

# THE JAVANESE IN LAMPUNG, STRANGER OR LOCALS? WITH THE REFERENCE OF CHINESE EXPERIENCE<sup>1</sup>

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## **ABSTRAK**

*Orang Jawa merupakan mayoritas dari penduduk Indonesia. Secara geografis mereka tinggal di Jawa Tengah, DIY dan Jawa Timur. Namun sejak awal abad ke-20 pemerintah kolonial Belanda mulai memindahkan mereka ke Lampung di Sumatera bagian selatan dan kemudian ke berbagai tempat lain. Selama seabad Lampung menjadi daerah tujuan utama migrasi Orang Jawa, menjadikan Lampung “provinsi Jawa” setelah Jawa Tengah, DIY dan Jawa Timur. Berbeda dengan Orang Cina yang berhasil membangun bangsa dan negara Cina, Orang Jawa gagal dalam membangun bangsa Jawa; bahkan mendukung dibangunnya bangsa dan negara Indonesia. Dalam tulisan ini Orang Jawa di Lampung dilihat sebagai kasus bagaimana kejawaan sebagai sebuah identitas ditempatkan dalam konteks perubahan politik pasca-Suharto, ketika desentralisasi dan otonomi daerah mulai diimplementasikan. Dari pengamatan yang dilakukan terlihat bahwa Orang Jawa meskipun tetap mempertahankan sebagian besar identitas kebudayaannya namun terbukti tidak menggunakan identitas tersebut untuk melakukan mobilitas politik, misalnya pada saat pemilihan kepala daerah. Orang Jawa sudah merasa aman, dan tidak merasa sebagai Orang Asing, karena merupakan mayoritas meskipun berada di wilayah yang sejatinya milik Orang Lampung.*

**Kata kunci:** *Migrasi, Identitas Etnis, Penduduk Lokal, Mobilitas Politik*

## **ABSTRACT**

Javanese is the majority of the Indonesian population. Geographically they are resided in the provinces of Central Java, DIY and East Java. However, since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Dutch colonial government began to relocate them to Lampung in the southern part of Sumatra and then to other places. Within a century Lampung become the main destination of Javanese migration, making Lampung the “Javanese province” after Central Java, DIY and East Java. Unlike the Chinese that is able to construct Chinese nation and state, the Javanese failed in constructing the Javanese nation, instead supporting the construction of Indonesian nation and state. In this article the Javanese in Lampung is exposed as the showcase of how Javanese as an identity is located within the post-Suharto’s political development contexts, when decentralization and regional autonomy began to be implemented. Based on a fieldwork in Lampung, it shows that the Javanese while continue preserving the cultural identities yet reluctantly using their identities for political mobilization, for instance during the election of head of local government. The Javanese seems secure to be the majority, and not perceived themselves as strangers, although the resided in the land of the Lampungers.

**Keyword:** *Migration, Ethnic Identity, Local People, Political Mobility*

*“The Javanese continue to be the Javanese but modified by the Sumatran environment.”  
(Wertheim, 1959)*

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## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is well known as a country that consists of more than three hundred large and small ethnic groups. What is also unique is its geographic contour; an archipelago consists of various ethnic groups residing on widespread islands. The Javanese is the largest ethnic group constituting approximately 40% of Indonesian population many of which live in Java island. Considering the declining of Javanese people's welfare, and a perception of an unbalance distribution between Java and other islands; the Dutch colonial government shipped the Javanese to other islands. Lampung was firstly the first destination in 1905. Ever since then, the Javanese have slowly turned Lampung into another Java, outside Java, as the policy to relocate people is continued by the Indonesian government. Moreover, many Javanese subsequently decided to move to Lampung voluntarily since there are both an abundant supply of land and well established Javanese communities many of which causing the newcomers feel at home.

Nevertheless, beneath the appearance of a smooth and peaceful migratory process, tensions and conflicts frequently happened between the migrants and the native communities. Luckily, the authoritarian and repressive nature of both colonial and post colonial governments are able to suppress the local disputes. In the last probably ten years, following the fall of unjust Suharto administration, the situation changes as the new decentralization policy is introduced by the new democratic government that has granted autonomy to the district level governments. In the last five years, the governors and the district heads have been elected directly by the people. As expected, the local populations reasserted their local identities and mobilize their claims as the sons of the soil (*putra daerah*), demanding the right to govern their territories. The Javanese who have become the dominant ethnic group in Lampung have adjusted themselves to the new social and political settings. The resurgence of political identities which is brought by the so

called *Lampungers*; has a political intention viz., evoking an emotional tension between the Javanese people vis a vis the native inhabitants. Yet it is interesting to note that the Javanese individuals seem unaffected by such politicking and apparently not interested in the politics of identity.

