660  
 Source: <https://bartelegallery.com/product/der-moren-tempel-binnen-de-stadt-iapare-schouten-1708/>

The Indonesia city pattern during the pre-colonial period was refers to the mandala pattern of the Javanese Hindu era which was oriented towards north-south cosmological axis, with squares and other important buildings around the King palace. In the XIII-XV centuries there was trade increase in Southeast Asia and in Java. Many foreign traders came to the north coast of Java. They came from India, Cambodia, China, Vietnam, Campa, South India, Bengali and Siam. As a result, new elites emerged in the north coast of Java. Two busy areas emerged as the city center, namely the trade area and the king's administrative area.<sup>4</sup>

Before colonize a city, the VOC's initial step was to build a warehouse like a fortress on the coast which then be used as a storage for agricultural products to be sent to Europe. After conquer and colonize a city, VOC then built a townhall which was surrounded by auxiliary buildings with interconnected wide roads. The colonialization with indirect rule makes the government divided into two, the center of native government and the center of colonial government.<sup>4</sup>

In 1854, during VOC colonization, Chinese were included as Dutch East Indies citizens if they were born in the Dutch East Indies territory. However, this provision changed in 1892, Chinese were classified as "Foreign Easterners", then changed again to "*kawula Belanda*" for all non-Europeans in the Dutch East Indies. This change occurred because if recognized as citizens of the Dutch East Indies then the Chinese would have dual citizenship, this was due to the 1909 Citizenship Law of the Republic of China which recognized all people of Chinese descent whether living in China or aboard as citizens of the Republic of China in accordance with the sanguinis principle (citizenship recognition by descent).<sup>8</sup>

### **Chinatown Indonesia during Dutch Colonization**

Chinatowns are not only found in Java, but also in every city on the main coast of Southeast Asia. Chinatowns are found in almost all cities in Java, both in coastal cities such as Jakarta, Semarang and Surabaya to the inland cities of the Javanese cultural centers, namely Yogyakarta and Surakarta.<sup>4</sup>

During Dutch colonization, there was a bloody incident called The Chinatown Riot or *Geger Pecinan* that occurred in 1740-1743 in Java. This incident was caused by the VOC trade monopoly and extortion to the Chinese, while at that time the VOC was almost bankrupt and had financial difficulties. This incident caused over tens of thousands of Chinese being massacred and there was a counter struggle from the Chinese which then spread throughout Java. The Chinese leader Kapitan Sepanjang led this struggle with the Javanese support but in the end they had been defeated. The Dutch issued a regulation to separate the Chinese from the natives, so that they would no longer be a threat to the Dutch and so that the Chinese' economic activities could not compete the VOC.<sup>5</sup>

In 1815 the Chinese population in Java was increasing sharply. Dutch Colonial government in 1816 issued a *Passenstelstel* regulation in order to control security and trade competition. People who would travel outside their area had to use a pass letter (travel permit). This regulation severely restricted the Chinese movement. Then in 1826 the Netherlands issued another *Wijkenstelstel* law. This regulation required ethnic groups to live in a specific place in the city. For example, the Chinese must live in Chinatown. The city was divided into three major areas, the first area for the Europeans, the second area for the Chinese and other Eastern foreigners, then the third area for the Native people. Even though this rule was abolished in 1920, the Chinatown area still has its own characteristics. The boundaries of the Chinatown area are sometimes not very clear. In order to control this area the Dutch appointed a leader with the rank of captain. The Chinatown area also became a buffer area if at any time the Dutch were attacked by the natives. Chinatown residents work mostly as middlemen and retail traders. This position placed them as intermediaries between the natives and the European Dutch.<sup>4</sup>

Chinatown has always occupied strategic areas in urban layout in Java, in the city center area with town squares (*alun-alun*), markets or areas near rivers have always been the target of Chinese settlers. Chinatown located in the most urbanized environment. The geometric principle is applied here, efficient layout with high density, without greenery, orthogonal grid, and narrow roads can only be passed by carts from two directions.<sup>4</sup>

The building hallmark in Chinatown are shophouses. This is because of the high density and the majority of the population work as traders, making the shophouses first floor as a place for business and the second floor as a home. The shape of this shop is also in the style of Chinese architecture where the building is made of brick with an arch tile roof. The narrow and elongated shape of the shop makes it difficult for lighting and clean air to enter the building. This problem was then solved by opening the building section in the middle with a courtyard/central garden/open space in the middle of the building.<sup>4</sup>

### **The History of Surakarta City**

Surakarta around the 1500s developed mainly in riverside areas. There is a main river that flows in this area, namely the Bengawan Solo River with its tributaries as the path of the city's growth. At that time water transportation was still the prima donna because the land network was not yet adequate. There were bustling ports with trading activities, large ships from the coast of Java and the Malacca Strait at that time were able to travel to the inland of Java via the Bengawan Solo River and even to its tributaries.<sup>9</sup>

