

ISBN: 978-979-3969-43-5

ENVIRONMENTAL GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF GEOGRAPHY
UNIVERSITAS GADJAH MADA
BULAKSUMUR, YOGYAKARTA 55281



PROCEEDING

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON THE FUTURE OF URBAN
AND PERI-URBAN AREA**

Yogyakarta, Indonesia - July 11th – 12th, 2011

**Editors : Prof Dr. Hadi Sabari Yunus M.A., DRS,
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PERCEPTION OF URBAN RESIDENTS ABOUT THE TRADITION OF BURYING FAMILY MEMBERS IN THE YARD: The Case in The City of Gorontalo

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Abstract

Since establishing a new province on 16 February 2001 pursuant to Act No. 38 of 2000, Gorontalo City, as the capital city, have experienced a rapid growth in both population and physical city. As we know, the development of cities are affected by 6 (six) factors: (a) accessibility, (b) public services; (c) land characteristics, (d) land owner characteristics, (e) regulatory measures and (f) developers initiatives. But, there are interesting things happening in the city of Gorontalo, the local wisdom of Gorontalo society is regarded as one of the factors that influence the physical changes of the city, namely the tradition of burying family members on the yard. In this study, the perceptions of both migrants and local society about the tradition will be explored.

This study uses ecological approach. Its relationship with the object of research used surveys because in this study people's perceptions about the tradition of burying family members on the yard will be revealed. Analysis used in this study is qualitative analysis.

This study was drawn with 128 samples representing 16 villages as the representation of 49 villages in research area. The result shows that 72.66% disagree with the tradition and only 27.34% agree. 94.53% of respondents are not willing to buy houses with graves in the yard and tend to buy land and then build or buy new housing, and only 5.47% are willing to buy an existing home grave. This, of course, accelerates the physical development of Gorontalo City because of the 94.53% of respondents who disapprove this, 55% of them have bought houses/vacant land to build. Perceptions of respondents who have already bought houses with graves in them are 67.97% of respondents intend to move the graves, and only 32.03% of which have no problem of the graves.

Keywords: traditions, graves, physical changes

Introduction

Geography is a science concerning on the shape and feature of the Earth's surface either the relationship between humans or the relationship between human and surrounding environment, and learning all aspects of problems within. In the other hand, geography is called as a science which learns a region with all aspects within (Bintarto and Surastopo, 1979).

City, as a geographical form, always experiences changes both physical and non-physical aspects from time to time (temporal). There are two main factors which mostly contribute in those changes i.e. the factor of demography in one side and the demographical aspects (population's activity) in the other side. The demographic factor becomes the most important considered from its side of quantity. The change of population number in a city is determined by "natural increase" and migration (Yunus, 1987). The city population growth brings serious spatial consequence on the city's life i.e. the existence of increasing space demands for settlement.

The cities development in Indonesia has the same characteristic with other cities in other developing countries i.e. the existence of disorder and the tendency of becoming chaotic either

seen from the products or the processes (Wibisono, 2010). This chaos is caused by the high city's population growth and its activities especially due to the ongoing urbanization flow.

It means that there are still many people from both small cities and villages living and looking for jobs in big city. Nevertheless, the problems in urban area will always rise and become harder. Urbanization is not only characterized by the cluster of population in one town, but also by the population sprawl to the fringe. It also influences the city's physical development (Hariyono, 2007).

This problem is also experienced by almost all of cities in Indonesia including the city of Gorontalo, which is the capital city of Gorontalo Province. This province is the result of area spreading from North Sulawesi Province according to Acts No. 38 Year 2008, which was issued by the Minister for Internal Affairs and Regional Autonomy on 16 February 2001, so it changed the status of Gorontalo City from the Local Activity Center into the National Activity Center (RTRW).