This paper, written as the result of a fieldwork in Lampung in 2011 and the study of some relevant literatures, aims to provide an explanation of why the Javanese people do not seem facing significant problems by being settlers in Lampung. In contrast to such focus, the question of whether or not the Javanese are locals is irrelevant to this particular article. Divided into five parts, this article, right after the introduction, describes the historical development of the general Javanese people within the context of Indonesian patriotism in the second part of this article. Moreover, the third part explores the process of Javanese migration and the resistance of local communities to their encroachment in Lampung. Next, the fourth part strives to fill the gap between what some literatures have claimed and the social realities be found during the fieldwork especially with regard to the recent implementation of decentralization. Finally, concluding remarks are provided in the fifth part.

## DISTINGUISHING JAVANESE FROM CHINESE INDONESIANS (TIONGHOA)

Who are the actual Javanese that we are talking about? In Indonesia, at least, when people in every day conversation talk about the Javanese, it is assumed that we (Indonesians) know what we mean by the term. There is something similar in our minds while thinking about the Javanese. It is perhaps something similar when we (all of us) consider the Chinese. The Chinese, at the global level and the Javanese at the Indonesian level postulate a similar situation viz., their number is huge and their presence overwhelms us. Allen Chun (1966) a Taiwanese expert in Chinese studies, in a mocking article entitled

“Fuck Chinese: On the Ambiguities of Ethnicity as Culture as Identity”, compels the following sentences:

*“It is said that China is the oldest extant civilization in the world and that its population constitutes one-quarter of humanity. Something so well entrenched demographically, territorially, politically, and historically should be anything but an uncertain entity. It is easy, thus, to identify something called “Chinese culture and society.” Its political presence in the modern world system is incontestable, and the amount of intellectual discourse devoted to the study of China continues to fill libraries. In short, there is much to suggest that the very idea of China is an unambiguous or unquestionable entity. But what is so unambiguous about China that makes it an unquestioned object of gazing? What is the nature of Chineseness, and who are the Chinese? Finally, who is really speaking here?”*

Chun then shows how diverse the meaning of China and Chineseness are:

*“While the Western term for China appears to accentuate the unity of a civilization brought about by the Ch’in Empire, Chinese terms for China and Chinese, on the other hand, suggest other kinds of associations, some of which are historically or regionally specific. The term chung-kuo, China’s rendition of itself as “the middle kingdom,” has existed since antiquity, and the term chung-kuojen is commonly used nowadays to denote Chinese people who speak chung-kuo hua or some form of Chinese language. When Chinese wish to talk about themselves as a unified people belonging to a unified culture, however, they refer to themselves as “people of the Han (dynasty)” (han-jen), as belonging to a Han culture that originated in the region of the Han River. The process of sinicization is one of being Han-ized (han-hua), and the ethnic minorities within territorial China are likewise set apart as being non-Han. Southern Chinese, in contrast, typically those from Fukien and Kwangtung who constitute the vast majority of “overseas Chinese” in places such as Southeast Asia, express their Chineseness by saying that they are “people of the T’ang (dynasty)” (t’ang-jen) who speak “T’ang language” (t’ang-hua) and have*

*deep attachments toward a homeland called “the land of T’ang” (t’ang-shan). Perhaps not coincidentally, Chinatown is called “street of the T’ang people” (t’ang-jen chieh). Nonetheless, the historical metaphor cannot be carried too far. When speakers refer to t’ang-shan, it usually means the China of one’s home village and not that of the imperial court; likewise, t’ang-hua simply means “Chinese,” which, because it can refer to any Chinese, does not sit well with Mandarin speakers who claim to speak chung-wen.”*

The Javanese are definitely not as overwhelming as the Chinese yet we could discover some similarities between them. The Javanese people, like the Chinese, are indeed not a single entity as they are diverse in terms of geography, history, language, economy, politics. Indeed, in the Java island itself, we easily find many blatant differences among the Javanese identities, such as between the central and the peripheral identities, between the coastal and the mountainous identities, and between the western and the eastern parts. We could imagine, therefore, such diversity would spread out as the Javanese people, like the Chinese at the global level, move and migrate to other places either within or beyond Indonesia. No wonder then that we find *Pujakesuma* (the acronym of Putera Jawa kelahiran Sumatra or the Sumatran Javanese), the Suriname Javanese, and Japung (the abbreviation of Jawa Lampung/Lampungnese Java). Recently, I visited the Netherlands where I met a Javanese who was born in Suriname, the Dutch colony in South Africa, where we know the Dutch coercively sent Javanese laborers in the 1920s and 1930s to unjustly work in various sugar plantations. This Javanese-Suriname person proudly told me about himself, “Suriname is my home, Holland is my country and Java is my soul”.

