



CONDET AS A BETAWI CULTURAL HERITAGE AREA AND THE LIFE OF ITS COMMUNITY (1976-1988)

Adrian Farsyah¹, Iklima Refindriana², Muhammad Luthfi Eko Nur Prasetyo³,
Rifqy Zahran Destame⁴

Jakarta State University, Indonesia

Address: JL. Rawamangun Muka Raya No. 11, RT 11, RW 14, Rawamangun, Pulo Gadung,
East Jakarta, DKI Jakarta, 13220.

Author correspondence: Farsyahhaddad@gmail.com

Abstract : This study examines the background to the designation of Condet as a Betawi Cultural Heritage Area and the dynamics of the social life of its community during the period 1976–1988. This study was motivated by the rapid development and urbanisation of Jakarta, which had an impact on the social, cultural and demographic changes of the Betawi people as the indigenous population. The study used a historical method with a descriptive-narrative approach through the stages of heuristics, verification, interpretation and historical writing. Data was obtained from secondary sources such as books, archives, theses and previous relevant studies. The results of the study show that the designation of Condet as a Betawi Cultural Heritage Site in 1976 was a strategic policy of the DKI Jakarta Provincial Government under the leadership of Ali Sadikin to protect the environment, settlement patterns, and Betawi culture amid the tide of modernisation. However, infrastructure development, urbanisation, and increasing population heterogeneity triggered significant social changes, including shifts in livelihoods, reduced plantation land, and cultural assimilation, particularly for the Arab ethnic group. These conditions contributed to the weakening of Betawi culture in Condet, eventually leading to the revocation of its cultural heritage status in 1988. This study concludes that the preservation of local culture does not only depend on government policies but also requires active community participation in order to maintain cultural identity amid the dynamics of urban development.

Keywords: *Betawi Community; Betawi Cultural Heritage Site; Condet; Social Change; Urbanisation*

BACKGROUND

The rapid development of Jakarta over the years has made it one of the most multi-ethnic cities in Indonesia. Reflecting on its history, Jakarta, formerly known as Batavia, was founded by J.P. Coen in 1619. At that time, Jakarta was already an area inhabited by various ethnic groups and races, including Javanese, Sundanese, Arabs, and Chinese. During the reign of Governor-General Daendels from 1809 to 1811, there were 60,000 native inhabitants living in 18 villages in Batavia. The 1814 census data in Raffles' book *The History of Java* also states that Batavia was the area with the largest number of slaves, reaching 18,972 people, followed by Surabaya and Semarang with 4,488 and 3,682 people, respectively. Thus, since the colonial era, Jakarta has indeed been a strategic location inhabited by various ethnic groups, as supported by the following table.

Table 1. Jakarta Population in 1930 Based on Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Population of Jakarta	Percentage
A. Indigenous		
Betawi	778.953	47,9
Sunda	494.547	30,41
Javanese	142.863	8,79
Malay	8.293	0,51
North Sulawesi Group	3.882	0,23

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Minang	3.204	0,2
Maluku Group	1.263	0,08
Batak	1.263	0,08
Depok & Tugu Community	998	0,06
South Sumatra Group	817	0,05
Madura	397	0,02
Others & Unknown	7.063	0,43
Subtotal	1.443.543	
B. Non-Indigenous		
Chinese	136.829	8,41
European	37.504	2,30
Others	8.243	0,50
Total Non-Indigenous	182.576	
Total	1.626.119	100

Source : Castle, 2007: 24-25 as cited in the research
Syarfina M.N., & Ana Windarsih (2011:175)

As the capital city, Jakarta was indeed established to become a global metropolitan city. This is reflected in the efforts made, even from the Soekarno administration until now. Since the VOC occupation of the country, Jakarta has always received a larger share in various aspects, including ideas and funding, so it is no surprise that the VOC made it the centre of administration, government and development. As a centre of development, Jakarta was then dubbed a pilot project for other cities (Windarsih, 2013). Behind this diversity, Jakarta is also inhabited by its original inhabitants, the Betawi tribe. The Betawi tribe are considered the indigenous people of Jakarta, so they often refer to Jakarta as their birthplace and hometown (Rizkiyah, 2018). However, this diversity has caused the Betawi tribe to slowly be marginalised from Jakarta, as supported by Rahmawati (2022), who highlights the condition of the Betawi tribe in Jakarta, which does not dominate in terms of either role or population.