While Bengawan Solo transportation network was used for trade. Merchant settlements were built on the river banks. The Laweyan trading Javanese community grew in the trading transportation trough Laweyan River. The Arab community in Pasar Kliwon took advantage of the Kaliwingko River, the Dutch merchant community took advantage of the bustling market on the banks of Kali Pepe and Kaliwingko around the Kretek Gantung, then the Pasar Gede Chinatown used the Kali Pepe trading port (now the BNI 46 building), while Madurese traders who are now in Kampung Sampangan used to have their trading port in Bengawan Semanggi, traders from Bali settled in Kebalen, a trading village along Tambak Segaran along the Pepe River which penetrates the Mangkunegaran area.<sup>10</sup> After the silting of the Bengawan Solo river tributaries the existing ports could no longer function.<sup>9</sup>

The Surakarta name is derived from reversing the syllables of the old palace name, namely "Karta-Sura" to "Sura-Karta". Besides the name Surakarta, this area is also called Sala or Solo. This name was taken from the name of the place where the port coolie leader, Ki Soroh Bau lived (Javanese words for chief coolie), who gradually changed his name to Ki Sala. At that time, because of the bustling trade in the Bengawan Solo River and its tributaries, settlements were organically formed, most of which were inhabited by community dock workers who worked for their employers in

Pajang which later became the Kingdom of Pajang.<sup>9</sup>

The Surakarta city was established after the destruction of the Kertasura palace during the Chinatown Riot (*Geger Pecinan*). The Chinese and some Javanese aristocrat fought together against Sunan Paku Buwana II and the Dutch in 1740. Their struggle was led by the Javanese aristocrat Raden Mas Ganerdi with the title Amangkurat V who became known as Sunan Kuning. The Kertasura Palace then fell into the hands of the anti-Dutch group. Raja Kertasura at that time fled to East Java. In the end the King who lost and fled collaborated with the Dutch to retake Kertasura and was successful. In return for Dutch assistance, the Dutch forced Paku Buwono to sign a new agreement that benefited the Dutch in 1743. The Dutch received a coastal area in North Java, then the placement of Dutch troops in the capital city of Mataram. In the construction of Surakarta, the Dutch Fort Vastenberg was planned from the very beginning of Surakarta. The capital city of Mataram, which was originally located in Kertasura, moved to Dusun Sala or Solo Village.<sup>11</sup>

If you look at the Map of Sala Village below, you can see that the position of the City Center of Surakarta was originally at the house of Kiai Sala. Where there was a land main route that connects activities from the banks of the Bengawan Solo River to the Pajang. Where at that time many laborers worked for employers in the Duchy of Pajang.



Sala Village Map in 1500  
Source: Qomarun, 2007; 84

This city form is a combination from three types of urban forms, namely organic where there are settlements growth on the river banks, then the Javanese cosmological pattern where Surakarta is the Mataram Capital City, then the colonial pattern which Dutch wants to control the king's power. Later political upheaval within the kingdom resulted in the splitting of the Mataram Kingdom into two, namely Kasunanan (Solo) and



Kasultanan (Yogyakarta). Then split again into three namely Kasunanan, Kasultanan and Mangkunegaran. Then split again into four namely Kasunanan, Kasultanan, Mangkunegaran and Pakualaman. The Solo region itself is divided into two kingdoms with two different regional divisions, namely Kasunanan and Mangkunegaran. The city development became complex, where the urban development of the Javanese was centered in the the two kingdoms area. Then the development of European areas began to grow inside and outside the Vestenberg fortress. Then the development of Chinese and Arab developed in their respective former cities. Namely the Chinatown on Kali Pepe and the Arab Township on Kali Jenes.<sup>9</sup>

### **Chinatown in Surakarta City**

The Chinese community diversity in Solo was due to the influx of Chinese who live outside Java then moved to Batavia, West Java, Central Java and East Java. Those who were originally mining-plantation workers changed their profession to become traders because having no money to return to China, they also wanted to go abroad. This diversity make them having several different languages. They are also divided into two major groups, namely Chinese Totok (native Chinese descent) and Chinese Peranakan (mixed ancestry).<sup>12</sup>

Discussion of Chinatown in Surakarta is divided into three periods, namely when Surakarta was first established or during the Dutch VOC Colonial period, second during the independence period of the Old Order to the New Order and third Reform Era or after Suharto stepped down to the present time. These three periods were chosen because during these three periods there were political changes in Indonesia which influenced the policies towards the Chinese community which then has an impact on Chinatown.

#### *1). Chinatown during the Dutch Colonial Era*

Chinatown in Surakarta was first organically settle in the Chinatown Port on Kali Pepe, which is located north of Gladak. The Chinatown area started here, this area was then a placement for Chinese, especially since the Chinatown riot (*Geger Pecinan*). The Dutch made a *wijkenstelstel* regulation, whereby Chinese people had to live in areas regulated by the Dutch and determined by the Javanese King. This is intended to prevent mixing between Chinese and Javanese. It was also intended that the Dutch East Indies government would be more flexible in exploiting Chinese.