In the contexts of Java and the Javanese-ness, Clifford Geertz (1960,7) noted in the beginning of his book *The Religion of Java*:

*“Java – which has been civilized longer than England; which over a period of more than fifteen hundred years has seen Indians, Arabs,*

*Chinese, Portuguese, and Dutch come and go; and which has today one of the world's densest populations, highest development of the arts, and most intensive agricultures – is not easily characterized under a single label or easily pictured in terms of a dominant theme. It is particularly true that in describing the religion of such a complex civilization as the Javanese any simple unitary view is certain to be inadequate; and so I have tried in the following pages to show how much variation in ritual, contrast in belief, and conflict in values lie concealed behind the simple statement that Java is more than 90 per cent Moslem. If I have chosen, consequently, to accent the religious diversity in contemporary Java – my intention has not been to deny the underlying religious unity of its people or, beyond them, of the Indonesian people, generally, but to bring home the reality of the complexity, depth, and richness of their spiritual life.”*

Having discussed the Javanese identities, perhaps it is appropriate to say that the Javanese people, like the Chinese share both a singular and a plural identities.

## **THE UNMAKING OF JAVANESE NATION**

Javanese and Chinese people are likely to ignite controversies not because they share various cultures but their continual, constructed and reconstructed identities pave the way to frictions. If there are differences between the Chinese and the Javanese it may presumably be related to the notion that China does not only refer to a nation but also a state. In contrast, there is no such thing called the Javanese nation nor the Javanese state. As a consequence of such notion, we are aware of the existence of what is called Chinese citizens, but none of whom are called the Javanese citizens. In the Chinese particular context, we also notice the rivalry between the ROC (Taiwan) and the PRC the extent to which both are contesting for political legitimacy and authenticity as being the legitimate heirs of Chinese culture.

From the Indonesian history we learn that the idea of Javanese identity loses its political legitimacy right after the founding fathers, many of which comprised of the cross, ethnic, educated elites,

vowed on 28 October 1928 in Batavia declaring that they are: "one nation, one language and one country" that is called Indonesia. Ever since then, such idea of Javanese identity merely indicates a group of people that are more or less united by a similar language, traditions and customs, arts and cultural heritages. All those characteristics more or less signify what perhaps could be defined as the Javanese culture. Java as indicated by the culture is always in the making process but Java as a political identity is unfortunately shrinking. In the Javanese studies, perhaps Benedict Anderson (1972) is the one and only expert who elaborates eloquently what he calls as "the idea of power in Javanese culture". Meanwhile, John Pemberton (1994) scrutinizes the idea of reinvention of Java in his book *On the Subject of Java*.

To compare with the Chinese experience, Sun Yat Sen and Mao Tse Tung constructed a Chinese patriotism that needed to be based on culture, but Sukarno and Hatta ground their thoughts on the modern idea of nation which is based on civic instead of ethno-nationalism. Indonesian nationalism earned its legitimacy from the national struggle against colonialism and the shared experiences and ideals of what Anderson describes as the imagined community (2003). Moreover, Indonesian nationalism is not defined by the glories of the past but by the common goals on the future. Indonesia is a common political project that should be realized by the common efforts of all ethnic groups. The construction of nationhood is indeed influenced by the way nationalism is crafted. The state as the embodiment of the nation often requires a kind of national identity. National symbols in the forms of arts, languages, architectures and food are inevitably necessary as the characteristics of national identity and nationhood. In this regard it is interesting to remember that a nation always consists of different ethnicities that possess their own ethnic characteristics. In the case of China, despite the fact that the Han is the largest and most dominant ethnic group, there are minorities that also possess their ethnic identities. Such

a situation poses a problem as Allen Chun concludes:

*“The existence of ethnic minorities within China’s national borders, on the other hand, created particular problems for reconciling notions of ethnicity in relation to national identity. For the most part, the government adopted a Stalinist policy of multiculturalism, with the Han ethnic majority positioned at the core of a family of nations.”*

Ethnically speaking, Indonesia is probably more diverse than China although the Javanese, like the Han ethnic, could be regarded as the major ethnic group. The Javanese people, however, do not have the luxury to claim as the core of a family of nations as the Han in China does. On the one hand, the Han is deliberately constructed by the state as the core nation. On the other hand, the Javanese have never been so well constructed. The construction of the Han as the core nation, however, implies some consequences as shown by Allen Chun:

*“The criteria of traditional practices and material customs applied to distinguish ethnic groups, however, made the very notion of ethnic identity within a cultural taxonomy problematic, especially in cases of historically known minority groups that had been undergoing a long process of sinicization. In this regard, the need to define ethnicity according to the kind of hard-and-fast rules characteristic of the boundedness of a modern nation-state ultimately fabricated ethnic divisions that did not exist in the minds and lives of the people themselves, while at the same time made cultural objectification a normative practice in the state’s institutional routine. As in the case of Taiwan, history and ethnicity thus combined to produce (a national) identity in which they were, in fact, nothing more than imagined constructions by the state to define the ethos of its own modernity.”*

A long process of sinicization as experienced by minority groups in China also occurred in Indonesia, culminating during the reign of Suharto military government from the 1970s to the 1990s. The process of Javanization had already become a contentious issue in the 1950s at the time when the national government began advocating the transmigration programs as a policy to assimilate

the local populations into the so called national identity. Heeren (1979) and Wertheim (1986) observed the implementation of this policy in Lampung and Sumatra Selatan provinces. The national government created some enclaves of Javanese resettlements in the middle of Lampung communities. In the Suharto’s administration the transmigration program is intensified by the support from the World Bank both for controlling the population density in Java, and for supporting what they called as regional development. The ultimate goal of relocating the Javanese through transmigration programs was, however, ideological: to achieve the national integration (Tirtosudarmo, 2001).

The policy has been widely criticized because it implies both marginalizing the minority groups, and deforestation in order to open a new land. It is no secret that the timber companies take benefits from the transmigration program. On the pretext of strengthening national integration the transmigration program is also used in order to reinforce the strategic interests of military forces in several areas, perceived by the national government as a kind of fortified bastion against the separatist movements such as in Aceh, Papua and East Timor. Despite all controversies concerning the security system of transmigration program during the Suharto administration, it is still relevant to ask whether or not the durable process of Javanization in Lampung as the oldest place for relocating the Javanese, and as a result the province is by now demographically dominated by the Javanese; did come into reality.

Given that Java has essentially failed to be the basis for constructing a Javanese nation, in another paper (Tirtosudarmo, 2005, 14-15) I have explained the reason for such failures:

*“The explanation as to why the Javanese failed to assert their political identity should be sought in the history of nationalism in Indonesia which began to emerge in the dawn of the twentieth century. The first generation of Javanese intellectuals that were the product of the Dutch educational system began to imagine what sort of future political community would*

suit the indigenous people in the archipelago. Here I would like to cite the debate between two Javanese intellectuals, namely Tjipto Mangoenkoesomo - who advocated Indies nationalism - and Soetatmo Soeryokoesomo - who advocated Javanese nationalism. This debate – in Dutch not Javanese or Malay – took place in 1918, the same year in which the Volksraad (People's Council) was founded by the Dutch (see Shiraishi, 1981). In this debate, Soetatmo advocated Javanese nationalism, arguing that the nation could and should be built on the basis of common culture and language. Javanese nationalism had its basis in the common culture, language and history of the Javanese, whereas the cultural bases of Indies nationalism were nonexistent or, at best, a product of Dutch colonial rule. Javanese nationalism was the means of self-expression for the Javanese, while the Indies nationalism was no more than a reaction to Dutch colonial domination of the Indies. Therefore, he (Soetatmo) argued, only Javanese nationalism had the sound cultural basis on which the Javanese could establish their future political community. In reaction to this argument of Soetatmo, Tjipto defended Indies nationalism. In his opinion, what was totally lacking in Soetatmo's view was world historical development. He argued that Europe was clearly more advanced than Asia, and therefore the Javanese could learn from the European historical experience the direction in which the national formation in the Indies would go. The Indies were indeed composed of diverse ethnic groups, with each ethnic group having a different culture and language, but Java had lost its sovereignty and was only a part of the Dutch-dominated Indies. The fatherland of the Javanese was no longer Java but the Indies, and the task of the national leaders was to work for Indies nationalism. In the end, after a long process of negotiation and conflicts, Indies nationalism more or less prevailed as the new form of 'Indonesian nationalism.' Yet, Javanese-ness did not fade away, but instead contributed – in some instances through elite manipulation and reinvention of Java - to contemporary Indonesian politics" (Pemberton 1994).

