

**Chinese Indonesians:
Stereotyping, Discrimination and anti-Chinese Violence in
the context of Structural Changes up to May 1998 Riots**

Luciana Sani Kosasih

3303047

Utrecht University

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BKUT	<i>Badan Kontak Urusan Tjina</i> (Contact Body for Chinese Affairs)
Baperki	<i>Badan Permusjawaratan Kewarganegaraan Indonesia</i> (Consultative Body of Indonesian Citizenships)
BKMC	<i>Badan Koordinasi Masalah Cina</i> (Coordinating Body for Chinese Matters)
BPUPKI	<i>Badan Penyelidik Usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia</i> <i>Dokuritsu Junbi Cosakai</i> (Committee for the Investigation of Indonesian Independence Preparation)
GAPI	<i>Gaboengan Politiek Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Joined Politics)
Gerindo	<i>Gerakan Rakyat Indonesia</i> (Indonesian People Movement)
G30S/PKI	<i>Gerakan 30 September PKI</i> (PKI Movement of the September 30 th)
ISDV	<i>Indische Sociaal Democratische Vereeniging</i>
KTP	<i>Kartu Tanda Penduduk</i> (Identity Card)
MPRS	<i>Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Sementara</i> (Temporary Consultative Body of People)
Nasakom	<i>Nasionalis, Agama, Komunis</i> (Nationalism, Religion, Communism)
PAI	<i>Partai Arab Indonesia</i> (Arab Indonesian Party)
PKI	<i>Partai Komunis Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Communist Party)
PNI	<i>Partai Nasional Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Nationalist Party)
PKI	<i>Partai Tionghoa Indonesia</i> (Chinese Indonesian Party)
RMS	<i>Republic Maluku Selatan</i> (South Moluccan Republic)
SDI	<i>Sarekat Dagang Islam</i> (Association of Islamic Trades)
SI	<i>Sarekat Islam</i> (Islamic Association)

THHK	<i>Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan</i> (Association of Chinese Indonesian)
Tritura	<i>Tri Tuntutan Rakyat</i> (Three Demands of People)
VOC	<i>Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie</i> (Dutch trading company in East Indies)
SBKRI	<i>Surat Bukti Kewarganegaraan Republik Indonesia</i> (Letter of Indonesian Citizenship Proof)
SCUT	<i>Staff Chusan Urusan Tjina</i> (SCUT - Special Staff for Dealing with Chinese Affairs)
WNI	<i>Warga Negara Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Citizen)

GLOSSARY

asli	native, indigenous
bangsa	nation, race
orang	person, people
kampoeng	rural area, village
<i>Indonësier</i>	Indonesian (related to native Indonesian)
Inlander	Indonesian (related to native Indonesian)
mata sipit	slanted eyes, typically related to Chinese descents
massa	group of people, mass
passenstelsel	system of passes
peranakan	Chinese-origin people who have been assimilated with native people
pribumi	indigenous people
ruko - rumah toko	shop house: a typical housing style which allows the shop owner to have space for a shop counter at the front of the house and live behind or above it
tjukong	Chinese businessmen in alliance with Indonesian power holders
wijkenstelsel	system of housing areas
tionghoa	Chinese
totok	pure Chinese, China-born Chinese
keturunan asing	foreign descent

1. Introduction

Post-colonial development in Southeast Asia has witnessed the emergence of new states after the Second World War. Almost all of them have a multi-ethnic population. As a consequence of these differences among ethnic groups, most governments established a common strategy of national integration¹ in their nation-building process. This strategy is compatible with the concept of social-nation state which is based on multi-ethnic groups integrated into a community with shared common values (Kellas 1998:3). Indonesia is not an exception. Since the early establishment of independent Indonesia, the principle of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity) has directed its orientation. Despite all the diversities and differences of cultures, religions, customs, even languages and many more, Indonesia is convincing enough in its social integration process.

Indonesia, like other states, faced several challenges due to being a multi-ethnic society. One of the most prominent issues was Chinese ethnicity. In spite of a long historical Sino-Indonesian relation it did not completely succeed in maintaining a stable position for Chinese in Indonesia. Compared to other ethnic groups or other foreign-descent groups, like Arabs and Indians that were seen as brothers Chinese have remained as simply belonging to a “foreign nation”. This perception originates in the Dutch colonial class system, which classified Europeans as the first class, Chinese and other Asian foreigners as the second, and native Indonesians as the last (Suryadinata 1978:116). This will be discussed in the following chapters. Although this notion of Chinese as “Foreign Orientals” should have been ended after Dutch colonialism, the distinctive label of separated group remained

“*Sekali Cina, tetap Cina.*” (Once a Chinese, always a Chinese)

(Coppel 1983:8)

Another argument for separating the Chinese as alien nation was geographical. Javanese Ambonese and all other ethnic groups have their own historic place in the land, but not the Chinese. Their ancestors came from the Far East. Ironically, this put Chinese Indonesians in a separate position in the Indonesian united society in which over time they were discriminated and subjected to ethnically framed violence.

This thesis treats the issue of Chinese Indonesians and the violent acts committed against them. What made, why, and how are Chinese-origin Indonesian citizens still considered as “Chinese”, and therefore, more easily targeted for violation?

¹ There are five kinds of integration which are national integration, territorial integration, mass and elite integration, values integration, and integrative behavior. The highest integration level is considered to be national integration. See Weiner 1967, pp. 150-166.

1.1. Problem Definition: Riots and Violence toward Chinese Ethnic in Indonesia

Considering this notion of a separate group, Chinese are seen through stereotypes and prejudices. Seemingly insignificant, yet influential, by the nature of stereotypes Chinese always had to deal with the consequences of bearing this label. The first implication was that Chinese were treated differently from all other ethnic groups in Indonesia. Different treatments were closely related to discriminatory acts. During the colonial time, Chinese were placed in a different class, suffered residential segregation, and were required to hold a pass to travel outside the Chinese areas. Discriminations against Chinese were continuously in the next periods of Indonesian history. It was getting worse during the New Order. The government then officially established legal discriminatory regulations against Chinese (Lindsey in Lindsey and Pausacker 2005:50-56). This was in contradiction with the assimilation process where Chinese-origin people were “forced” to abolish their cultural background of and became more “Indonesian” (Coppel, Mabbett and Mabbett 1982:8).

This assimilation process did not provide a solution for the Chinese issue. In Indonesian history, between 1912 and 1998, anti-Chinese violence and riots had been quite commonplace. These brings us to a major question: How to explain that the same people who were in certain periods involved in violent conflict can in other times live in relatively “peaceful condition”? (Gaay Fortman and Kortekaas 1998:362) Of course here we need to be careful with the notion of peaceful condition itself; either it refers to negative peace or positive peace (Galtung 1969:172-174,183-185).

The Chinese were somewhat left in peace for quite long period of time, which is actually more fitting with the definition of negative peace – the absence of violent conflicts. Yet, it is important to note that even during the absence of anti-Chinese riots, the prejudices and discriminations continued. During chaotic periods of political turmoil and economic instability, anti-Chinese violence and riots will take place. These are always marked with anti-Chinese yells, provocative slogans, and scapegoating acts. Anti-Chinese riots during early Indonesian nationalism up to the independence, widespread anti-Chinese riots after the PKI coup d'état in 1965, and dreadful anti-Chinese violence in May 1998 Riots were part of the of anti-Chinese violence.

Among those riots, May 1998 was the most influential as the turning point of anti-Chinese sentiment. After these riots Soeharto resigned from his thirty-two years ruling period. From then on Chinese Indonesians have got better treatments. The government of Indonesia has abolished several discriminatory regulations against Chinese ethnic². Also, the May 1998 Riots

² When Habibie replaced Soeharto as president, he suggested the conversion of word “Tionghoa” which has a better connotative meaning, to replace the use of word “Cina”. As addition, he issued *Inpres no 5 Tahun 1999*, about the abolishment of SBKRI, an official document of Indonesian citizenship proof for Chinese Indonesians. Later, President Gus Dur issued *Surat Keputusan No 13 Tahun 2001* and *Keputusan Presiden No 6/2000* to allow the celebration of Chinese culture in public sphere and adopted Chinese New Year as Indonesian national holiday.

inspired many Chinese Indonesians to be more active in the struggle for their equal rights, both in the sight of law and society³.

Observing a repeating pattern of parallelism of anti-Chinese violence and structural changes in politics and economy, along with strong the sense of Chinese scapegoating based on stereotypes and prejudices, which will be treated in this thesis.

1.2. Research Question and Sub-questions

My major research question will be:

“How did anti-Chinese stereotypes, discriminations, and scapegoating, in the context of political change and economic stability, contribute to the outbreak of ethnically framed violence against Chinese Indonesians culminating in the May 1998 Riots?”

To provide an answer to the question above, I formulate several sub-questions, as the following:

- “What kind of political changes and economic instability happened in recent Indonesian history from 1945 to 1998?”
- “How was the position of Chinese Indonesian within Indonesian society before 1998?”
- “What kind of stereotypes and discriminations performed against Chinese Indonesian from historical colonial period until 1998?”
- “How did those stereotypes and discriminations stimulate scapegoating towards Chinese Indonesians?”
- “In what ways did political changes and economic instability open the opportunity to legitimize the use of ethnically framed violence against Chinese Indonesian, particularly during May 1998 Riots?”