The Betawi community is spread across various areas in the city of Jakarta, one of which is the Condet area, East Jakarta (Rizkiyah, 2018). In line with this, Elfatryani (2023) also revealed that Betawi cultural civilisation has close connections with the Condet area. Mellatoa in Setiawan (2019) states that the existence of the Betawi and Betawi Condet tribes can be seen through certain cultures, such as language, dialect, food, and beliefs. In addition, Betawi Condet art has undergone a process of acculturation that is clearly reflected in several things, such as the art of lenong, whose songs contain a mixture of Chinese and Betawi songs.

The strong Betawi culture in Condet led Ali Sadikin, the Governor of DKI Jakarta at the time, to designate this area as a Cultural Heritage Site (Hidayat, 2010). This was stated in Decree No. D. IV. 1511/e/74 concerning 'The Determination of Villages to be Developed/Expanded and those to be Maintained as New Residential Areas in the DKI Jakarta Region', followed by Decree No. D. I-7903/a/30/75 concerning the 'Confirmation of the Designation of Condet-Balekambang, Batu Ampar, and Kampung Tengah as fruit-producing areas'. These two decrees were then reinforced by the Governor's Instruction No. D. IV-99/d/11/76 on the 'Formulation of the DKI Government Policy Plan and Work Procedures for the Condet Cultural Heritage Project', thereby officially designating the Condet area as a Cultural Heritage area in 1976. Although the letter did not explicitly state that Condet was designated as a Betawi Cultural Heritage area, it implied the

cultivation of Betawi culture, leading the general public to believe that the Condet area was designated as a Betawi Cultural Heritage area (Taranggono, 1992).

Based on this description, it was determined that the scope of this study would be the Condet area between 1976 and 1988. This period was chosen because Condet was designated as a Betawi Cultural Heritage Site in 1976, which was then revoked in 1988 because it was considered to limit the development of Condet (Nurizki, 2020). The focus of this study is on the social life patterns of the Condet community and the background to its designation as a Betawi Cultural Heritage Site. This study aims to identify and understand the background to the designation of the Condet area as a Betawi Cultural Heritage Site, as well as to reconstruct the dynamics and developments that occurred in the social life of the Condet community during its designation as a Betawi Cultural Heritage Site.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is descriptive-narrative in nature and was written using historical methods. Kartodirdjo (1992) explains that descriptive-narrative is a form of writing that offers descriptions and constructions of the past with stories as explanations. This is in line with Miftahuddin's (2020) idea of descriptive narrative. Meanwhile, according to Mardalis in Putri (2021), the historical method is a method used to investigate and analyse past events objectively and systematically. Kuntowijoyo (2018) explains that historical research consists of five steps, namely topic selection, heuristics, verification, interpretation, and historical writing.

The data and sources used in this study are secondary data obtained from books, theses, and previous studies discussing similar themes. The author obtained these data and sources from the National Library of Indonesia and the internet. All of the data and documents were then collected and analysed in depth using literature study and interpretation techniques based on the historical research process described by Kuntowijoyo (2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. The Origins of Betawi Cultural Heritage in Condet

Condet is an old village in East Jakarta that is home to the Betawi ethnic group. The name Condet itself has various toponymic origins. According to Zaenuddin (2018), the word 'Condet' is derived from the word 'Ci Ondet', which is the name of a tributary of the Ciliwung River. In Sundanese, the word 'Ci' means river or watercourse, while 'Ondet' or 'Ondeh' is a type of tree, with the Latin name *Antidesma diandrum* Sprg., which belongs to the *Antidesmaeae* family (Fillet, 1888:128). It is said that this tree grows along the rivers in this area, and its fruit is edible. Furthermore, the local community believes that the name Condet is related to a mystical figure who has a scar on his face. This mystical figure is believed to have often been in the Batu Ampar, Balekambang, and Pejaten areas. Rizkiyah (2018) revealed that some people believe that this figure was Prince Geger or Ki Tua, but no sources or concrete evidence have been found to explain this in more detail.