Like China, Indonesia also faces some difficulties in the construction of national identity. National identity as perceived by the power holders is required by what they define as the national culture. But what is national culture? The constitution defines it as the peaks of all regional or local cultures. If this is the case, the

next question is how do we opt the regional or local cultures that ultimately represent the national culture?

## JAVANESE MIGRATION AND THE LAMPUNGERS' RESISTANCE

The Javanese diaspora has existed since the earliest times as Hugo (1980) notes "A good example is the Javanese movement into the Banten and north coastal regions of Sundanese West Java which gaining its momentum in the sixteenth century ...". Furthermore, he argues that:

*"This movement was instrumental in the spread of sedentary wet rice cultivation into West Java where previously almost all of the indigenous Sundanese population engaged in ladang (dry field) cultivation."*

The presence of Javanese people in Sunda and Banten has become in turn the source of migration to Lampung.<sup>1</sup> According to the late Indonesian maritime historian, Adri Lopian, the Sunda Strait is geographically decisive in determining the interaction between people in both Banten and Lampung. Thereby, discussing Lampung should be necessarily complemented with Banten according to Lopian.<sup>2</sup>

In 1905 the unjust Dutch colonial government began to relocate people from Java to Lampung. Under the so called Ethical Policy, relocating people (land colonization) was one out of three related programs, with the other two are education and irrigation. Through the land colonization program, 155 Javanese families from Bagelen, Kedu areas in Central Java, are resettled to Gedong Tataan in Lampung, Southern Sumatra Selatan<sup>3</sup>. The motivation of

1 There are at least two theories about the place of origin of people in Lampung. The first theory holds that their ancestors came from Banten in the western part of Java while in contrast the second explains that the origin of the people in Lampung is Pagar Ruyung in Sumatra Barat.

2 Personal communication in May 2011 with A.B. Lopian in Jakarta.

3 Gedong Tataan is located at the foot of Mt Betung, about 20 km west of Tanjung Karang (Bandar Lampung). At the time Gedong Tataan became a subdistrict of the district of Pasawaran, Bagelen became the name of a village in the Subdistrict Gedong Tataan.

the Dutch is not merely the demography and economy based reasons but also due to security reasons. The Javanese countryside in the 19th and early 20th centuries are characterized by the sporadic social unrest, and the peasant rebellious movements against the Dutch unjust, repressive, agricultural policies (Kartodirdjo 1973). Not only did sporadic, the peasants' unrests and violent conflicts occurred almost on the entire Javanese rural areas between 1900-1920 in Tangerang, Pamanukan, Sukabumi, Ciasem, Kuningan (Jawa Barat), Pekalongan, Gombong, Semarang (Jawa Tengah), Mojokerto, Sidoardjo, Kediri and Jember (Jawa Timur), (ANRI, 1981). There might be a direct linkage of the Javanese rural unrest and land colonization in Sumatra although it is inconceivable that such a coincidence could posit a causal relationship.

The perception that land colonization is not only driven by some demographic reasons but also aimed to be a kind of social experimentation is also conveyed by ORSTROM (1980) in their report:

*“Lampung’s destiny has been a prodigious one. Devoid of human inhabitants up to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this southernmost tip of Sumatra was to become, in the 20<sup>th</sup>, the privileged experimental zone for all the forms of organized colonization ever elaborated in the framework of the Dutch kolonisatie or the Transmigration program of independent Indonesia. The voluntary development policies were so successful there that today the government has been forced to take preventive measures in order to protect the natural environment and to rely upon the local offices of the Transmigration Ministry to encourage emigration to the other islands in the archipelago.”*

The Dutch land colonization program that is perceived by ORSTROM as a social experimentation experienced several changes since its beginning in 1905 until the Javanese arrival in 1942, (ORSTOM, 1986, 83-87). Heijting, the architect of land colonization program, says that: “Javanese emigration can only be successful by establishing ‘little Java’ in Lampung”.<sup>4</sup> The conceptual idea on which the