1.3. Theoretical Debate

After the end of Cold War, violent conflicts have moved to new trend of intrastate conflicts. Most of the conflicts that occur in this period are officially classified as “ethnic conflict” (Eriksen 2002:2). However, to understand such conflicts under the label of ethnicity, multi-perspective approaches are required. Ethnic conflict cannot be understood as just conflict between ethnic groups (Brubaker 2004:35-37). Differences between ethnic groups could not serve as the ultimate reason of ethnically framed violence. Because if ethnicity is the only

³ Some numbers of associations and organizations were established by Chinese Indonesians after May 1998 Riots. For example: SNB (Solidaritas Nusa Bangsa or Solidarity of the Nation), GANDI (Gerakan Anti Diskriminasi or Anti Discrimination Movement), SIMPATIK (Solidaritas Pemuda Pemudi Tionghoa untuk Keadilan or Solidarity of Chinese Youth for Justice), and so on. In general, they voice the struggle of Chinese Indonesian equality in rights and any aspect of society, and also abolishment of Chinese discriminations.

reason for ethnic conflict, how could it explain that people from different cultures can live for long periods together in the same multi-cultural state? Or, how is it possible for people who live in peace for a long period of time, suddenly to become involved in violent conflict? (Gaay Fortman and Kortekass 1998:362) The “ethnic” quality of “ethnic violence” does not refer to the violent act itself, but is attributed to recognize violent behaviors of perpetrators (2004:42-43).

In order to understand ethnic conflict or ethnically framed violence, one should observe the processes, mechanisms, and context in which these conflicts happen. Ethnically framed conflicts often relate to stereotyping. Members of ethnic groups have a “cultural knowledge” which particularly means a notion of values and virtues of the other group, and if it affects the relationships with members of other groups, it may be perceived as ethnic stereotyping (Eriksen 2002:23). Stereotyping usually leads to ethnic prejudices or inaccurate perceptions of others (Rettew et.al 1993). Despite of the untrue sides, stereotypes will always be part of relationships between ethnic groups.

Starting from Giddens’s structuration theory, social phenomena, including dynamics and conflicts of ethnic groups, are more than random human acts; they are influenced by the social structures among them. This is what he called the “duality of structure” in which ethnically framed conflicts as social performances should be situated in the context of time and space (Giddens 1984:2).

Ayoob observes that ethnic conflicts, especially in developing countries, relate closely to two major changes in structures namely: politics and economy (Ayoob 2001:127-128). First, political changes have a risk of increasing or changing communal demands. If government fails to address the new demands, it will open opportunities for communal tension and ethnic conflicts (Gurr 1994:163-164). Second, economic changes may result in inequalities. If those inequalities are put under ethnic cleavages, it will intensify clashes between ethnic groups, as quoted:

“Simple inequality between rich and poor is not enough to cause violent conflict. What is highly explosive is ... ‘horizontal’ inequality: when power and resources are unequally distributed between groups that are also differentiated in other ways - for instance by race, religion or language. So-called ‘ethnic’ conflicts occur between groups which are distinct in one or more of these ways, when one of them feels it is being discriminated against, or another enjoys privileges which it fears to lose.”

(Annan 1999)

According to Galtung’s conflict triangle, in order to transform conflict from its latent level into the manifest level, it needs to be underlined by assumption, attitude, and frustration (Galtung 1996:72). At this point, ethnic conflict as a behavioral manifestation of conflict is seen as a product of the underlying assumptions and attitudes in the form of stereotypes and prejudices, together with frustration due to structural changes.

1.4. Methodology

One of the crucial challenges in doing literature research is the selection of reliable and related literature. I began my thesis by brainstorming keywords of my research questions and creating a list out of it. As starting point, I selected books, journals, and other published writings in local university libraries, according to my keyword list. Due to their limitation of published writings collection related to my topic, I found very limited sources of publications available. Therefore, I continued my source findings to publications in Indonesian language. Convincingly there were quite sufficient numbers of books and articles addressing some points in my keywords, but it would take quite a long time to order the books and send them here. Some books were not sold in Indonesian public book shops because they were only sold by request to certain organizations. Articles in Indonesian publications were the best choice at that time to provide necessary data. Later, I found more related sources in the library of KIT Amsterdam. The interesting thing is most of the significant and accurate data I found were mainly recorded or published outside Indonesia.

In the same time, I succeeded to establish a contact with a lecturer in Indonesia who has written several articles on Chinese-Indonesian topic. It was very difficult to find more reliable sources to discuss my research due to the sensitivity of the issue. Then I switched to a more informal way by involving in daily conversation and doing observation in Chinese Indonesians' attitude and behavior to know their perception and position regarding the issue. Since it was not meant to be interviews, the people to whom I discuss with were in familiar circle, like relatives and acquaintances. My purpose of having several talks with them was mainly to understand their insights about this issue. Based on what I observed, if they knew that my questions were meant for thesis writing, some of them had a tendency to answer with what they thought I might want to hear. I had to keep that in mind to select the quality of received information.

The analysis of research data is mostly based on literature reading. Only very limited information taken from discussion and observation were used in this thesis writing.

1.5. Outline of Thesis

After the introduction, the following chapter two discusses the major structural changes in politics and economy from 1945 to 1998 in order to give context of time regarding anti-Chinese violence. Chapter three will cover the position of Chinese Indonesians in social, political, and economic aspects in the Indonesian society. I will aim to give basic understanding of Chinese Indonesians' vulnerability compared to other ethnic groups in Indonesia and how they were particularly distinguished from other ethnic groups. Then chapter four will discuss discriminations against Chinese Indonesian in many aspects of lives and livings. Here I will describe the discriminations since the Dutch colonial period which still

influence and somehow, authorized current discriminations. The last chapter five will treat stereotypes and prejudices toward Chinese-origin Indonesian, and how they became manifested in more aggressive, violent acts during the time of structural changes. Above all, my thesis aims to explain the Chinese ethnic issue in Indonesia in more analytical and comprehensive way.

2. Political Turmoil and Economic Instabilities

To understand the issue of Chinese-origin people in Indonesia and how they have been violated severely during anti-Chinese riots, it is necessary to look closer to a general background of when and in which aspects the riots took place. This chapter will discuss about significant periods of Indonesian history when political and economic aspects were challenged. As a starting point, anti-Chinese violence usually occurred during period of political turmoil and economic instability. This background will be divided into three different periods of changes. First, the period after independence, in which led into solid basic to understand the struggle for power in Indonesia. Second, the issue of PKI and its so-called alleged coup d'état, in which opened possibility to cease Soekarno's communist-related regime. Third, I will end with looking into Asian crisis in 1997 and how it affected New Order regime. Finally, this chapter may provide fundamental thinking of how structural changes related to Chinese Indonesians issue and violence performed against them in the following chapters.

2.1. Post-Independence Period of 1945 - 1965

After proclaiming independence in 17 August 1945, the new Indonesian Republic faced the problem about how to unite the nation. Indonesia consists of numerous regions each with its own customs, values, and traditions. Historical records indicated the existence of animistic local tribes as well as ancient, culturally developed princedoms which in later period turned to more complex composition of Indonesian society. The Republic faced not only the challenges of every other multi-cultural, multi-nation society, but also the impact of Marxism and various religions, with often fundamentalist minorities, such as Mohammedans and Christians that made the state-building even more complex. The fear of Javanese political domination blurred the whole process. As Ricklefs stated clearly in his overview, Indonesia was characterized by poverty, limited education levels, and authoritarian traditions (Ricklefs 1991:237).

The political dissatisfaction was later manipulated by those who were interested in structural changes (Feith 1973:597). As a result, large numbers of separatist movements - that nearly all demanded a regional state - rose against the Indonesian central government. From 1948 on, Darul Islam in West Java demands an Islamic State of Indonesia. Later, in April 1955 members of the former Royal Dutch East Indies Army proclaimed the RMS, the Republic of South

Maluku. Other rebellious movements were active in Sumatra, Sulawesi and other regions; they all demanded some form of independence. They all had links with the center of national politics.

The principle of Liberal Democracy itself did not really help to establish a solid form of government. During the years 1950 - 1959, seven cabinets were formed and disbanded. None of these was able to provide a firm basis for Indonesian political and social stability. Idealism and principles reigned where practical governance was required. From the idealist's perspective, the failure of Liberal Democracy was the result of insufficient institutional backup. In other words, there was no democratic tradition and the economic base was very weak after the damages of war and the ensuing unrest. Feith named the period of 1949 - 1957 the "time of high and rising political unrest" (1973: 597).

The failure of the Liberal Democratic System led to a new establishment of political power. President Soekarno attempted in 1957 to bring political and social stability by forming a concentrated, centralized power with the president as the executive. This was contradictory to Liberal Democracy that focused on the parliamentary process. The new Guided Democracy emphasized the role of leaders to obtain its major aim and establish a stable atmosphere in politics. Soekarno introduced "Nasakom", an abbreviation of *Nasional* (Nationalism), *Agama* (Religion), and *Komunis* (Communism), as a fusion of three fundamental elements in Indonesian politics: the army, Islamic groups, and Communists. One of the main problems to be solved in that period was achieve more balance by industrialization and bring structure to the economy closely related to stability in politics and social aspects (Thee 2003:16).

But instead of solving the underlying problem, Soekarno chose to "maintain balance and unity within the dynamics and the sharpening tensions of the opposing forces, in particular between the army and communist" (Soebadio and Sarvaas 1978:273). He provided a new "Eight-Year Overall Development Plan" that focused on both political and economic stability. Yet, this so-called "Planned Democracy" did not work in the ongoing economic system. The massive expenditures for military campaigns to maintain power over West Irian in 1961 -1962 and "Crush Malaysia" in 1963 - 1966, in combination with the fragile political establishment made the Plan fail. It could not be implemented (2003:17). Production decreased dramatically. Exports and imports came to a halt, hyperinflation of more than 600 percent and highly increasing prices of basic supplies were the main causes for the society to rise against Soekarno's policy⁴. The failure to address economic demands and reconcile the opposing forces of the army and the communist brought Soekarno's power to the end.