This status change significantly affects the city's development i.e. Gorontalo City which experiences both physically and non-physically development and change. One of the indicators is the population number's growth which can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. The Population Number of Gorontalo City

Year	Population Number
1990	119.566
1995	121.669
2000	135.074
2005	156.390
2009	182.861

Source: Statistics Center Bureau (BPS) and Gorontalo in Numbers

From Table 1, it is known that the population number in 1990 is 119.566 people and is increasing into 121.669 people in 1995, and then becoming 135.074 people in 2000. This means that there is an increasing population number for 15.508 people in 10 years (1990-2000). If the population number in 2000 is compared with the one in 2009 i.e. 182.861 people, then there is an increase of 47.787 people in 9 years only.

This population growth happens either normally or because migration. Migration happens both from outside Gorontalo City but still within the Province of Gorontalo and outside Gorontalo Province. These attracting forces are due to the recently wide-opened occupation chances in urban areas. Migrants are temporary and permanently. The permanent migrants are generally in productive age. This certainly is influencing the natural population growth. It indirectly influences the increasing needs of settlement area. Land clearing for settlement happens individually and collectively i.e. new settlement complex built by developers.

One of the influencing factors of the rapid increase of new settlement in Gorontalo City is a tradition i.e. burying the members of family in the yard. Houses with this condition become less interesting to be bought by other families. Besides, there is another belief of building no houses/offices/business on the ex-burying land, because the spirits will keep bothering although moved gracefully. As the consequence, migrants tend to open/build new houses in un-

built land and agricultural area. This absolutely affects the city's physical change in Gorontalo City.

Literature Review

The Concept of City

A city is a very interesting subject due to the complexity of possessed problems. This causes many disciplinary sciences to have special studies on urban areas with main characteristic of non-agricultural life. This is the difference with the non-urban cities. City is a dynamic settlement, either viewed from social, economic, cultural or spatial sectors. Two main factors are known as the determinants of the high dynamics of the city's life i.e. the demographic factor in one side and the factor of population activity in the other side.

The demographic factor refers to the demographic perspective in which the number of city's population, especially in developing country like Indonesia, has higher population growth if compared with national population growth. This is a common phenomenon due to the determinant of city's population growth, which is not only a natural growth but also immigration. Meanwhile, the determinant of national population growth is the natural growth (Yunus, 2005:56).

According to Mamas (2000), the higher population growth in urban areas is mainly caused by the increasing population migration to urban areas in Indonesia. According to Saefullah (1995), the existing migration is a reflection of the uneven distribution of growth and the imbalance of interregional facilities.

The city's population growth which gradually and highly increases brings serious spatial consequence on the city's life i.e. the increasing demand of space for settlements. Most of cities in Indonesia experience serious problem in fulfilling the increasing space needs, meanwhile, the availability of open space is still possible for accommodating the population but the functions of city becomes more limited and lessened. The population flow to the city and the increasing population due to natural process happen in a long period; therefore, they cause the densification processes of population, settlement and non-settlement buildings in the city which grow out of control.

Within the study of Lee (1979 in Yunus, 2005), it was elaborated that there are 6 factors which highly influence the process of space development. These factors are: (a) accessibility; (b) public service; (c) land characteristics; (e) land owners' characteristics; and (f) developers' initiatives.

For Gorontalo City, beside these six factors, there is another factor which assumed to also contribute in city's physical change i.e. tradition. There is a tradition in Gorontalo City i.e. to bury the deceased members of family in the yard. This absolutely affects the sale value due to the less anxiety to buy. Therefore, people tend to clear a new space for settlement which has consequence on land use change.

Research Method

Geography has a very important contribution in development, especially the regional-based development due to the nature of the object of geography i.e. geospheric phenomena. The main task of a geographer is to identify the regional problem, understand the environmental factors (abiotic, biotic, social, economic, and cultural) which influence directly and indirectly, identify the relationship between the influencing variables and determine the born of regional problems, identify the negative and positive impacts from the existing and future problems, and finally find the alternative solution either preventive, curative, or innovative.