The use of the word 'Condet' to refer to this area is recorded in various sources and historical archives. One such source is the travel notes of Abraham van Riebeeck when he was still serving as Director-General or Governor-General of the VOC in Batavia. These notes describe van Riebeeck's journey with his entourage along the Ci Ondet tributary on 24 September 1709. This description is written in a sentence that reads 'Over mijn lant Paroeng Combale,

Ratudjaja, Depok, Sringsing naar het hoodft van de spruijt Tsji Ondet', which means 'Through my land in Paroeng Combale, Ratudjaja, Depok, Sringsing, towards the headwaters of Ci Ondet.'

Furthermore, the name Condet is also found in the will of Prince Purbaya, which states that Prince Purbaya bequeathed several houses and a number of buffaloes in the Condet area to his children and wife. This was then confirmed and legalised on 25 April 1716 by the notary Reguleth. In addition, Ruchiat (2018) adds another source that discusses a similar matter, namely the resolution of the company's leadership on 8 June 1753 in Batavia, which explains the sale of 816 morgens (\pm 52,530 hectares) of land in Condet for 800 ringgit to Diederik Willem Freijer. Administratively, there are three villages in the Condet area, namely Balekambang, Batu Ampar, and Kampung Tengah, with a total area of 6.11 km², or about 47% of the area of the Kramatjati sub-district.

Setiawan (2019) explains that the Dutch were the first to develop the Condet area as a fruit plantation until 1949, when it was handed over to local farmers. This made the local community's livelihood dependent on the plantation's produce. Junior (2004) highlights the life of the indigenous people of Condet, known as devout Betawi Muslims. Their lives are always accompanied by the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah, as reflected in the many religious activities, congregational prayers, and Majelis Taklim (religious gatherings). In addition, traditional Betawi houses in Condet also have their own characteristics. In terms of basic materials, many elements of these houses are made of jackfruit wood, durian wood, and teak wood, with floors made of smoothed clay. The front is generally equipped with several chairs, a guest table and a well in the yard, while the rest is planted with trees, such as salak and dukuh. This is in line with the findings of Taranggono (1992), who noted that until the 1960s, the Betawi people in Condet had a distinctive culture, including in terms of house architecture, dialect, and art, which created their own values in life.

Over time, increasing urbanisation triggered population density accompanied by rampant development. Condet was one of the areas that felt the impact; the construction of a highway that divided Condet in 1972 significantly changed the physical appearance of Condet. Taranggono (1992) assessed that the presence of this highway had an effect on increasing the frequency of population mobility, which in turn stimulated the emergence of new settlements, as had happened previously. Responding to this, Ali Sadikin, the Governor of DKI Jakarta at the time, tried to pay special attention to his people, especially the lower-middle class, through his policies. This policy was aimed at protecting the existence of green areas on the outskirts of the city and their inhabitants, namely the Betawi people. Therefore, Ali Sadikin initiated the Condet area as a cultural heritage area to protect and preserve the Condet environment as a producer of Jakarta's distinctive fruits, while also maintaining its cultural originality.

Subsequently, Ali Sadikin issued Decree No. D. IV. 1511/e/74 concerning 'The Designation of Villages to be Developed/Expanded and Those to be Maintained as New Residential Areas in the DKI Jakarta Region', followed by Decree No. D. I-7903/a/30/75 on the 'Confirmation of the Designation of Condet-Balekambang, Batu Ampar, and Kampung Tengah as Fruit-Growing Areas'. These two decrees were reinforced by the Governor's Instruction No. D. IV-99/d/11/76 concerning the 'Formulation of the DKI Government's Policy Plan and Work Procedures for the Condet Cultural Heritage Project', so that in 1976 the Condet area was officially designated as a Cultural Heritage area, consisting of the sub-districts of Balekambang, Batu Ampar, and Kampung Tengah.

Rizkiyah (2018) explicitly assesses this policy as an effort to preserve and restore the authenticity of the surrounding environment and buildings, which are considered rich in

knowledge; to protect and preserve the cultural heritage environment and buildings from future destruction; and to promote a deeper understanding that the environment and culture must be preserved and maintained as much as possible in order to encourage growth and public image of urban life so that it can continue to be enjoyed by future generations.