It should not be forgotten that Indonesia is part of the world and is influenced by it just as it influences the world. While concentrating on what happened in Indonesia we need to

⁴ Slowly led to the end of 1965, social movements, particularly by the students, propagated certain claims toward Soekarno's government. One of famous social movements was Tritura in January 1966. Tritura means *Tri Tuntutan Rakyat* (Three Demands of the People) which demanded dissolution of Indonesian Communist Party, expulsion from the cabinet of PKI elements, and lower prices of basic supplies and economic improvements.

remember that the cold war was very much dividing the world. Indonesia was one of the founders of a heterogeneous group of countries that did not want to be part of the cold war: the non aligned countries. The communist and non communist countries both tried to influence Indonesia to join their side often by means of illegal activities. It became almost impossible to distinguish between fact and fiction. The truth often lost.

In this chapter we will not delve too deep into that side but always keep it in mind.

2.2. Political Turmoil in 1965: Coup d'état of the Indonesian Communist Party and the Rise of the New Order Regime

The economic collapse was followed by a struggle for power between the army and the PKI; *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (Indonesian Communist Party). In September 30, 1965, six high military commanders with the rank of general were abducted and murdered. The exact conditions of these murders were never revealed but soon the blame was attached to the so-called *Gerakan 30 September* (30 September Movement), a group of officers uniting left-wing elements in the army. This movement was assumed to be related to the PKI and its mass organizations which were subsequently officially blamed for the coup d'état (Cribs 1990:41).

Then Major General Soeharto took over command. He appointed himself as supreme commander of the army under the label of saving the state, without consulting or asking for approval President Soekarno. He mobilized the forces and eliminated the left wing officers. He ordered their execution and declared them responsible for the alleged 30 September coup d'état.

This accusation was clearly expressed by Soeharto with the given abbreviation of *G30S/PKI*, *Gerakan 30 September PKI* (30 September Movement PKI). Along with the leading support of the army and horrible stories of torture and mutilation of the six generals, he succeeded to fuel anti-communist struggles. Soon, anti-PKI demonstrations broke out and violence rose and this involved mass violence and killings of people whom were suspected to be PKI members or belong to its affiliations. These violent acts were started at Aceh, and then gradually spread over Central and East Java, and even reached peaceful Bali. The army continued and fuelled the elimination and killing suspected communists all over the country side.

It also encouraged *Ansor*, the youth wing of *Nahdlatul Ulama*, one of the well-known strict Islamic groups, to kill so-called PKI members (Sundhaussen 1982: 215-216). The same techniques that were used earlier by Senator McCarthy in the US worked in Indonesia. This hysteric, unlawful, anti-communist violence, mainly instigated by the lead of army, has killed an estimated number of 78,000 to one million people across Indonesia. It destroyed the PKI and all its affiliated organizations (1982: 218).

The G30S/PKI event sidetracked Soekarno and his power came to an end. Politically weakened and blamed to have close relations and trust in PKI as a partner, Soekarno was

slowly but surely, urged to transfer his political power and leadership, as well as military power to Soeharto.

In 1966, as the anti-PKI mass-demonstrations continued, Soekarno attempted to maintain his power by forming a new cabinet which soon failed and was accused of being a *Gestapu* cabinet⁵ (Poesponegoro and Notosusanto 1992:546-547). His action did not prevent his further collapse. Only a few days later a mass, consisting mainly of students, started violent street protests against the government. Mainly, their demand was the fulfillment of *Tritura*⁶.

Then Soekarno planned a three-day series of meetings to stabilize the situation. The first meeting, on 10 March 1966, was held among the leaders of political parties. He succeeded to persuade them to support the presidential authority by signing a declaration against demonstrators' urge to undermine the presidency. However, the next day when the second meeting was on the way, suddenly he heard the palace was surrounded by unidentified troops. Afraid for his life he fled hastily to Bogor where, later that night, he signed the document in which he officially transferred the highest authority of state to Major General Soeharto⁷. After receiving legitimate power, Soeharto took quick steps by banning the PKI on 12 March. His action was received with excitement and euphoria by the demonstrators and brought stronger support for his beginning maneuver of power.

On 27 March, Soeharto's power became more visible when he was appointed by his new cabinet as the interim deputy prime minister for security and defense. The cabinet also appointed more people with that were affiliated to Soeharto, such as: Adam Malik and Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX. By emphasizing the abolishment of the PKI, placing a ban on Marxism teaching and promising guaranteed economic development, the flow gradually went in Soeharto's direction.

⁵ In 21 February 1966, Soekarno announced the revised Dwikora cabinet after reshuffling the old cabinet. This cabinet was formed during extremely high tense political situation to address the concern of people or *Tritura*. However, this new form cabinet even more led into deeper dissatisfaction and disappointment towards Soekarno's government. Within the new Dwikora, Soekarno unexpectedly replaced people who strongly opposed PKI, General A.H. Nasution. On the other hand, he appointed people who were suspected to have affiliation with PKI, like Ir. Surachman and Oei Tjoe Tat, SH, to be ministers of the cabinet. His decision incited anger among striking students, which later named the cabinet as *Gestapu (Gerakan Tiga Puluh September)* Cabinet, as an insulting title derived from Nazi's Gestapo.

⁶ *Tritura* means *Tri Tuntutan Rakyat* (Three Demands of the People) which demanded dissolution of Indonesian Communist Party, expulsion from the cabinet of PKI elements, and lower prices of basic supplies and economic improvements.

⁷ The document was known as *Supersemar (Surat Perintah Sebelas Maret – Order of the Eleventh March)*. This was meant to give Soeharto the authorization to do any necessary acts to restore chaotic situation during 1965 – 1966. In reality, it was the transfer of executive power from Soekarno to Soeharto. Yet, there is still an ongoing debate on the originality of the context of the draft.

By 11 August, Indonesia officially signed a treaty in which the intention was expressed to rejoin the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and also the confrontation with Malaysia was ended. This was in defiance to what Soekarno did before.

In his Independence Day speech of the August 17th, Soekarno stated again that Indonesia would not rejoin UN and moreover, he did not transfer his power to Soeharto. His statement was ridiculed and many criticized him publicly.

On 10 January 1967, Soekarno submitted *Nawaksara*, a document of his version of the September 30th event. Generally, he expressed his surprise about what he called the alleged PKI coup d'état and rejected to be taken as the sole responsible for the chaotic situation and the ensuing economic deprivation. Once again, the public was against his lead. The MPRS, Indonesian parliament at that time, rejected *Nawaksara* and decided that Soekarno had failed his mandate as president. Therefore, there would be a special session for the case against Soekarno's and his responsibilities.

After tense debates, on 12 March 1967 the MPRS decided that Soekarno's regime was over and held him de facto responsible. The same day, Soeharto was appointed as acting president. A year later, on 27 March 1968, Soeharto was officially appointed as the second president of Indonesia that began his era of New Order Regime. Soekarno lived under house arrest in Bogor until his death in 1970.

2.3. Asian Economic Crisis 1997 and the Collapse of New Order Regime

“Soekarno's language of revolution shot grossly out of control, in a dangerous reciprocity with neglected, unguided economy. [...] Soekarno needed to feed his people. But instead of filling their stomachs, he tried to inflame their imagination with [...] the mythic past and cumbersome intellectuality about continuing revolution. [...] Soeharto could be judged adversely for the opposite: cultivating full bellies and empty spirits.”

(Friend 2003:92-93)

In contrast to Soekarno's idealism, strong nationalism, revolutionary rhetoric and economic failure, Soeharto's Western orientation was able to establish a period of economic stability and rising development, as well as solid, centralized government (Friend 2003: 87-93). As argued in his point, Thee concluded Indonesia's rapid and sustained growth during Soeharto's rule can be classified as “an able economic team experienced in crisis management and enjoying the confidence of President Soeharto” (2003:31). This great success cannot be separated from the roles of the international financial community, such as IMF, World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank. The favorable support from these international organs is well-attached to Soeharto's acknowledgment that the anti-Western and anti-capitalist policies by Soekarno had been proven self-destructive. Therefore, since the beginning of his

debut, Soeharto had chosen to welcome Western influence. He led the Indonesian economy in line with the world economy (2003:32).

This step had brought forward several changes in the Indonesian economy. Particularly, the role of foreign aid and foreign investment in the private sector in some ways are contradictory to the political views of many of the former leaders (Hollinger 1996:8). According to Sadli, the new conciliatory policies towards the Western countries resulted in an important flow of foreign aid to the country which in turn resulted in balancing payments and government budget (Sadli 2001:122).

However these Western-oriented policies brought further consequences than the merely economic stability. After a while, the Indonesian economy was criticized for being too much depending on foreign aid and foreign private capital inflows, including foreign investment. According to these critics, the Indonesian economic became highly vulnerable by being linked to world dynamics. Critics stated that this economic system allows the rich to grow richer while the poor stay poor. The widened disparities of economic status open possibilities for “the rise of predatory conglomerates and monopolies and the proliferation of rampant corruption” (Thee 2003:36-37).