4 Kingston (1990).

land colonization program is based – known as the “Javanese paradigm” – in principle is aimed to create a Javanese rural community in Lampung. The Javanese are relocated into an area that is considered by the Dutch as an empty land in the middle of local communities in Lampung as noted by Kingston (1990):

*“In recreating the Javanese landscape, the government allotted about 1.5 bouw (1 bouw= 0.709 ha.) of land per family and encouraged wet rice cultivation by subsidizing irrigation. The government intended that the pioneer settlements engage in food production and did not encourage export commodity crop production; the Dutch image of what Javanese villages ought to be like overshadowed what they could be like. It was the ideal type of Javanese village, conveyed by the village elite and embraced by the colonial officials that defined the manner in which transmigration was implemented on the ground.”*

Heeren (1979) argues that the reason for Heijting to relocate the Javanese in an area that is separated from the local communities was not primarily to make the Javanese people feel at home but due to the resistance from local communities in handing over their land to the Dutch unjust colonial government. Separating the Javanese communities from the local population, however, implied criticism from Nitisastro (1955: 125, as quoted in Heeren 1979, 17) by which such policy reflects the enclaved politics. Widjojo Nitisastro is of the opinion that the Javanese should be able to assimilate with the local population since both communities are Indonesian citizens. Based on his observation in 1956 in Lampung, Wertheim (1956) finds that assimilation between the Javanese and the local population occurred in practice but it did not turn the Javanese into Sumatran people or Indonesians, but rather be more Javanese with some adjustments to the Sumatran environment.

Kampto Utomo (1974) notes that until 1928 the resettlement pattern of the Javanese indeed followed the enclaved politics where the Javanese are engineered to form their own local governance.<sup>5</sup> Until the *marga* system is

5 Kampto Utomo’s study in Lampung was the basis for his PhD thesis at Bogor Institute of Agriculture where Professor W.F. Wertheim was his supervisor.

revived by the Dutch as “*inlandse gemeente*,” the Javanese communities are governed under the *marga* system. The Javanese communities spread out very fast ranged from Gedong Tataan to the west, and occupying places such as Pagelaran, and to the south encroaching the areas surrounding Rawa Kementara. In the western part, starting from Pringsewu (1926) that later on transform into a Javanese concentration, and to the north encroaching areas of Way Sekampung. The encroachment of Javanese in Lampung practically halted during the Japanese occupation but resumed immediately after the Japanese left (1942), and the recognition of Indonesian sovereignty by the Dutch in 1949. According to Kampto Utomo (1974) the reason for resuming the land encroachment by the Javanese in Lampung was primarily due to the communication and interaction between themselves with their relatives in Java run smoothly as people visited one another or sent letters that eventually encouraging the unstoppable, voluntary transmigration.

The waves of Javanese resettlement in Lampung, as Wertheim observed in 1956, eventually created some social tensions with the local population in which case the land competition inevitably increased:

*“This situation leads to an increasing resistance of Sumatrans to the way in which resettlement has been carried on. Such resistance may seriously hamper further transmigration efforts. Thus it can be stated that the absorptive capacity of the outer islands is not only restricted by spatial and technical but also by social factors as well.”*

Who are actually the local communities in Lampung resisting such Javanese encroachment? Referring to the definition used in the 2000 Population Census, those are: Orang Peminggir (6.42%), Orang Pepadun (4.22%) and Orang Abung Bunga Mayang (1.28%) Suryadinata et.al., (2003: 18.) In their research on the local communities in Lampung, ORSTROM (1986: 91) identifies at least four groups: Orang Abung, Orang Menggala Tulang Bawang, Orang Pubian and Orang Pesisir. The migrant groups originating from South Sumatra, as identified by

ORSTROM are: Orang Ogan, Orang Sumendo, Orang Way Kanan and Orang Mesuji. In relation to the Javanese settlers, these people could be categorized as the local population or simply called Orang Lampung or the Lampungers.

Wertheim’s observation in 1956 is relevant to the wider political context after the Dutch left Indonesia. After the independence, the administrative system at the local level began to change in 1950 following the rapid change in the political system at the national level. The change in the land ownership system (previously organized through the *adat* (customary) laws but then the national laws) is one of the sources of dissatisfaction among the local population. The reorganization of *marga* (from the local government hierarchical structure into the new autonomous institution called *negeri*) also triggered social tensions. The *negeri* comprises several *marga* including the Javanese communities that reside into the respective areas. (Heeren, 1979). According to the national laws, a *negeri* should be created based on democratic principles rather than by the customary laws. Therefore, a Javanese could be the head of a *negeri* insofar as he/she is elected democratically.