B. Social Life of the Condet Community

Condet is one of the densely populated areas in the Kramatjati district of East Jakarta. Originally known as a plantation area, it has made a significant contribution to Jakarta's economy through its high export of agricultural products. This has led to the continued development and progress of Condet, accompanied by migration and changes in the community's way of life (Zahnd, 1999). As time went by, this area, which was originally inhabited by local communities, slowly transformed into a more densely populated area, as seen from the number of residential areas and public facilities, followed by shopping centres, cafes, and schools. It is no surprise that this area has now become one of the contributors to traffic congestion in Jakarta.

As part of East Jakarta, the indigenous people of Condet are considered part of the Betawi ethnic group. This is reflected in several aspects, such as cuisine, music, and other customs that are still preserved by the local population today. The local community's efforts to preserve Betawi culture have succeeded in making Condet a cultural area and reserve, which was inaugurated by Ali Sadikin as the Governor of Jakarta at that time, through Governor Decree No. D. IV-1511/e/3/74 and reinforced through Governor Decree No. D. I-7903/a/30/75.

Its rapid development has slowly caused many of Condet's original residents to move to surrounding areas, such as Lenteng Agung, Pasar Minggu, and Depok. In addition, many of the Betawi people of Condet were relocated to the Srengseng Sawah area to be used as a new Betawi Cultural Heritage Site after Condet. Gradually, the decline in the population of the indigenous people of Condet was taken advantage of by residents from various other backgrounds who were able to occupy the area. Therefore, this has made Condet a multicultural area inhabited by people from various ethnicities and tribes, especially Arabs. Many of the Arabs in Condet depend on trading for their livelihood, as can be seen from the many Arab shops selling religious accessories, perfumes, and so on, which line the area from Rindam Jaya to PGC (Cililitan Wholesale Centre).

The existence of the Arab ethnic group in Condet is inseparable from the history of Islam's arrival in Indonesia, which is estimated to have occurred between the 12th and 14th centuries AD. According to various sources, the first wave of Islam's arrival in Indonesia was carried out by Yemeni traders, particularly from the Hadramaut region, where the majority of the population were traders, sailors, and religious leaders from the Bani Alawiyyin clan. The Hadramaut community is known as one of the poorer inland Arab tribes, who traded to meet their daily needs while also spreading Islam (Yunita, 2017). They took advantage of information about Indonesia, which at that time was an international trading area under Dutch East Indies rule, to seek their fortune. Over time, their steadily increasing income gradually led them to settle in Indonesia. Dutch regulations classifying certain ethnicities and groups forced Arabs to gather in one area and form an Arab settlement. Gradually, the growing Arab population was considered a threat to the survival of the VOC, until finally the Dutch issued the Wijkenstencil law, which was aimed at dividing certain ethnic groups into various regions led by their respective heads (Saidah, 2015).

Jakarta, which continued to experience development and construction, became one of the areas affected by the spread of the Arab ethnic group. They initially lived in the Pekojan area of West Jakarta. The increasing number of Arab ethnic people who arrived and married local people

slowly increased their population. This was supported by the 1885 population census found by Van Den Berg (2010), which showed that the number of Arab descendants on the island of Java exceeded 10,888 people. Amaruli (2018) assessed that although the increase in the Arab ethnic population was considered a threat to the VOC, their presence did not have any significant political significance for the Dutch East Indies government.

However, the Dutch East Indies government still considered them a threat to the VOC, which gradually led to the introduction of various new regulations. These regulations forced the Arab ethnic group to disperse to various areas in Jakarta, such as Grogol, Kwitang, Tanah Abang, and Condet, which is now known as the Arab neighbourhood in Jakarta. According to Alatas (2010), the Arab community in Condet relies heavily on the trade sector and has become a source of Indonesian migrant workers (TKI). Although their Arab culture is very strong, they continue to assimilate with the local population in order to form a cohesive community, in addition to their efforts to spread Islam (Ajami, 2016).

As an immigrant community, one vital aspect that the Arab community must consider to socialise with the Condet community is language and art. Therefore, many of them study the Indonesian language and arts so that they can always blend in with each other. To date, the majority of the Arab community in Condet are fluent in Indonesian, and many of them no longer speak Arabic because they have lived in Indonesia for a long time. In addition to language, arts are also an essential thing they need to learn in order to socialise with the local population. Therefore, to this day, there are many forms of local arts that are combined with Arabic nuances, including gambus and marawis, which are often found in religious gatherings, weddings, and so on (Widarti, 2010).