The critics were proven precisely right. In 1997, when Thailand’s Bath party collapsed the country bankrupted because of the foreign debt’s burden. Most Asian countries, particularly in the South East, were hurt by the Asian financial crisis. In the beginning, Indonesia was still able to maintain its healthy economic growth. But the fact that many Indonesian companies were borrowing capital in US Dollars influenced the exchange rate of the Rupiah. When Thailand floated the Bath in July 1997, Indonesian authority widened trading band of Rupiah from eight to twelve per cent. The attack of the crisis hit Rupiah exchange rate severely. Before crisis, Rupiah exchange rate to US Dollar was relatively stable around Rp.2,500 to US\$ 1. The rate rapidly plunged to over Rp.11,000 to US\$ 1 per January 1998, and later reached spot rates over Rp.14,000 during January 23-26 and trading again over Rp.14,000 for about six weeks within the period of June to July 1998. On 31 December 1998, the rate reached nearly Rp.8,000 to US\$ 1. Nevertheless, Indonesia had lost 13.5 per cent of its GDP of 1998⁸. Companies that had borrowed in US Dollar needed to deal with the declining Rupiah. Many of them tended to buy more Dollars against Rupiah, which later brought worse impact on Indonesian economic collapse. Although the IMF tried to support the national money since October 1997, the fall could not be stopped⁹. All economic achievements earned during the previous decade vanished in a short period. Indonesia was recorded as the country suffering the most severe impact of the crisis.

⁸ For further discussion, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1997_Asian_Financial_Crisis.

⁹ The crisis in Indonesia was known as *Krismon* (*Krisis Moneter* - Monetary Crisis). At the beginning, the government had put several efforts to encourage people to keep their Rupiahs. One of the efforts was the campaign of *Aku Cinta Rupiah* (I Love Rupiah) which publicized by famous artists and public figures. However, all the efforts seemed never enough.

After many strategies in defending internal economic structures failed, Soeharto finally agreed to accept the IMF suggestions on structural reforms on 15 January 1998. But the Rupiah continued to drop. Indonesia suffered from high rates of inflation and increasing prices of basic supplies. Many companies could no longer continue their economic activities which brought great numbers of people to be unemployed. These impacts incited people to express mistrust towards Soeharto's government. His position as solitary power for thirty-two years at last was gradually destructed by the economic crisis. His performance legitimacy disappeared and so did the support for his rule. His regime faded from both internal and international pressure.

This crisis was multi-dimensional crisis because of the wide-spread impact in other aspects, politics and social. Not only the economic failures. Starting in 1997, many riots erupted in different places in Indonesia. Often those riots were aimed directly toward Chinese Indonesians. We will discuss this further in the coming chapters. Most of the riots were about lowering prices for daily goods.

Demonstrations against Soeharto also started. This time students played a significant role in condemning Soeharto's corrupt regime. At the beginning of May 1998, students held peaceful demonstrations on universities all over the county. They were protesting against increasing prices for fuel and prices of basic supply and blamed Soeharto and asked him to resign. These student movements continued and Soeharto reacted harshly on them by putting armed forces toward demonstrators. Later, peaceful demonstrators turned to be violent. During the demonstration in the Trisakti University Campus and Semanggi, police and army fired at the protesters with live ammunition. Many unarmed civilians and students were injured and several were killed. This fueled people's anger and demonstrations against New Order regime became stronger. It resulted in even more violent riots on May 13-15 which we will discuss later. Finally, Soeharto reluctantly resigned his position and the New Order regime came to its end.

Soeharto's New Order became accepted as a regime of successful economic development, but generally was condemned on human rights abuses and wide-spread corruption (Ricklefs 1991:284).

2.4. Conclusion

This chapter describes the political turmoil and economic crisis after the period of independence. The political atmosphere in Indonesia has shown fluctuating dynamics. Starting with the changing cabinets, Soekarno's idealistic regime and the event of 30 September, and finally ended with Soeharto's unexpected resignation after his absolute winning period of power in thirty-two years, reflects how political power in Indonesia from time to time has attempted to find the balance of power in many ups and downs. So did economics. Here we may conclude that there is causal relation between politics and economics. When politics started to change, economics would also suffer from its influence. On the other hand, crisis in

economics would be able to destroy political supreme as well. Besides, both political turmoil and economic instabilities would definitely cause deeper impact in society in providing medium to cultivate stereotypes and prejudices into the legitimate use of violence in the context of ethnically framed issue of anti-Chinese which will be discussed in following chapters.

3. The Position of Chinese Indonesians

“It is impossible to state with assurance [...that] Chinese who are Indonesian citizens, aliens or stateless.”

(Coppel 1970)

The position of Chinese Indonesians in Indonesian society is vulnerable, they are never appointed in high places in government and their personal safety is at best sketchy, in ordinary small violent situations the police usually looks the other way. This happened in history and still happens today, particularly whenever the country is in an unstable condition.

This chapter aims to explain what the position is of Chinese Indonesians, in social, political, and economic aspects. My starting point will be the position of Indonesians with a Chinese background in the multicultural, multi-ethnic, plural society that is Indonesia. Secondly, I will describe the political position and opportunities provided for Chinese Indonesians. Last, my focus will be on the economic aspect. As a result, this chapter will provide a general overview of Chinese Indonesians.

3.1. The Social and Plural Society

“Rwāneka dhātu winuwus Buddha Wiswa,
Bhinnêki rakwa ring apan kena parwanosen,
Mangka ng Jinatwa kalawan Śiwatatwa tunggal,
Bhinnêka tunggal ika tan hana dharma mangrwa.”

Mpu Tantular - Kakawin Sutasoma of the 14th Century

Translation:

“Buddha and Wiswa (Shiva) are two different elements.
They are different, yet how to be acknowledged as different?
Because the truth of Jina (Buddha) and Shiva is solitary,
They are separated, yet united. There is no discrepancy in truth.”

The above quotation is taken from the ancient Javanese book that promoted the spirit of unity between Buddha's and Shiva's followers in the 14th century A.D. The last line of that stanza has become Indonesia's national slogan which officially condensed as "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, Berbeda-beda tetapi Tetap Satu Jua" (Although we are different, we are united)¹⁰. The spirit of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* also inspired the third *sila* (principle) of *Pancasila*, the Indonesian state philosophy that clearly states the unity of Indonesia¹¹. This slogan is worn on army uniforms, represented with a symbol of banyan tree, a tree believed to be sacred. This clearly shows that this slogan has taken a big place in the building of the Indonesian nation-state.

"This principle embodies the concept of [nationalism](#), of love for one's nation and motherland. It envisages the need to always foster national unity and integrity. Pancasila nationalism demands that Indonesians avoid feelings of superiority on the grounds of [ethnicity](#), for reasons of ancestry and skin color."

(Bahar 1995:63-84)

It also proves that since the beginning, Indonesia has been aware of the notion of diversity, the "unity in diversity" is defined in the Dictionary Britannica:

"The Indonesian national motto "Bhinneka tunggal ika" ("Unity in diversity") makes reference to the extraordinary diversity of the Indonesian population that has emerged from the ongoing confluence of peoples, languages, and cultures. The country includes more than 300 different ethnic groups and more than twice as many distinct languages, and most of the major world religions, as well as a wide range of indigenous ones, that are practiced there. Notwithstanding this diversity, most of the people are of Malay ancestry, speak Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian) languages, and profess Islam."

From the early ages, Indonesia, as a nation, has been a multi-religion, multicultural, multiethnic, multi-layered society. Today the society consists of Javanese 40.6%, Sundanese 15%, Madurese 3.3%, Minangkabau 2.7%, Betawi 2.4%, Bugis 2.4%, Banten 2%, Banjar 1.7%,

¹⁰ The slogan of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* is stated on *Garuda Pancasila*, official symbol of Indonesia. This symbol describes an image of the bird of Garuda which holds a white band with a statement of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. Basically, *Garuda Pancasila* is meant to express how Indonesia as a multiethnic, multicultural nation stays in unity among the existing differences. For more details of this symbol, please refer to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pancasila_%28politics%29.

¹¹ *Pancasila* etymologically came from two Sanskrit words, "panca" (five) and "sila" (principle). It is five principles known as Indonesia's fundamental state foundation. It is considered very important, especially during the era of Soeharto in which emphasized the five principles of *Pancasila* in nearly exaggerating way. The third principle is *Persatuan Indonesia* (Unity of Indonesia).

other or unspecified 29.9%. Religions Muslim 86.1%, Protestant 5.7%, Roman Catholic 3%, Hindu 1.8%, other or unspecified 3.4%¹².

Also, from the history of the Hindus and Buddhist empires since the fourth century, to the Islamic empires of the twelfth century, to the modern republic form, Indonesia has shown the world a wide-scope fusion of ethnicities, religions, customs, in a great many aspects of daily life. Chinese ethnicity, seen in this light, could be considered as part of the normal diversity.

Ironically, this so-called Chinese ethnicity has rarely enjoyed a stable, guaranteed position in the ideal Indonesian plural society. Ever since the migration of Chinese in Indonesia which is categorized in three major periods, the Chinese minority was in vulnerable position. Immigration began in the fiftieth century of when Admiral Zheng He was ordered by the emperor to make a trading voyage. The second wave of immigrants dates back to over two centuries ago when the economic development raised an urgent demand for laborers in the mines and plantations when the Opium War created major instability in China. The last wave of immigrants came around the first half of the twentieth century, during the time of the Chinese Civil Wars and the Sino-Japanese War. The first and second migrations were relatively well assimilated, either by intermarriage with local people¹³ or they adapted new customs. Most of the descendants of these immigrants spoke at least one of the local languages and did not speak Chinese (Coppel, Mabbett and Mabbett 1982:2-3). They are named *peranakan Chinese*, who inherited practices from Chinese-born fathers, but also followed native customs and traditions passed on by their local mothers. Undoubtedly, their customs, beliefs, and religions were mixed, as what they perceived as “*too Chinese to be Indonesian and too Indonesian to be Chinese*” (Suryadinata 1978:2-3). More recent immigrants were culturally more Chinese. They strongly maintained their Chinese traditions and backgrounds. These people are called *totok Chinese*.