This system is known as the zoning system which is contained in the Law article 73 Reegering Reglement which is published in the Mangkunegaran Archives, *Staadblad van Nederlandsch Indie* of 1866 No.57 which reads:

"Foreign Easterners residing in the Dutch East Indies as much as possible were co-opted into one within their own wijk by being ordered by their own leaders."<sup>13</sup>

The Dutch used an indirect rule, meaning that it used native rulers as an extension of their hands, making every Dutch policy in an area also depend on the local rulers.<sup>4</sup> The Dutch in implementing its policies is still limited to political contracts with local authorities. The Kingdom of Surakarta is *Projo Kejawen* (Java Kingdom) which has its own rules managing its territory. The Chinatown arrangement must meet the permit from King of Java. By *Susuhunan* the Chinese were allowed to live in north of Kali Pepe close to *Pasar Gede*. This appointment was associated with the interests of native rulers to develop a self-supporting economic system.<sup>14</sup>

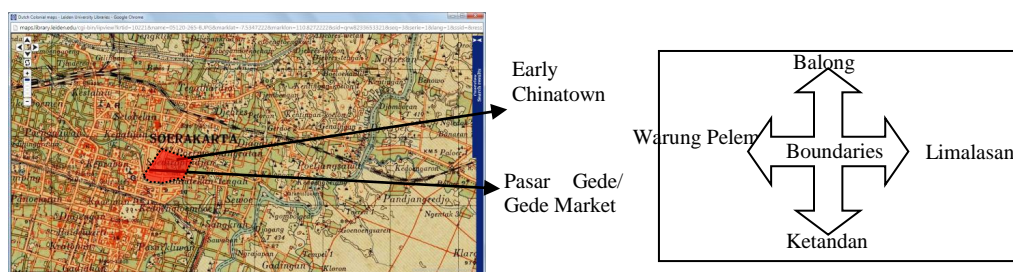
The Chinatown in Surakarta is located north of the Pepe River and around *Pasar Gede*, east border from *Ketandan* to *Limasan*, north border to *Balong*, west border to *Warung Pelem*. The Chinese leader was the richest person among the other Chinese. They could be given the rank of major, captain or lieutenant and were given an irregular salary by the Dutch. In Solo this officer usually had been called "*Babah Mayor*". He was in charge of handling government administration such as registration of deaths, births, marriages, newcomers, and as guarantor of debts. If a Chinese person wants to enter and exit the border of his territory, he must use a travel permit or "road pass" and pay a toll.<sup>13</sup> Chinatown at this time was in the *Sudiroprajan*. This village has several sub-villages such as *Balong*, *Samaan*, *Mijen*, etc. Not all residents of are Chinese, some are native and other ethnicities.

*Soediroprajan* is bordered by roads, the settlement at the main road developed into a shopping area. In the *Soediroprajan* there is also the *Samaan* village, inhabited by wealthy Javanese natives who work in tanning animal skins. Successful Chinese live in the main roads in *Ketandan*, *Limolasan*, and *Warung Pelem*. Meanwhile, the middle and low class Chinese lived in the middle of the village, mingling with the natives.<sup>14</sup>

*Balong* is the sub-village most inhabited by Chinese. *Balong* used to be a yard and burial area, many human remains/bones were found, so this area was called *Balong*.<sup>14</sup> The *Balong* area since the zoning regulation abolition has remained a Chinatown. In this area, there are the oldest Chinese people in Solo City with a middle to lower economy, that's why there

is close social communication with native people. In this village there were many mixed marriages between Chinese and Javanese which resulted many Chinese Mixed Descents.<sup>12</sup>

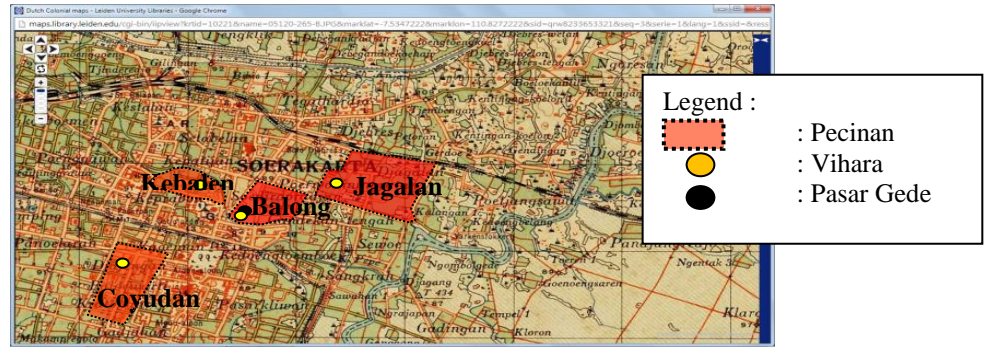
In the early Sudiroprajan Chinatown there was a Solo trading center, namely Pasar Gede Hardjonagoro. In the past, this market was an organic market (*ndeprok/lesehan*), without buildings and shade. Initially the market belonged to a Chinese major named Be Kwar Koen. Finally, the land was redeemed for 35,000 Gulden in 1924. Then it was renovated by Pakubuwana X Susuhunan. The construction of Pasar Gede involved the well-known Dutch architect Thomas Karsten.<sup>15</sup> This market was called “Gede” because the building resembled a fortress with an entrance like a palace with a large and magnificent roof.<sup>16</sup> The name Hardjonagoro was taken from the Chinese whose real name was Go Tik Swan with the title K.R.T. (Kanjeng Raden Tumenggung) Hardjonagoro. Exactly to the south of this market there is a Vihara Avalokitesvara Tien Kok Sie and is located on Jalan Ketandan.<sup>17</sup>