The various changes related to the new arrangement concerning local governance caused local grievances against the national government. Both the regional rebellion in Sumatra Barat, Sulawesi Selatan and Sulawesi Utara under the banner of PRRI/Permesta in 1956-1958 paved the way for local populations in Lampung to articulate their feelings through a petition to stop the transmigration program which is launched in the *Adat* Conference, firstly in Palembang (January 1956) and then in Bukittinggi (March 1957).<sup>6</sup> In response to the threatening political situation in 1959, President Sukarno, supported by the military forces, announced a decree to return to the 1945 Constitution, and arbitrarily dissolved the Konstituante that was preparing a

<sup>6</sup> According to Heeren (1979: 50) the abolition of transmigration program was also one of the demands of PRRI/Permesta.



new constitution. Under this administration, the *negeri* and the *marga* systems are abolished as well, and all local administrative arrangements are organized by the district governments.

As the regional rebellions finally reduced the frequent resistance of local population in Lampung against the Javanese settler, transmigration is also practically halted due to the budget constraint of national government. Indeed, the program is stopped due to the arbitrary change of power from Sukarno to Suharto following the 1965 national political tragedy. In the 1970s, the transmigration program re-implemented under Suharto's New Order regime in which Lampung was one of the major transmigration destination areas.<sup>7</sup> Here, the nationalization project of local government is reshaped by the Law No. 4, 1974 concerning the regional level government, and the Law No. 5, 1979 concerning the village level government. The uniformity process of local government throughout Indonesia proceeded almost without any significant resistance from the local population as Suharto arbitrarily appointed military officers to be both the district heads and the provincial governors.<sup>8</sup>

## THE JAVANESE IN LAMPUNG AFTER THE NEW ORDER

The step down of Suharto, a Javanese, from power in May 1988 is described by a foreign observer as the end of the 'Last Sultan' in Indonesia (Loveard, 1999). Nonetheless, Suharto who held almost absolute power for more than thirty years is not considered as the Last Javanese King. Although Suharto's style of government is strongly associated with the Javanese political culture (Pemberton, 1994), only the Yogyakarta's Sultan is popularly known as the Javanese King.

7 The following is the national number of families moved under transmigration programs and the percentage. Repelita I (1969-1974): 11397 KK (29%), Repelita II (1974-1979): 4500 KK (8%), Repelita III (1979-1984): 42876 KK (12%), Repelita IV: 1984-1989: 17893 KK (9%), Repelita V (1989-1994): 12515 (5%), Repelita VI (1994-1997): 8412 (4%). Tirtosudarmo (2001: 212).

8 In Lampung from 1973 to 1998 the governors are always a Javanese military general: Sutiyoso (1973-1978), Yasir Hadibroto (1978-1988) and Pedjono Pranyoto (1988-1998).

The collapse of Suharto's authoritarian political regime is perceived as the end of a centralist government that emphasized too much uniformity in the arrangement of local government. It is therefore quite understandable that one of the immediate demands in the aftermath of Suharto regime should be for political decentralization and regional autonomy.

Several new regional laws and regulations are created to support the implementation of a decentralization policy to open up the political space for the local populations to articulate their wishes. Under the new political space local populations began to mobilize their local identities to reclaim what they conceived as their local rights. *Adat* or customary laws, that are totally repressed under Suharto administration, revived by now. The local populations reclaimed their land ownership and organized their right to have their own local government and leaders based on the *adat* laws. In Lampung, local intellectuals actively reinvent their traditions in order to provide the justifications for their political claims such as the sons of the soil (*putra daerah*). They have reinvented traditions – to borrow Hobsbawm's terminology – through several projects such as rewriting the history of Lampung, reviving local customs, and teaching the Lampung language. Such activities, however, have implied limited impacts and are still in the early stages.