Relations between Chinese Indonesians and *pribumi* (native) Indonesians were and are always problematic. In the Dutch's colonial class system, it would disadvantage Chinese to assimilate with *pribumi* (*Inlander* - in Dutch), because it made them belong to the lowest-third-class. The second class was for Foreign Orientals, it was most likely referring to Chinese and the first was for Europeans. Because of that reason, assimilation between Chinese and *pribumi* was usually not perfect (Suryadinata 1978:116).

Moreover, in line with the perspective of early practitioners of classic colonial strategy, the Dutch colonial government implemented *divides et impera* (divide and rule) politics by favoring certain ethnic or group thereby corrupting the national system and stability¹⁴. At that

¹² CIA The world factbook 2010

¹³ The Chinese who came to Indonesia in this period typically did not bring their families, but married native women, usually non-Muslims or nominal Muslims.

¹⁴ The politics of *divide et impera* by Dutch colonial government was well-known as the most common strategy in occupying Indonesia. The division aimed to separate people in competing groups, create mistrust among

time Chinese people were thought to be “intelligent, diligent, and capable of overseeing Dutch plantations”. So, many Chinese ended supporting colonial rules and thus gradually worsened their relationship with the indigenous people.

One of the famous examples was Souw Beng Kong, who was known as *Kapitan Cina* (Chinese Captain) of Banten. He arranged a large wave of Chinese immigration to Batavia during his period of power and many of those migrants actively helped to strengthen Dutch domination in Batavia. Ultimately, this support brought instability in the local economy and politics which made the subjection of the sultan possible as well as the occupation of the whole Banten region. Later, Souw’s successors, known as *Majoors der Chinezen* (Chinese Major) were honored by the Dutch colonial government with the title of *Sia* and given regional fiefdoms in specific areas which later became *Pecinan* (China towns) or *Kampung Cina* (Chinese villages). This occupational segregation of Chinese from indigenous people was also matched by a degree of residential segregation (Coppel, Mabbett and Mabbett 1982:3).

As a result, many *peranakan* had influence over land of Java and became wealthy, replacing the aristocratic *pribumi* whose power they took over. From this time, mistrust, prejudices and stereotypes started to grow among the indigenous people who labeled the Chinese as “colonial puppets”. Related to strategy of *divide et impera*, the Chinese minority was not only used as an agent to enforce colonial rules towards *pribumi*, but also as targets of scapegoating in order to distract growing tension towards colonial government.

As stated by Coppel, Mabbett and Mabbett, this was to a large extent the reason why Chinese minority as a whole, remained distinct while, under similar circumstances, Indian and Islamic cultures made a deep impact. During the Dutch colonial period, the position of Chinese was even worsened by the distinctively legal social position from indigenous people. According to the Dutch Ethical Policy which was rather similar to the class system in India, native Indonesian people were categorized as the third class, Chinese and other foreign people, like Arabs and Indians, were the second and Europeans were first class.

The situation was slightly improved when Indonesian independence led the provision for Chinese to be Indonesian citizens “by the passive process of not refusing it”. This provision was acknowledged in 1949 when Indonesian and Dutch governments agreed to grant all Chinese and Dutch subjects that were born in Indonesia or residents there would automatically gain Indonesian citizenship unless they rejected it within two years. Except those that obtained the legal status of being Dutch. During the period of Revolution, there was some violence against the Chinese community and this discouraged quite a few Chinese to accept Indonesian citizenships (1982:5). Often they regretted this later due to the introduction of governmental measures aimed to benefit citizens as against aliens.

Indonesians toward each other, and destroy loyalty to higher authority like local *raja*, princes or dukes. For further information about general implementations of the politics of *divide et impera*, please refer to <http://www.constitution.org/kant/append1.htm>.

When the Dual Nationality Agreement between Jakarta and Peking was raised in 1955, there was a change of procedures of citizenship for Chinese. At that time, Peking claimed that overseas Chinese were still mainly Chinese citizens. Then Indonesian citizens of Chinese origin were required to reject Chinese nationality, and if they did not, they were assumed to choose Chinese citizenships. Although the third wave of Chinese migration in Indonesia brought a stronger so-called Chinese background feeling¹⁵, two third of the Chinese population chose to become Indonesian citizens, few only remained Chinese. Between 1960 and 1962 approximately 600,000 - 800,000 Chinese chose to become Indonesian citizens (1982:10).

However, the case of citizenship has not yet ceased. In 1980, the Indonesian government redefined the boundaries between alien Chinese¹⁶ and clarified the legal status of Indonesian citizens of Chinese origin who had no, or less clear proof of their citizenships. Since that date, the Chinese is considered to be one of the ethnic groups in the framework of Indonesia's diversity. Coppel argues obviously in his perspective: "...the issues outstanding for the Indonesian Chinese will be those of discrimination on an ethnic basis amongst Indonesian citizens rather than those of nationality itself" (1982:5).

The position of the Chinese Indonesians' has remained unstable until the 1990's, and still has not been settled definitively. Hostility against Chinese has not ceased significantly. Prejudices from *pribumi* are used to in determine "how many Chinese should have citizenship and the rights which that citizenship would bring" (1982:3) and furthermore, Chinese Indonesians have become "inevitable scapegoat for economic decline and politics" which will be discussed further in next chapters (1982:10).

3.2. From Political Ground: Revival of Chinese v.s. Indonesian Nationalism

"There are those who say that Soekarno is a nationalist, there are those who say that Soekarno is no longer a nationalist, nor an Islamist, but a Marxist; and there are others yet who say that he is neither nationalist, nor Islamist nor Marxist but a person with his own ideas...Readers, Soekarno is...a mixture of all these "isms"!"

(Soebadio and Sarvaas 1978:273)

¹⁵ As discussed in previous paragraphs, the third wave of migration brought stronger Chinese influence. Many *toto* chose to send their children to Chinese-medium schools (Suryadinata 1978: 15-17). However, compared to Malaysia as South East Asian country which also received large-scale migration of Chinese, Chinese influence in Indonesia was not dense enough. Chinese in Indonesia, especially *peranakan*, preferably oriented to integrate with the new country and culture. In Malaysia for comparison, *peranakan* were too fragile to maintain their assimilation. Many of them reacquired Chinese language and studied in Chinese schools.

¹⁶ There were numbers of Chinese who were trapped into long process of acquiring citizenship and naturalization due to the slow, complicated, and undeniably expensive bureaucratic, since the high fees needed were often caused by a definite demand to bribe corrupt government officials. Therefore, those who had not been confirmed legally as Indonesian citizens were still considered as alien Chinese.

To define oneself according to his political position and concern is considered to be complex. Even Soekarno with his strong notion of political determination still created multi-sided perspective and yet, established a fusion of several views. The similar phenomenon goes along with Chinese Indonesians' political position. In the early twentieth century, Chinese in Indonesia established the first Pan-Chinese organization which was called Tjong Hoa Hwee Koan (THKK). Through this organization, the Chinese consciously distinguished themselves from Dutch or indigenous people. On the other hand, political activities by indigenous people excluded Chinese.

Boedi Oetomo, a former proto-nationalist organization which was formed in 1908, did not admit Chinese members. Sarekat Islam (SI), an organizational-based association of Moslem merchants, was initially formed in order to protect business interests against the Chinese competition. Later, the Indische Partij (1912) and the Indische Sociaal Democratische Vereeniging (ISDV, 1914) were formed. The aim of these organizations was a multi-racial Indies nation, but it did not succeed to attract the Chinese due to the difference in ideas between Eurasian and Indonesian proto-nationalists. Besides, the Chinese of that time were dominantly oriented to Chinese nationalism (Suryadinata 1978:63-65).

In this proto-nationalist¹⁷ stage, the Chinese were seen as “a rich and conservative group standing in the way of native advancement” by both the Dutch and the indigenous population (Williams 1911:38-41). This prejudice resulted in anti-Chinese riots in 1912 and 1918 that will be discussed in coming chapters (Suryadinata 1978:66). Understandably, those riots had incited blaming hostile attitude between *peranakan* Chinese and native Indonesians.

A decade later, Indonesia came to another form of politics and nationalism. This era was marked by the establishment of *Partai Nasional Indonesia*, Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI) which basically continued racial notion from earlier proto-nationalist era. The racial distinction of Indonesian nation was stated clearly within PNI's constitution, as follows:

“...the person eligible for membership in this party are native Indonesians (*orang-orang bangsa Indonesia*)¹⁸ not less than eighteen years old; other Asians (*orang-orang bangsa Asia jang lain*) can be associate members.”

(PNI Constitution Article 4)

From this constitutional statement, PNI clearly distinguished between native Indonesian and *peranakan*. Here *peranakan* was referred to *peranakan* Chinese and Eurasians¹⁹. Therefore, it

¹⁷ Proto-nationalist is the term used to describe early form of nationalism which took form in region-nationalism. For example, many proto-nationalism movement and organization were based on regions or tribes, like Javanese, Ambonese, Sumatran, etc.