Chinatown Location in Dutch Colonial Era in Old Surakarta Map

Source: Dutch Colonial Maps-Leiden University Library ([maps.library.leiden.edu](http://maps.library.leiden.edu)) & analysis

In 1904 the Nationalist Chinese movement arose among the Indonesian Chinese, they demanded the zoning abolition. In 1919, the Dutch Colonial abolished the zoning rule. Since then Chinese were free to go anywhere and Chinese settlements began to spread to other areas, such as in Coyudan around the Poo An Kiong Temple, Kebalen around the San Tek Tong Temple, Jagalan around Lithang (Confucian Temple) and there also those who live elsewhere but in small numbers. Even though they spread out, they live in groups.<sup>13</sup>



Chinatown Location in Dutch Colonial Era in Old Solo Map after *Wijkenstelsel* Abolition  
Source: Dutch Colonial Maps-Leiden University Library ([maps.library.leiden.ed](http://maps.library.leiden.ed)) and analysis

The Jagalan area became a Chinatown growth area from Sudiroprajan, this area was named Jagalan because this area used to be an animal butcher community, so there are slaughterhouses. The animal skins cut here are processed by the Samaan Village residents in Sudiroprajan into rambak and other goods. The Coyudan area during the PB X era in the 1900s was the place where the palace soldiers lived. There lived a high ranking royal soldier named Ngabehi Secoyudan, from which the area name came from.<sup>18</sup> This area was known as a gold trading center, there are numerous gold shops. Coyudan is an area in Solo City which includes some street areas: Yos Sudarso, Dr Radjiman, Gatot Subroto, Bedhoyo and Kalil- arangan. This area is a modern trading center with some buildings still maintain European architecture. Gold trading by Chinese is a hereditary heritage. The Chinese population is mixed descents. Many Chinese resident in this area trade in gold, diamonds, pearls and gems. Legendary gold shops have even survived to this day, such as Mas Doro Shop, Gajah Mas Shop, etc.<sup>19</sup>



Shophouses in Chinatown Coyudan in 1930  
Source: <https://www.facebook.com/kotasolo/photos/coyudan-pada-masa-pb-x>

The Kebalen area existed before the move of the Kartasura Palace to Solo. Initially traders from the Bali Island lived in one location called Kampung Kebalen. Gradually they were pushed aside by Chinese traders who set up shops in Kebalen. This village existed around the 15-16th century along with the emergence of a trading community in trading ports in the city of Solo.<sup>20</sup>

## *2). Chinatown during the Old Order and the New Order*

In 1946 after Indonesia's independence, the government issued a citizenship law for people who were 21 years old and had lived for more than five years in the former Dutch East Indies colony to be recognized as Indonesian citizens. Chinese who also have Chinese citizenship end up having dual citizenship. This problem was resolved by issuing a regulation in 1962 regarding Chinese having to choose only one nationality.<sup>8</sup>

Since the Dutch colonization, the Chinese had a privilege to drive the economy. They became Dutch partners as well as objects of exploitation. They also mediated economic relations between the natives and the Dutch. They were appointed as owners of trade monopoly rights and tax collectors in the Dutch East Indies. Making them Dutch agents and exclusive among the native. The Old Order government issued policies to protect the national economy, especially the natives. This policy is called the Alibaba, in the form of fostering cooperation between Chinese and native entrepreneurs. Non-native are required to provide training to native entrepreneurs. The government then gives credit and licenses to private entrepreneurs. This policy failed because it turned out that native entrepreneurs who were given capital did not use credit for productive purposes but were consumptive, Chinese entrepreneurs only used native to obtain credit, and license trading occurred.<sup>8</sup>

In 1959 during the Old Order, the government issued regulations prohibiting foreigners from becoming retail traders below the district level or requiring Chinese to only trade in the regional capital. What is meant by foreigners here are Chinese people who have Chinese citizenship and have dual citizenship (Chinese and Indonesian).<sup>8</sup> Despite strong protests from the Chinese, this was an attempt to protect Indonesia. It was a big concern if Chinese with dual citizenship have land ownership in Indonesia. Because of this, the government then issued a nationalization policy by requiring Chinese to choose only one citizenship, if they chose Chinese they were allowed to return to China, whereas if they chose Indonesia they were required to provide an evidence document of Indonesian citizenship.