C. The End of Betawi Cultural Heritage in Condet

Social change is an integral part of the dynamics of society as social beings. Continuous interaction can encourage acculturation and cultural assimilation. In the process of acculturation, different cultural elements interact without losing their original identities, while assimilation tends to blend cultural elements until their original identities fade. In many cases, assimilation causes minority groups to lose their cultural identities due to the dominance of other cultures. This phenomenon occurred in the Betawi community in Condet. Intensive social interaction with immigrant groups, especially those bringing Arab cultural influences, has slowly shifted long-established Betawi cultural practices. The Betawi community's openness and hospitality towards immigrants has accelerated the assimilation process, resulting in Betawi values, traditions, and customs being abandoned or altered. Consequently, Betawi culture in Condet is gradually losing its position as the primary identity of the local community.

Historically, Condet was known as an area synonymous with Betawi culture, characterised by the presence of traditional Betawi houses, extensive salak gardens, and a variety of local traditions. In 1976, the DKI Jakarta Provincial Government designated Condet as a Betawi Cultural Heritage Site with the aim of preserving Betawi cultural identity amid the tide of modernisation. During this period, Condet became the centre of various Betawi cultural activities, such as Betawi Eid celebrations, traditional weddings, and the development of traditional arts such as lenong, mask dance, and gambang kromong. However, since the 1980s, social and economic changes have begun to erode the authenticity of Betawi culture in Condet. Rapid urbanisation in Jakarta caused many agricultural lands and salak orchards to be converted into residential and commercial areas, transforming the landscape of Condet from a rural area into a

densely populated urban area. Massive infrastructure development also accelerated social change and weakened the economic base of the local Betawi community.

These conditions have forced the indigenous Betawi population to be economically marginalised and choose to move to other areas that offer a lower cost of living. One of the main destination areas is Srengseng Sawah in South Jakarta. This migration has increased the heterogeneity of Condet's population while accelerating the decline of the Betawi population in the area (Sudarmo, 2018). In Srengseng Sawah, the Betawi community sought to rebuild their social and cultural life by preserving Betawi customs, traditions and lifestyle. Entering the 2000s, Srengseng Sawah developed into a new centre of Betawi culture in South Jakarta. Various aspects of Betawi culture, such as house architecture, everyday language, culinary traditions, and traditional ceremonies, are still preserved by the Betawi community living in the area (Prasetyo, 2022).

However, modernisation and globalisation have also influenced the younger Betawi generation, who tend to live a modern lifestyle, resulting in a decline in interest in local traditions (Haris, 2021). In the 2010s, development and population growth in Srengseng Sawah increased again. Although this has had a positive economic impact, modernisation has also raised concerns about the erosion of Betawi cultural character. In facing these challenges, the Betawi community in Srengseng Sawah continues to strive to preserve its cultural heritage through cultural activities, language and customs preservation, and the involvement of the younger generation in various cultural activities (Haris, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The designation of the Condet area as a Betawi Cultural Heritage Site in 1976 was a strategic policy implemented by the DKI Jakarta government during the governorship of Ali Sadikin in order to preserve Betawi culture amid the rapid development of Jakarta. The policy taken by the DKI Jakarta government played an active role in preserving the traditional values of Betawi culture as reflected in social life, architecture, and local arts. However, economic development and urbanisation in Jakarta, particularly in the Condet area, led to social changes and demographic shifts among the Betawi community in Condet. Local cultural changes in Condet were also accelerated by the assimilation of Betawi culture with the culture of immigrant ethnic groups, namely the Arab ethnic group.

The status of Betawi Cultural Heritage in Condet was officially revoked in 1988, marking the end of the government's efforts to preserve Betawi culture in the Condet area. Nevertheless, the spirit and efforts of the government in preserving Betawi culture in Jakarta continued through communities that moved from Condet to the Srengseng Sawah area, which later developed into the centre of New Betawi culture, replacing the Condet area. Thus, the dynamics of Condet during the period 1976-1988 reflect that cultural preservation requires collaboration between government policy and the active role of the community in maintaining cultural continuity and local identity amid the tide of modernisation.

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