¹⁸ *Orang* literally means person while *bangsa* means nation. Both could be used as a word referring to people, race, ethnic group, etc.

was clear that both Chinese and Eurasians were not considered as Indonesians. Dr. Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo, one of PNI preparatory pioneers, proposed to open possibility for *peranakan* to become Central Committee members. His proposal was denied and as a result, he himself could not join PNI (Balfas 1952:101).

Another example was the case of Kwee Tjing Hong, a *peranakan* Chinese businessman who took initiatives to set up a local branch of the PNI in Palembang. As a *peranakan*, he could only be accepted as associate member according to PNI's constitution. However, he did not give up easily and kept himself active in the PNI, even starting another branch in Bangka. When the Dutch authorities arrested some of the PNI's leaders, Kwee was also restrained. Later, he gave up his associate membership in the PNI, because he was bitterly disappointed by the fact that he could not occupy a central position inside the branch which he had formed, simply due to his "nonindigenous" background. He said that his fellow members treated him as Chinese, in other words, an outsider, no matter how much he tried to be *Indonësier*²⁰ (Suryadinata 1978:67). A great many of *peranakan* Chinese had similar notions which led them into separated political views with so-called native Indonesians. Mainly, they became focused on the Chinese-oriented nationalism.

These feelings about Indonesian nationalism gradually changed in the early thirties. Some *peranakan* Chinese leaders, such as Liem Koen Hian and Ko Kwat Tiong, formed the *Partai Tlonghoa Indonesia*, the Chinese Indonesian Party (PTI) in 1932. Initially, they encouraged *peranakan* Chinese to become involved in politics as *Indonësier* which meant to accept Indonesia as their homeland and struggle together with indigenous people for Indonesian independence. This notion was inspired by Dr. Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo's idea. He formed a concept of *Indische Natie* (Indies Nation) which believed that "future Indies nation should be composed of all who considered the Indies their motherland and actively helped to develop it". Based on this idea, Liem claimed to be *Indonësier*.

This claim was not accepted by most of the Indonesian nationalist, secular, or Moslem groups. Soetan Sjahrir who was known as "*internationally-minded socialist intellectual*" used the term of *Indonesische Volk* (Indonesian people) and *Indonësier* in his 1930's writings, referring only to indigenous people, excluding the *peranakan*.

Another example was the case of a public debate between Liem and Dr. Soetomo, one of the Boedi Oetomo pioneers. In 1936, Dr. Soetomo wrote an article in *Soeara Oemoem*, a newspaper of the local party *Parindra*, about his journey to Japan. This article basically admired Japan's development and even argued that the Japanese had originated from Indonesia. Liem criticised Soetomo's article on how he should take into account the aggressive policy of Japan towards other Asian countries and the need to be aware of Japan's capability as an imperialist power. Soetomo bitterly rejected the critics and argued that Liem was a

¹⁹ Eurasian refers to people who had fusion of between Dutch and *pribumi* (native) Indonesian, particularly through intermarriage in previous generations.

²⁰ *Indosier* is the word used by Dutch to indicate Indonesian.

Chinese who had opposed Japan because Japan attacked China. Soon, a number of Indonesians supported Soetomo with several articles in newspapers like *Soeara Oemoem* and *Pewartar Deli*. They condemned Liem's attitude "was not the attitude of Indonesian" (1978: 72). This debate was ended by Dr. Tjipto's letter in *Kebangoenan*, another local newspaper, which defended Liem's position by saying:

*"Liem Koen Hian is an Indonësier, with or without pitji."*²¹

(1978:75).

This debate showed how the Indonesian press at that moment was against Liem, except *Kebangoenan*, who was the representative of *peranakan* Chinese. The foundation of this opposition was most likely prejudices and stereotypes against Chinese. Soon after this Hoesni Thamrin, a member of Parindra, expressed in 1938, in the congress the opinion that Parindra should not be open for membership to *peranakan*. His argument was that although *peranakan* Chinese had assimilated, they were still economically and socially above the indigenous population. Although PTI members considered Indonesia as their motherland and were Indonesian-oriented in their political ideas, they still maintained the Chinese customs and education. Therefore, they could not be accepted as *Indonësier*. Unsurprisingly, Thamrin's proposal was well-accepted by the congress (1978:75).

Later, during the Japanese occupation, the Indonesian nationalist parties established *Gaboengan Politiek Indonesia* (GAPI), a combined political force. GAPI invited PTI and PAI (*Partai Arab Indonesia* - Arab Indonesian Party) to join the force, but once again, only as associate members. PTI refused this offer by replying:

"The PTI is ready to take the responsibilities and consequences as full member of the GAPI but it does not want to be an associate member [...] because it does not wish to become a stepson of an Indonesian mother."

(1978:77)

Although there were several remarks made by the Communists (PKI - Partai Komunis Indonesia) and other left-wing parties like Gerindo (*Gerakan Rakyat Indonesia* - Indonesian People Movement) to include *peranakan* Chinese, the majority of Indonesian nationalists excluded them.

Another point in politics was about the right of a citizen to political participation: the right to vote and stand for election. Although the number of Chinese in Indonesia is too slight to influence the election, their political participation should be notable. In 1954, *Badan Permusjawaratan Kewarganegaraan Indonesia* (Baperki) was formed as an organization by

²¹ *Pitji* is a term used for black velvet cap which is commonly worn by native Indonesia. In other Indonesian meaning, wearing *pitji* can also described the belief of Moslem.

Chinese Indonesians in order to promote understanding of citizenships and end discrimination. It acquired a large participation, particularly from Chinese Indonesians, though it also opened possibilities for non-Chinese Indonesians to take part. Baperki was successful in the 1955 Indonesian election and won several seats in the national parliament. In several years only, it had achieved a system of national education for schools and universities, based on the Indonesian language. This system was mostly organized by education-oriented Chinese Indonesians. But Baperki's leadership had somehow become involved with the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). Right after so-called alleged coup d'état of PKI, the organization was dissolved and many members of it were assumed to be related to PKI. Many of these members were put in prison for the only reason of being office-bearers in Baperki. They did not involve in any coup d'état and even more, very few had any idea what communism was about nor were interested in it. Quoted from Coppel, Mabbett and Mabbett in their report:

“Contrary to the widespread belief outside Indonesia, the Chinese were probably under-represented in the massacre which followed the coup. Similarly, the number of Chinese among the many Indonesians who were imprisoned after the coup was not disproportionately large.”

(Coppel, Mabbett and Mabbett 1982:11)

The scope of Chinese political activities had been shortened since the dismissal of Baperki. From the start of the era of Soeharto's regime, the government has set a policy of totally assimilation-orientation in which an 'exclusive' Chinese organization would be seen as obstacle to the goal. The question went further than just about the Chinese Indonesians' suspected loyalty toward Indonesian government. It reached out a point where national loyalty, pride, and identity required 'absolute' assimilation. Here Chinese Indonesians had to abolish all allegiance and political orientation to China. Even more, in the later period, it meant to erase Chinese social and cultural practices by governmental order to restrict any Chinese-related. But more forced assimilation did not stop the anti-Chinese sentiments. After the rough years of political turmoil from 1965 to 1967, anti-Chinese riots continued to happen in various places in Indonesia. This will be discussed in the coming chapters. The criticism of Soeharto's government was that it was mostly addressed to his sharp distinction of people in political power, who were mostly non-Chinese Indonesians. The Chinese were only allowed to participate in the economic aspects. There seems to be a gradual change nowadays in offering opportunities for Chinese Indonesians, but still only very few are politically active. It is similarly to what Liem had said during his advocating of Indonesian citizenship for the Chinese Indonesian:

”...most of the peranakan Chinese never thought of politics. They did not dare to think of politics. Nowadays if they are asked whether or not they want to be Indonesians, they will be confused.”

(Suryadinata 1978:103)

3.3. Economic: Between Inequality and Limited Opportunities

Looking through the issue of Chinese Indonesians, one might conclude that these Chinese populations have survived in both very well and poorly ways. As discussed before, politically, the Chinese Indonesians have not been given similar opportunities as indigenous people and thus, ended up with very limited participation in politics. Yet, economically, this seems to be different.

Coppel, Mabbett and Mabbett describes as follows:

“Their [Chinese Indonesians] economic strength has raised their living standards as a community well above those of the indigenous people, they have made important contributions in virtually all walks of life, and as a general rule they much prefer living in Indonesia to returning to the land of their forefathers.”

(Coppel, Mabbett and Mabbett 1982: 10)

As mentioned previously, the first wave of Chinese migration to Indonesia was during the period of Admiral Zheng He's overseas voyage which basically organised for trading. And even before the migration, Chinese had been known to have intensive relation with Indonesian in economy and trading. Later, along with Dutch colonialism, Chinese workers were the key elements in building Batavia and cultivating local agricultural areas. Also, when the *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC - Dutch trading company in East Indies) infiltrated Indonesia, the Chinese traders were seen to be reliable partners and therefore, made the relation between the Dutch and Chinese dependable. The Chinese community was the most suitable intermediary traders whom can be used as middlemen vis-à-vis indigenous people.

Dutch colonial government was able to control major economy and crops, and also maintain its superior position toward *pribumi*, because the Chinese were the ones who played a significant role in supplying credit and arranging cultivation of exported local crops, such as rattan, rubber, copra, etc. Soon after, Chinese were considered higher than local people. This was clearly expressed within Dutch categories of class system where Chinese were the second. Even more, in some ways, Chinese position could be perceived as similar to Dutch, because they also paid taxes which were taken into account not only as economic burden, but also considerably privileges. This was a comparable phenomenon to the case of French settlers' resentment in Algeria toward local Christians and Jews whom were considered to be equal (Cook 2001:398).