Continuing previous policy, in 1966 the Soeharto New Order government issued regulations on the Indonesian Chinese assimilation by prohibiting the use of Chinese characters and language for mass media and company store names. The government also regulates the policy on personal and family names must convert to Indonesian names. Prohibition on Chinese cultural and religious activities on a large scale in public in order to prevent racial exclusion. In this era, Soeharto provided many opportunities for Chinese to advances the national economy.<sup>8</sup>

During the New Order and Old Order era, Chinatown continued to spread throughout the Solo, choosing to live in strategic areas, in trade centers located on the main roads and around the Golden Triangle, namely Gede Market, Klewer Market and Legi Market. The existence of their settlements and places of business can be found on Jalan Slamet Riyadi, Jalan Urip Sumoharjo, Jalan Coyudan, Jl Yos Sudarso (Nonongan), etc. This is because most of them work as traders. In general, Chinese houses are rows of shophouses facing each other along the main road. Tenements under one roof and no front yard. This period was also marked by the changing shop names which no longer had any Chinese characters. Temples are also not built, may not be renovated, expanded, restored and may not be renewed.

In 1990 the Solo Baru area had been built as a city development area because Solo was run out of land. The Solo Baru area is located in Sukoharjo, this area was developed by PT Solo Pondok Permai, initially only for settlements, then the government built a road network that makes access there easier. Gradually this area developed into a business, trade and entertainment area. Many Chinese live and do business in the Solo Baru. The Chinatown area extends to the outskirts of Solo City and other districts in Solo Raya.

The 1998 riot in Solo occurred during political turmoil on the process of overthrowing Suharto who had been president for 32 years. The economic crisis occurred due to the higher dollar exchange rate causing the fall of rupiah value. The price of basic necessity soared, the people economic conditions slumped. Riots occurred first in other cities then spread to Solo. Solo Riot happened in 14-15 May 1998 which started with student demonstrations which ended in chaos and violence. Demonstrations in various cities in Indonesia have been going on for almost 2 months. Students and the community mixed in and destroyed, burned shop and businesses office buildings along the main streets. During the vandalism some of the rioters before rampage and destroying a building would first ask

whether it belonged to the Chinese or the Javanese. This riot happened very quickly, starting from Kleco through Purwosari to the city center. The shopping area in Purwosari further along Jl Slamet Riyadi was burned and looted by the masses. Almost all Supermarkets of Luwes, Matahari, Mitra were also looted. The natives and Chinese suffered casualties, but the material losses were mostly endured by the Chinese. Their psychology was also shaken. Some say this happens because of the relationship between workers (natives) and employers (Chinese) which sometimes unfair. The sentiment that the Chinese were cronies of the New Order Government as people enemy and then the unequal economic gap gave rise to social jealousy were triggering factors.<sup>21</sup>

The physical impact after the riots was shop buildings and offices located on main roads then avoid using glass on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors, if on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor if they still use glass there will be another covering layer to avoid damage from the outside. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of shophouses in the Solo then turned into massive wall. Because there were many cases of rioters entering the building via the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor which was made of glass. Cases of replacing this model occurred in most of the shop and building of business along street of Slamet Riyadi-Gatot Subroto-Veteran-Secoyudan and Setabelan area. According to the business owners they did not want the riots to happen again, but this step was taken as an anticipatory action.<sup>21</sup>

### 3). *Chinatown in Reform Era to the Present Time*

During the Reformation Period at the Gus Dur's leadership, the previous regulations were repealed. Confucianism is recognized by the state, so that the Chinese religious activities, beliefs and customs can be carried out without requiring special permits. During this reform, Chinese New Year or Imlek was set as a national holiday. This change is marked physically by the restoration of many temples in big cities in Indonesia. Chinese New Year celebrations are marked by red or the spread of Chinese New Year decorations such as lanterns in the Chinatown area in cities where there are Chinatowns. Barongsai performances are also often found in various cities in Indonesia.

Imlek in Solo is currently an annual tourist agenda, this event is celebrated around Pasar Gede as the oldest Chinatown. Since 2007 at the peak of Imlek, Grebeg Sudiro has started to be held. It is a symbol of Javanese-Chinese acculturation. Grebeg is a gathering event with a parade of mountains of food (*gunungan*), then the audience can scramble it. In imlek the food changed to basket cake (*Nian gao*). While Sudiro comes from the

word Sudiroprajan which is the first and oldest Chinatown. Hopefully this will be a sign that the Chinese is mingling with other ethnic groups in Indonesia and could reduces Chinese exclusivity.

Solo Chinatown, which is located around Pasar Gede area, has been revitalized since 2011 to become a new tourist area.<sup>22</sup> Since 2010 the Surakarta City Government has made improvement in Chinatown area to make it as tourist destination. The areas that are arranged are Balong and Surodiprajan. In that place there are still old Chinese architecture buildings and there is Klenteng. This arrangement parallel with the arrangement of the Kauman and Baluwarti areas. Each will be arranged with their own characteristics.<sup>23</sup> This tourism area is complemented by cruising the Kali-pepe river using a small boat with a dock at the former location of the first Chinatown in Solo, formerly known as Bandar Chinatown. This water tour can be enjoyed during Chinese New Year in Solo in January.