This research used an ecological approach i.e. concerns on the local wisdom of the citizen of Gorontalo focusing on their tradition in burying the family members in the yard. Because this research elaborates the citizen's perception on this tradition through interviews, its relationship with the research object is analyzed by survey. This survey was conducted to generalize a huge population. Survey was conducted to be analyzed specifically about the samples of villages and population (respondents) as parts of population. Mantra (2000) described that a research with a high number of respondents can be conducted by questionnaire. Considering the population in Gorontalo City as an enormous research with 49 villages included in 6 sub-districts, the population is sampled. These samples are expected to represent this huge population.

Analysis used in this research is qualitative analysis, while the sampling method is used to observe 16 villages. Population is sampled for 128 samples which represent 18 samples of villages which represent 49 villages existing in Gorontalo City. The sample of population includes population who was born and grown up in Gorontalo City and also migrants. People from outside the city but still within Gorontalo Province are assumed to be migrants.

Result and Discussion

According to the result of questionnaire, there is a conclusion about the perception of Gorontalo citizen both the native and migrants. Based on Table 2, some citizens don't agree with the existence of graves within the yard i.e. 93 respondents or 72.66% of total respondents with 46 respondents or 35.94% of them are the native people and 47 respondents or 46.72% of them are migrants. The reasons of it include 21 respondents (16.41%) that hoping for a public burial site, 20 respondents (15.63%) that still having a family burial somewhere else, 15 respondents (11.72%) that feeling a decreasing aesthetic value of their houses, 12 respondents (9.38%) that feeling a decreasing sale value of their houses, and 8 respondents (6.25) that thinking the inappropriateness with tradition.

Table 2. Disagreeing Citizens with the Existence of Graves within the House Yard

Reasons	Citizens				Total	
	Native	% Respondents	Migrants	% Respondents	Citizens	% Respondents
Still having a family grave	13	10.16	7	5.47	20	15.63
Uncomfortable	6	4.69	11	8.59	17	13.28
Aesthetic	5	3.91	10	7.81	15	11.72
Economic Factor	7	5.47	5	3.91	12	9.38
Hoping for public burial site	14	10.94	7	5.47	21	16.41
Inappropriate with tradition	1	0.78	7	5.47	8	6.25
Total	46	35.94	47	36.72	93	72.66

From 36 respondents which agreeing the existence of grave within the yard, 27 of them (21.09%) think that the graves make them feel close to the deceased, 5 of them (3.91%) reason for the inexistence of a public burial site and 1 respondent (0.78%) think that it is easier to clean the graves, personal reason, and the affection form for the deceased. All of the reasons and related number of respondents are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Agreeing Citizens with the Existence of Grave within the House Yard

Reasons	Citizens				Total	
	Native	% Respondents	Migrants	% Respondents	Citizens	% Respondents
Feeling close to the deceased	18	14.06	9	7.03	27	21.09
The inexistence of public burial site	3	2.34	2	1.56	5	3.91
The grave becomes easier to clean	-	-	1	0.78	1	0.78
Personal Reason	1	0.78	-	-	1	0.78
The form of affection	-	-	1	0.78	1	0.78
Total	22	17.19	13	10.16	35	27.34

The most interesting thing is that 121 from 128 respondents (94.53%) don't want to buy house/land with graves in/on it. As seen in Table 4, 94 respondents (73.44%) think that it is uncomfortable, 6 respondents (4.69%) think that it decreases the utilized space, 6 respondents (4.69%) feel uncomfortable due to privacy reason when the other family members pay a visit to the deceased, 5 respondents (3.91%) think that it is inappropriate with their tradition, and 4 respondents (3.13%) reason that the deceased is not their family members.