The relation between Chinese and Dutch colonial government up and above the distinction made to show superiority above native people made the relation between Chinese and indigenous people not amiable. Chinese were portrayed as money-lenders and merchants

according to Dutch authorities and *pribumi*. This prejudice became strengthened when the Chinese were seen to make use of native trade for making their wealth. It caused the negative tendency among *pribumi* to see the Chinese as the ones who took over their economic opportunities (Suryadinata 1978:66).

In the early period of the struggle for Indonesian independence, this full-stereotyping attitude remained still. There was a sharp rivalry between Chinese and indigenous merchants, of which one of the results was the establishment of *Sarekat Dagang Islam* (SDI - Association of Islamic Trades)²² in 1912 in order was issued to protect business interests of *pribumi* and Moslem merchants against Chinese traders. That certain antipathy against Chinese people led to two riots in 1912 and 1918 which basically “was a manifestation of a conflict of interests between local Chinese businessmen and the indigenous merchants” (1978:66). Quoted from Semaoen, one of SI leaders, the racial prejudices did influence wide-scope aspects, as follows:

“Nowadays the life of the natives is worsening; they feel that they are getting poorer and poorer but they can see for themselves that other peoples [bangsa], [particularly] the Chinese, are getting richer. [The Chinese] show off their wealth and contrast it with the poverty of the natives...”

The contrast between the poverty of the natives and the richness of the other people caused the hatred of these natives toward the rich, of whom a large number are Chinese. The hatred of the poor natives towards their rich fellow natives disappeared because they belong to the same race and same religion. What is left is only hatred toward the rich Dutch and the rich Chinese. The hatred toward the rich Dutch is drowned because the Dutch are the rulers and they are very strong, but the hatred toward the rich Chinese has no counterbalance...”

(1978: 66-67)

Moreover, this attitude against Chinese remains up to recent Indonesia. To expect that the Chinese Indonesians’ position in economically will be as equal as *pribumi* is eventually impossible. One might very well expect that a Chinese Indonesian citizen would have the same right, access, and opportunities for economic as his fellow citizen of indigenous origin. Nonetheless, this view has been proven very complex to be applied. In the papers, Indonesian government stated that Indonesian citizens of both foreign and indigenous origins would be treated equally in the same rights and obligations. Yet, in reality this is most of the times not the case.

One of the examples was the Presidential decrees issued from 1979 to 1980 in giving “preferential treatment in several economic sectors to what is euphemistically described as

²² *Sarekat Dagang Islam* was converted into *Sarekat Islam* in later period which slightly reduced its anti-Chinese sentiment. Yet, it remained to state clear distinction between Moslem or indigenous people, and Chinese.

‘the economically weaker group’”. Although Indonesian government had strongly rejected involving any racial or discriminatory issue, the main purpose and intention was to favor indigenous businessmen and companies in large percentage of capital and investment. This decree had incredibly brought increasing numbers of new companies.

Yet, certain ‘favoritism’ towards certain group(s) most likely ended up in evasion and corruption. It was very common that indigenous business in particular places, where enterprises were reserved or given preference to indigenous people, were only a front or cover for Chinese business (Coppel, Mabbett and Mabbett 1972:7-8). Furthermore, this tendency of corruption was also reflected in the Indonesian bureaucracy. The relation of Chinese businessmen and senior military officers to guarantee access and permit for the ongoing business are mostly closed by “a good deal of corruption” or bribe. To some extent government officers protect Chinese business is not uncommon. Here comes the notion of “tjukong” which literally means “grandfather” or “boss” in Chinese (1972:14). It refers to Chinese businessmen who have military officers work as their guardians. This term indicates how Chinese businessmen and military officers are closely bounded in mutualism. Military officers benefit from bribes and *uang pelicin*²³ while Chinese rely on the guarantee of permit and access to run their business as well as protection if there is any political turbulence. This notion of finding protection under military backing, once again, confirms how Chinese themselves realize their vulnerable position and most likely find backup plan for their safety in rough times.

3.4. Conclusion

This chapter explains the position of Chinese Indonesians in various aspects within the scope of Indonesian society. One of the repeating patterns in all those aspects is Chinese Indonesians are most of the times considered as separated part or even outsiders by indigenous people. Being a legally confirmed Indonesian citizen does not mean a Chinese origin person would be accepted as ‘true’ Indonesian. As described in previous discussions, even within plural society which is very familiar with the concept of “unity in diversity”, Chinese Indonesians remain distinctive, either rooted from Dutch class system or simply caused by prejudices that Chinese is a separated group which consisted of “foreign nation”. From political ground, the Indonesian nationalist movements had a tendency to exclude Chinese Indonesians and in the end, any attempt to include Chinese in this group was not successful enough. As addition, economic activities have strengthened distinction between Chinese Indonesians and non-Chinese. The favor of Indonesian government to prioritize economic assets and opportunities to indigenous people was one of the evidences. Once again, Chinese Indonesians are left only with limited opportunities and ineffective bureaucratic process which grows communal attitude of corruption inside government.

²³ *Uang pelicin* is the term commonly used in Indonesia to indicate the demand of certain amount of money to be paid to the officers or bureaucratic authorities, in order to get permit of business or important official documents.

4. Chinese Ethnic Discrimination

In the previous chapter the Chinese Indonesians have been described as part of the Indonesian society. This chapter aims to examine the factual and contextual discriminatory practices toward Chinese Indonesians. The way the Dutch colonial system and the 'native' Indonesians of that time perceived the Chinese affects the present day treatment of Chinese Indonesians. It still influences the persisting discriminatory attitude.

First, I will supply more details about the discrimination towards the Chinese immigrants from the early period of Indonesian history onwards. More details of discriminatory acts will be exposed in political, educational, economic, and social-legal aspects. Those discriminatory acts have had long history and yet, persist to be influential in present reality regarding relation of Chinese Indonesians and non-Chinese people.

At the end of this chapter I will treat the many discriminatory acts built into the legal system, especially where they touch the obligatory assimilation which was forced upon the Indonesian citizens with Chinese origins.

4.1. From Historical Hereditary to Modern Reality

“The Chinese have always been a small minority in Indonesia. [...] In a country where ethnic diversity is so pronounced that the national motto proclaims ‘Unity in Diversity’ (Bhinneka Tunggal Ika), the Chinese have nevertheless stood out as a distinctive ethnic group. Where the greater parts of the population have lived as peasants in rural areas, the Indonesian Chinese have for most of their history been more strongly concentrated in cities and towns. Where other ethnic groups have their own territory, however widely they may be dispersed in other parts of the archipelago, the Chinese, as the largest of the ‘foreign’ ethnic groups, have no territorial roots in the country.”

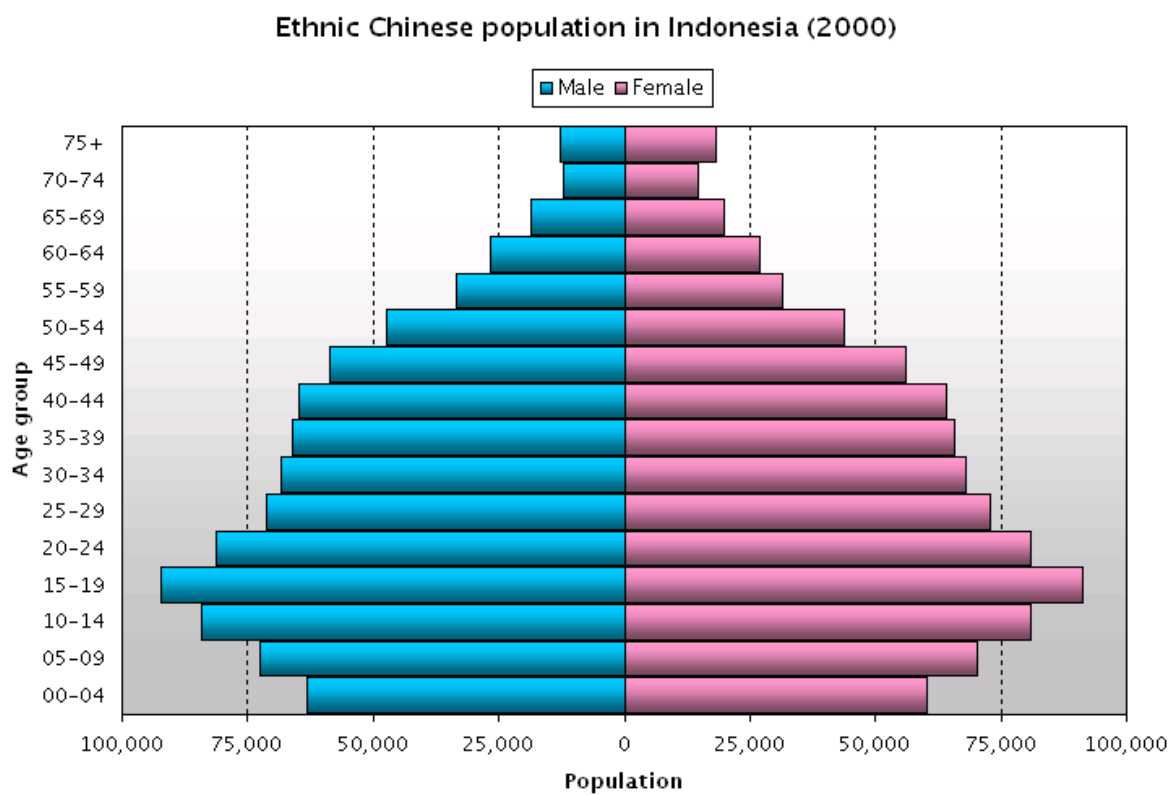
(Coppel 1983:1)

Skinner, in 1961 estimated the number of Chinese in Indonesia to be about 2.45 million. This represents only 2.5 per cent of the total population (Skinner 1963:99). When the national census was held in 2000 this number even seemed to have decreased. The census reported that the number of Indonesian citizens with Chinese origin was estimated around 2,411,503

people²⁴. Even when we add the 93,717 Chinese that are reported as foreign citizens of either the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China, the total at that time is roughly 1.25 per cent of the whole population of Indonesia (Suryadinata, et. al. 2003:77). Yet, no matter how small the numbers are of the Chinese living in Indonesia, comparing it to the other ethnic or more majority groups, the Chinese issue of is always significant in Indonesian history.