Migration of the Javanese to Lampung has occurred for more than a century so that Lampung has become demographically and culturally a kind of Javanese province outside Java. In many places such as Pringsewu and Metro for example, Javanese has become the lingua franca. In this regard the question put forward in the title of this paper "The Javanese.... locals or strangers?", seems to be relevant here. As the ORSTROM (1986) study has shown the majority of Javanese in Lampung comprises the second, the third even the fourth Javanese generations. These "Javanese-Lampung" as they are called do not even know where their Javanese ancestors originally came from. The Javanese have

dominated various positions and occupations, within the government offices, in the universities and local parliaments, as well as in the private sectors. As the position of the governors and the district heads are now contested through direct elections, the Javanese should be quantitatively the winners if they politically exploit their ethnic identities to win the elections. In contrast to such political configuration, the Lampungers would not mathematically vanquish the Javanese in elections though they could exploit their claim as the sons of the soil.

The new electoral system allowing the direct election of local leaders paves the way for the local population to mobilize their local identities to influence the election processes. In such a situation Lampung provides an interesting case as the majority of its population is Javanese and the local population is a minority. In the last gubernatorial election, the candidates used cultural symbols to attract votes. Interestingly, the Javanese candidates are lost to the local Lampung candidate. This reality could be interpreted as that the Javanese voters – that is the majority – apparently are not attracted to the Javanese candidate, and in fact they chose the local candidate as their governor. How can we explain this phenomenon?

According to Wertheim's (1959) observations on Lampung in 1956 says, the Javanese identity developed not according to the expectations of the designers of land colonization or transmigration program. Both the designer who wanted the Javanese to retain their Javaneness by engineering the enclaved politics, and other designers who expected the Javanese to be the agents of assimilation to create an Indonesia-ness in Lampung; should have disappointed by the reality as the Javanese maintain their Javanese-ness but be modified into the Sumatran environment to some extent. To be consistent with Wertheim's study, the Javanese in Lampung turn out to be the "Jawa-Lampung" or "Japung". This new identity of Javanese-Lampungers is a result of more than a century of Javanese cultural

transplantation into the Lampung environment. Indeed, the Javanese identity in Lampung is so much different from the Javanese in Solo or Yogyakarta the Javanese on the northern coast of Java or the Javanese in Suriname or New Caledonia.

The political participation of the Javanese in Lampung as reflected by their decision to vote for the local candidate instead of the Javanese candidates; indicates their pragmatism in their daily lives. For the Javanese it is not important what the ethnic identity of the candidate is insofar as he or she is perceived as a capable leader to foster peace and welfare to the society. The current euphoria in many communities to create a new district in Lampung for instance is also not a big deal for the Javanese as they might think that whatever happens, they are the majority in anyway.

## CONCLUSION

Javaneness, unlike Chineseness, has not turn into a political identity. Some attempts done by a few Javanese elite groups to form a Javanese nationalism are proven to be unsuccessful because Indonesian leaders deliberately developed a civic instead of an ethnic based nationalism (ethno-nationalism). The Javanese have submitted their ethnic identity in favor of the trans-ethnic and national identity though they are demographically the dominant ethnic group in Indonesia. In other words, Javaneness transformed into merely a social and cultural identity rather than political identities. In the era of the post-Suharto political decentralization, as the case in Lampung has shown, the Javanese seem not to be interested in mobilizing their ethnic identity as it has been excessively taken for granted by many other ethnic groups in Indonesia.

Apart from the historical fact that the Javanese have relegated the idea of Javanese nationalism, in reality, they have already gained some economic and political important positions in Lampung. Their votes are always decisive to the local election results. In Lampung, the issue

of ethnicity is an elite issue while in contrast laymen, either Javanese or non-Javanese, pay no attention to such topic. Tradition is exercised by the local elites because they foresee some political opportunities provided by the new political developments in the post Suharto administration. The discourse of Lampungers as the sons of the soil (*putra daerah*) has increased in the last ten years, and indeed there is a common question to the Javanese, "how should they respond to such increasing politics of identity in Lampung?" Based on my short fieldwork in Lampung, I have come to several arguably premises regarding the main questions put forward in the title of this paper, "The Javanese in Lampung: Strangers or Locals?"

Firstly, the Javanese in Lampung are not really concerned about their ethnic identity. Secondly, if tensions and conflict occur in such a way, the source is not really ethnicity but rather the rivalry over various economic resources especially the land ownership. Thirdly, Javaneness apparently could not be mobilized for supporting the politics of identity in Lampung. Fourthly, the Javanese and Javaneness are certainly not static and homogeneous but diverse and constantly shifting in response to the changing environment. Fifthly, the Javanese in Lampung have created a new identity viz., the "Javanese-Lampung" or "Japung," that could be considered as the local identity. Yet, such thing is no longer relevant because they are somehow regarded as strangers.

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