Table 4. Citizens Who Don't Want to Buy House/Land with Grave in/on It

Reasons	Citizens				Total	
	Native	% Respondents	Migrants	% Respondents	Citizens	% Respondents
Uncomfortable	54	42.19	40	31.25	94	73.44
Economic factor	2	1.56	4	3.13	6	4.69
The deceased is not a family	1	0.78	3	2.34	4	3.13
Less utilization of the yard	3	2.34	3	2.34	6	4.69
Inappropriate with tradition	-	-	5	3.91	5	3.91
Privacy	2	1.56	4	3.13	6	4.69
Total	22	17.19	13	10.16	35	94.53

Table 5 describes the reason of respondents who want to buy house with grave in it. From 7 respondents who want to, 2 of them (1.56%) reason that they need place to live and other 2 of them (1.56%) reason with economic factor i.e. the house with grave on it costs cheaper. One respondent (0.78%) think it is fine as long as the grave is not inside the house and it doesn't bother the house owner's daily activity, and doesn't care about the grave.

Table 5. Citizens Who Want to Buy House/Land with Grave in/on It

Reasons	Citizens				Total	
	Native	% Respondents	Migrants	% Respondents	Citizens	% Respondents
Need place to live	2	1.56	-	-	2	1.56
As long as the grave not inside	-	-	1	0.78	1	0.78
Economic factor	2	1.56	-	-	2	1.56
Not influenced by the grave	1	0.78	-	-	1	0.78
As long as it doesn't bother	1	0.78	-	-	1	0.78
Total	6	4.69	1	0.78	7	5.47

In Table 6 and Table 7, there are perceptions of respondents when they've already bought houses/lands with graves in/on them. 87 respondents (67.97%) intend to move the existing graves, while the rest, 41 respondents (32.03%), have no intention to move them. From all respondents who have intention to move the graves, 41 of them (32.03%) reasons for comfort, 18 of them (14.06%) reasons for maximizing the yard utilization, 10 of them (7.81%) reason for privacy factor when the family of the deceased come to pay a visit, 9 of them (7.03%)

reason for the decreasing sale value when the house sold with graves in it, 6 of them (4.69%) reason for the deceased which is not part of their family. The rest, 1 respondent (0.78%), wants to move the graves because of tradition, the need to move them, and the inappropriateness of aesthetic side of view.

Table 6. Citizens Who Want to Move the Graves from the Houses/Lands They've Already Bought

Reasons	Citizens				Total	
	Native	% Respondents	Migrants	% Respondents	Citizens	% Respondents
For comfort	17	13.28	24	18.75	41	32.03
Economic factor	2	1.56	7	5.47	9	7.03
The deceased is not a family	3	2.34	3	2.34	6	4.69
Privacy	5	3.91	5	3.91	10	7.81
Land utilization	10	7.81	8	6.25	18	14.06
Tradition	-	-	1	0.78	1	0.78
The need to move the graves	1	0.78	-	-	1	0.78
Inappropriateness	1	0.78	-	-	1	0.78
Total	39	30.47	48	0.78	7	67.97

Twenty five respondents (19.53%) have no intention to move the graves because of sympathy, while 12 respondents try to make a border between the graves and the house. Three respondents (2.34%) don't really care about the graves and another respondent (0.78%) doesn't have intention to move it because unwilling to trouble the family of the deceased.

Table 7. Citizens Who Don't Want to Move the Graves from the Houses/Lands They've Already Bought

Reasons	Citizens				Total	
	Native	% Respondents	Migrants	% Respondents	Citizens	% Respondents
Sympathy	18	14.06	7	5.47	25	19.53
Unwilling to trouble the family	-	-	1	0.78	1	0.78
It doesn't matter	2	1.56	1	0.78	3	2.34
Giving a border between the graves	9	7.03	3	2.34	12	9.38
Total	29	22.66	12	9.38	41	32.03

According to the above results i.e. 94.53% respondents state that they don't want to buy houses with graves in it and tend to buy an inbuilt land or new house and only 5.47% who want to buy them. This phenomenon absolutely fastens the physical development of Gorontalo city. Besides, 55% of them have already had chances to buy new houses/inbuilt lands. This also means that almost all of them have chances to buy inbuilt lands for their houses. Furthermore, most of the inbuilt lands, whether they were owned or bought by the developers, were agricultural area (rice field). The agriculture land is rapidly change or converted into new settlements. Therefore, the tradition of burying family members in yard is believed to contribute in the rapid physical change of Gorontalo City.

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