Gladak Area towards Imlek 2023  
Source: Primary Data



Water Tourism in Kali Pepe during Imlek  
Source:

<https://www.maioloo.com/travelogue-id>

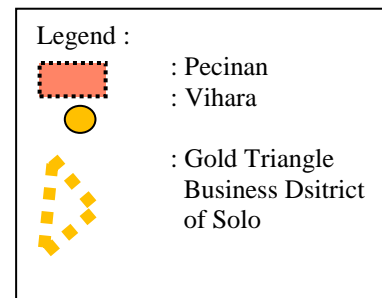
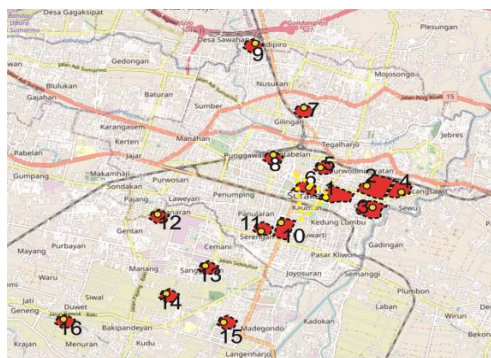


Early Chinatown Port Area around Pasar Gede Area and Pepe River Revitalization  
Source: Primary Data

According to the Religion Ministry regulations, one of the requirements for establishing a worship place is minimum being used by 90 people, as evidenced by a local ID card approved by the lurah, supported by the local community for a minimum of 60 people.<sup>24</sup> From this regulation it can be concluded that where there are temples, vihara or other Chinese



worship building, there are Chinese settlement. This can be known from Chinese settlement pattern form previous era which is marked by the existence of places of worship such as the Temple.



Temple / Vihara Location as Chinatown Landmarks in Surakarta City and Outskirt  
 Source: [intip.surakarta.go.id/peta](http://intip.surakarta.go.id/peta), Googlemap and Analysis

Table 1. Temple Location and District Characteristic in 2022

Number	Worship place of Chinese / Vihara / Temple Name	Location			District Characteristic
		Kampoong, Kelurahan	Kecamatan	Kota / Kabupaten	
1	Klenteng Tien Kok Sie Vihara Avalokitesvara	Sudiroprajan	Jebres	Surakarta	Larger Scale of Pasar Gede Business District Area
2	Lithang Gerbang Kebajikan Perkumpulan Khong Kauw	Jagalan	Jebres	Surakarta	
3	Vihara Sorogenen	Sewu	Jebres	Surakarta	
4	Vihara Dhamma Sundara	Pucangsawit	Jebres	Surakarta	
5	Vihara Maitreya Murni	Kepatihan Kulon	Jebres	Surakarta	
6	Klenteng San Tek Tong	Kebalen, Kampung Baru	Pasar Kliwon	Surakarta	Pasar Nusukan Area
7	Vihara Lotus Solo	Kadipiro	Banjarsari	Surakarta	Balapan Main Train Station Area
8	Cetya Kristigarbha	Punggawan	Banjarsari	Surakarta	Gondangrejo Toll Gate Area
9	Vihara Lemah Abang Solo	Kadipiro	Banjarsari	Surakarta	Gondangrejo Toll Gate Area
10	Klenteng Poo An Kiong	Coyudan, Jayengan	Serengan	Surakarta	Solo Business District Area
11	Vihara Vimalakirti Surakarta	Kratonan	Serengan	Surakarta	Solo Business District Area
12	Vihara Sasana Karuna	Talang Biru, Banaran	Grogol	Sukoharjo	Solobaru as New Residential & Business District Area
13	Vihara	Manang	Grogol	Sukoharjo	
14	Vihara Amoghasiddhi	Sanggrahan	Grogol	Sukoharjo	
15	Vihara Vajra Bumi Kumala	Langenharjo	Grogol	Sukoharjo	
16	Vihara Dammaloka	Kebun Menuran	Baki	Sukoharjo	Solobaru as New Residential & Business District Area

Source: Observation and Analysis from Solo Map, Google Map and other Data.

From the above data it can be concluded that currently most Chinatowns are located in Jebres and Solo Baru Districts. This can be seen from the many temples and monasteries in the two areas. This data also shows that the location of Chinatown in Solo is close to locations that are centers of the economy, trade, business and transportation hubs.

Besides the existence of Worship building as a landmark of China-

town. Chinese settlement also found along the main road. This was based on the results of Soedarmono's research, most of the business owners on the main streets in Solo City are Chinese. This research was conducted on 18 roads by recording the ownership of 18 business premises. The main roads in the Solo City include the roads in the North and South of Slamet Riyadi Street. Namely Slamet Riyadi, Honggowongso, Gatot Subotro, Yos Sudarso, Radjiman, Veterans, Brigadier General Sudiarto, Captain Mulyadi, Yosodipuro, Gajah Mada, Diponegoro, S. Parman, MT. Matradinata, Col. Sutarto, Juanda, Urip Sumoharjo, Ir. Sutami, Ahmad Yani. As much as 1,795 business premises on 18 roads, most of them were owned by Chinese (1,046), then Javanese (613), Arabs (38), and the rest were owned by other ethnic groups. The following table is a sample list of business ownership on central business streets in Solo City.<sup>21</sup>

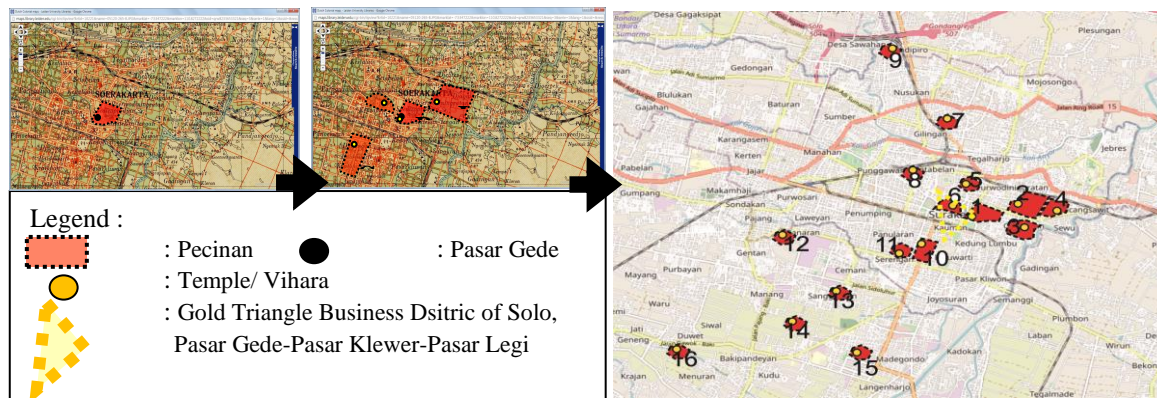
Table 2. Sample List of Business Ownership in Three Main Road in Solo City

Number	Street Name	Ownership of Business Place based on Ethnicity			
		Tionghoa	Jawa	Arab	Others
1	Jalan Slamet Riyadi	158	129	4	27
2	Yos Sudarso	193	14	2	2
3	Radjiman	184	52	2	7

Source: Analysis from Soedarmono's Research Data, 1999

#### 4). Chinatown Growth

If summarized from above description about Solo Chinatown History, it can be concluded that Chinatown first exist is in Bandar Chinatown (formerly in the BNI 46 Gladak). At that time Solo was a city whose economy was centered on the Bengawan Solo River and its tributaries. The Chinatown riot (*Geger Pecinan*) in Batavia which spread to the whole Java was one of the reason ethnic settlement separation by the Dutch. This riot also became the background for the Solo establishment in the Sala Village, moving the capital city of Mataram from Kartasura.



Analysis of Solo Chinatown Growth from Dutch Colonialization Map,  
Old Order-New Order Map, Reform-Present Map  
Source: Data and Analysis

Dutch implemented zoning rules for Chinese, Arab, European and Native. The Dutch politic of playing one against each other was conducted so that Chinese and Javanese or other ethnic group could no longer cooperate and this zoning made easier for the Dutch to exploit each of them. The Dutch divided social strata with European Dutch having the first, other foreigners the second, and natives the last. This social structure makes foreigners feel superior and exclusive. These foreigners were also given special privileges, especially the Chinese because of their ability flourishing the economy. This made Chinese could monopolize trade and own many assets. It was this policy that make other than natives feel exclusive, segregated and compartmentalized. The Dutch goal was this segregation would weaken the nation so that it could no longer unite and no longer be a threat.

The Chinese settlement in Bandar Chinatown and scattered areas had been concentrated by the Dutch in Sudiroprajan. They lived there from 1866 when the zoning regulations were enacted until it was repealed in 1919. These regulations were repealed influenced by the Chinese revolutionary movement which turned China into Republic by Sun Yat Sen. Undercurrent movement that was able to oppose the hegemony of the royal power created Chinese nationalism pride. Chinese in Indonesia continued this struggle spirit by protesting against the Dutch to abolish zoning regulations. This protest result was the zoning rule abolition in 1919 and then the Chinese could live outside Sudiroprajan.

The Chinatown growth was then spread into Coyudan, Kebalen and Jagalan. In each new Chinatown they built a temple, monastery or

Lithang. The existence of a Chinese worship place is a sign of the existence of their settlement. This growth is an economic expansion of the golden triangle area that connects Gede Market, Klewer Market and Legi Market. Gede Market and Klewer Market are located in the Kasunanan Kingdom, and Legi Market is located in the Mangkunegaran Kingdom. Chinese settlements expanded around this golden triangle.

During the colonial period, due to privileges from the Dutch, Chinese monopolized trade and owned many land assets, this then became a huge problem for Indonesia. After Indonesia's independence, the government then regulated Chinese specifically. After China revolution from kingdom to Republic, the China adopting a citizenship system based on *ius sanguinis*, every China descendant are Chinese citizen. This makes Chinese who have lived for a long time in Indonesia has bipatride status or have dual citizenship. This was threatening State sovereignty, such as a lot of land in Indonesia is owned by Chinese. Although there had been an agreement between Sukarno and China for dual citizenship, later Indonesia could no longer accept this. This was marked by the China and Indonesia diplomatic severance. Then came the rules that govern it, the rule to choose one nationality. In terms of the economy, in order to protect and equalize the domestic economy, the government issued various policies, such as Ali Baba, regulating Chinese and Native businessmen to work together, which ended in failure. Then regulate the retail sales prohibition for Chinese in order to protect local business. This then encourages the Chinese business type to be a wholesale business and was centered in the city.

During the New Order era, Seoharto emphasized the Chinese assimilation to become truly Indonesian. Several regulations such as changing Chinese names to local names, prohibiting the use of Chinese characters in shop/business names, and even temples are prohibited from being built, restored and renovated. Ethnic religious event was also prohibited being held in the open public space. Even so, in the economic field, the Chinese were given wide opportunities to drive the country's economy.

The New Order period ended with riots in various areas, one of them was the 1998 riot in Solo. There was social segregation from Dutch heritage, ethnic Chinese exclusivity and people's suspicions that Chinese was government's cronies making the demonstrators at that time thought they were people enemy. This made the Chinese had been became the target of mass fury.

The reformation period was marked by the rise and fall of several presidents, namely Habibie, Gus Dur and Megawati. Under Gus Dur's

leadership, the basic rights of the Chinese were restored. They can have names according to their culture, worship according to their faith and celebrate custom event like any other ethnic groups in Indonesia.

Currently the Chinatown continues to expand to various areas in Solo Raya, such as Sukoharjo and Karanganyar. Assimilation occurs naturally, social barriers are increasingly disappearing along with the open flow of information in various fields. The Chinatown growth area can be known from the increasing number of temples, monasteries and lithangs in Solo Raya. The establishment of Chinese worship place marked the growth of their settlements.

From the point of view of City theory, it can be said that the Chinatown area has 2 main elements according to Kevin Lynch's theory, namely paths and landmarks, Chinatown is always on the main path and near the main market/ business in a city, and this is influenced by their main activity in trading. Their settlement also has a landmark, it is a temple.

Based on the city classification theory on its function, Surakarta City is a city of culture where there are Kasunanan and Mangkunegaran, which are derivatives from Islamic Mataram Kingdom, the center of Javanese culture. Meanwhile, the Chinatown function as a trading area, which many of them for wholesale trade, this is the effect of old order regulations. There are a lot of wholesale Chinese shops in Solo. This can be seen in Pasar Gede and its surroundings which are the destination for out-of town trader doing grocery shopping. Starting from fruits, household items, etc. Even in Jebres area there are many toys wholesalers. There are many food and beverage wholesalers in the Legi Market area. In the Klewer Market area, you can find wholesalers of batik, textile raw materials, and clothing. In the Coyudan and Nonongan areas there are many wholesale areas for tertiary goods such as jewelry, accessories, stationery, etc. So Solo is a combination of the cultural city and the trading character in the Chinatown.

When viewed from the classification of cities based on their physical characteristics, Surakarta is a Bengawan city or a city located on riverbank. The largest and longest river on the Java Island. The growth of the Solo city area in general also started from the Bengawan Solo River and its tributaries, at that time water transportation was main path. Then after the road becomes the main transportation route, the regional growth change to be along the main roads. The first Chinatown area was in Bandar Chinatown and then moved to Sudiroprajan due to Dutch rule and then developed around the main market and around the city's main roads. The

Chinatown area grows due to business development or economic factors.

## CONCLUSION

Chinese ethnicity has a long history in Indonesia. Their presence from the beginning was due to economic motives, to trade and to work. The Chinatown in Solo is characterized by a trading area within the Culture City of Solo. The existence of the Chinatown area is marked by the existence of temples, monasteries or lithangs, which are very numerous today in Solo Raya when compared to the pre-reform era. Chinatown is also not only inhabited by Chinese, there are natives and other ethnicities there.

The Chinatown growth is strongly influenced by political factors. Who is in power and what his policies is? During the three periods, namely Colonial, Old-New Order and Reformation, Solo's Chinatown continued to grow organically spread throughout the city of Solo and its outskirt. The growth of Chinatown begins in the heart and landmark of the city, which is in the northern area of the Solo Palace, which has a north-south cosmological axis, Chinatown is growing around this axis. The Chinatown area is growing around economic, business and trade nodes and approaching main transportation path and nodes. The biggest growth of Chinatown locations are around Solo's golden triangle, namely around Gede Market, Klewer Market and Legi Market. The second rapid growth location is in the Solo Baru area. The trading image district in Chinatown was overlap with the image of the Solo City as cultural city.

This research observe and research on previous research data, comparing Old and Present Solo City Map and not observing directly at so many location in Solo Raya. Further research was needed to get detailed information about Chinatown growth in Solo City which since reform era grow rapidly in Solo Raya.

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