Table 4.1.1

(Adapted from http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chinese_Indonesian_population_pyramid_2000.png)



As described in the preceding chapters, the Chinese have a long historical relation with Indonesia. Nevertheless, there were never enough of them to identify them as insiders. Coppel argues in his perspective about the marginality of Chinese in Indonesia:

²⁴ The decreasing number was most likely caused by the method of census which used self-identification method. This allowed people that do not want to identify themselves as Chinese to be reported as non-Chinese. The tendency of not reporting oneself as Chinese was very common at that period. The most sensible argument was the fear of repercussions following anti-Chinese riots in 1998. It was perceived to be safer not to reveal any identity or background related to Chinese.

“...the case of Indonesia’s Chinese minority, with its large numbers of acculturated, *peranakan* Chinese, who from the perspective of China scarcely seem to merit the description ‘Chinese’. In Indonesian studies [...] they have been seen as marginal.

This is not only because they are but one ethnic group among hundreds, comprising a mere 2 or 3 per cent of the total population, but also because they have been constructed as ‘foreign’, no matter how many centuries they have been settled in the archipelago.”

(Coppel 2005:1)

The sense of defining Chinese as foreign is typically related to the concept of a group. Seul describes a group as “a self-defining collection of individuals; like an individual, a group can be said to have an identity of its own” (Seul 1999:556). From the constructivist point of view, in the case of Chinese Indonesians and so-called indigenous people, the concept of them as a group is most likely shaped by an imagined, constructed community and created through social interaction. This began when the Dutch colonial administrators classified three classes of society based on nations. This was expressly stated in Section 131 jo.161 of *de facto* Constitution of the Netherlands East Indies. The *Wet op de Staatsinrichting van Nederlands Indie* or *Indische Staats Regeling* (*Staatsblad* 1855-2 jo.1), established a basic division of Dutch East Indies inhabitants into three distinctive groups. Europeans were put in the first class, followed by Foreign Orientals (Chinese, Indians, and Arabs) in the second and native Indonesians in the third, the whole residence in Indonesia have become very familiar with the nation-based distinction. Therefore, they identified themselves as different communities in the structure.

The impact of this nation-based classification has not stopped there. The distinctions created different attitudes and behavior in the frame of social interaction. Each class performed differently towards people in the in-group and out-group members. Gradually, this led to a setting of categories and boundaries with, as a final result, ethnic identity.

Fearon and Laitin explain how these social categories are constructed by labeling people with two main features. First, ‘rules of membership’ that decides who is and who is not a member of the category. Second, ‘content’, that is, sets of characteristics (such as beliefs, desires, moral commitments, and physical attributes) thought to be typical of members of the category, or behaviors expected or obliged of members in certain situations (roles) (Fearon and Laitin 2000:848).

Related to the case, by identifying Chinese as foreigners, indigenous people basically claim that people with Chinese origin do not belong to the criteria of membership, even if they have been legally Indonesian citizens for generations.

“...many Indonesians today still regard the Chinese politically, culturally and socially as foreign as any other real foreigners, even though they may have an Indonesian citizenship card in their pockets.”

(Muaja 1958: 10 in Coppel 1983: 2)

The concept of a nation-based distinction has had a long-term influence in Indonesian nation building. While the Dutch colonial government portrayed the Indies population as ‘native’ (*Inlander*) and Chinese as ‘Foreign Orientals’ (*Vreemde Oosterlingen*), early Indonesian nationalists wrote about the Indonesian nation as a mixture of various indigenous Indonesians (*asli*) and ethnic groups (*suku bangsa*) to which the Chinese belonged (Coppel 1983:2-3). The idea of nation (*bangsa*) in Indonesia was blurred with the racial connotation. The word *bangsa* originally means both ‘nation’ and ‘race’. Looking back to the statement about anti-Chinese riots in 1912 of Semoen, SI leader, and 1918 regarding the issue of Chinese as foreign nation²⁵, Suryadinata gives his opinion as following:

“Semoen’s remarks reveal the extent to which the indigenous peoples were hostile to the local Chinese, both for being economically stronger and for being alien. They also show that the word ‘bangsa’ already had a racial connotation.”

(Suryadinata 1978:67)

Along with the concept that Indonesia consisted of indigenous people (*asli*) and other ethnic groups, the Chinese were perceived as separate nation group, called *bangsa Tionghoa*. That was one of the reasons why very few political parties accepted people of Chinese origin as full members. At best, select Chinese were accepted to be associate members²⁶.

This framework of thinking also showed during the making process of the 1945 Constitution. The draft made by the Committee for the Investigation of Indonesian Independence Preparation (BPUPKI - *Badan Penyelidik Usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia* or *Dokuritsu Junbi Cosakai*) stated that “citizens shall be native Indonesians (*orang-orang bangsa Indonesia asli*) and those of other races (*orang-orang bangsa lain*) who are confirmed to be citizens by law” (Coppel 1983:3). In short, the Indonesian citizenship was given to indigenous people (*asli*) and refused to other nations unless they proved certain requirements²⁷. The word *asli* literally means both “indigenous, native” and “genuine, authentic”. The formula and the wording of the Constitution draft emphasized the distinction made to separate indigenous people from other groups.

²⁵ See the full quotation of Semoen’s remarks on chapter three, point 3.3.

²⁶ Complete explanation on this issue is discussed in chapter three, point 3.2.

²⁷ For a further explanation, see chapter three, point 3.1.

Ever since the term of Indonesian citizen (WNI - *Warga Negara Indonesia*) was publicly pronounced, it had a connotation to nation distinction. Almost automatically, if someone was referred to, in daily conversation, as a WNI, he was considered to be foreign (from Chinese origin in particular) and not indigenous. Quoted from Coppel's review:

“WNI was thus understood to be an abbreviation of ‘WNI Keturunan Asing’ (Indonesian citizen of foreign descent); the use of the word ‘asing’ (foreign) in this expression itself underlined the alienness of the Indonesian-citizen Chinese in Indonesian eyes. (Similarly, in Dutch times, a Chinese was officially described as a ‘Foreign Oriental’ even if he were a Dutch subject.)”

(Coppel 1983:3)

Once again the repeating pattern is found. The nation-based distinction inherited from Dutch colonial class system was transferred directly to the Indonesian nationalist version.

Another example is the use of the word “national”. It was commonly understood that if someone mentioned the term “national”, it would most likely refer to indigenous people. For instance, using term “national economy” would be considered the economic activities related to or controlled by indigenous people rather than by “foreign” people, particularly Chinese even when they were legally Indonesian citizens.

Referring to the second point of Fearon and Laitin's features of constructed social categories, the Chinese have been seen, most of the times, as having distinctive qualities. Regarding sets of characteristic behavior performed by most native Indonesians, the Chinese were barely seen as similar. They are labeled as a foreign group motivated by economics and money-oriented in business. In belief and religion, most of Chinese are not Moslem like the majority of indigenous people. As discussed in the preceding chapter, their commitment to the Indonesian loyalty was doubted from the beginning by the nationalists. Even physical attributes are sometimes perceived influentially. Chinese-origin people are usually believed to have a yellower skin tone and almond-shape or slant eyes, labeled as *mata sipit*, compared to the brown tan skin and round eyes of indigenous people. Although, through the process of intermarriage and adaptation over centuries, their physical appearance could no longer been taken into as a credible measurement of determining whether or not a person is Chinese (Fearon and Laitin1983:4).

As a result, the nation-based distinction led into discriminatory practices performed against Chinese-origin Indonesians. According to the sociological definition, discrimination is a term “referring to the treatment taken toward or against a person of a certain group in consideration based solely on class or category”²⁸ (Giddens et al. 2009:324). Discrimination results in actual behavior towards another group. This behavior usually takes form in the acts

²⁸ For further details, see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discrimination>.

of excluding or of restricting members of one group from opportunities which are available to other groups (2009:324). Taking from a United Nations review, discrimination may take many faces, but they all include some form of either exclusion or rejection.

4.1.1. Residential Segregation

“The ghettos to which the Jews restricted their daily lives could be compared to the special living quarters which the Chinese built for themselves in many towns.”

(Muaja 1958:10 in Coppel 1983:6)

Since the beginning of the Chinese migration to Indonesia, it has been quite common to see most Chinese living in urban areas. This is most likely caused by the trading activities they had which needed fast access to the key cities and harbors. Chinese traders practically lived in separated quarters of the towns in Java. This phenomenon was not restricted exclusively to the Chinese. Other foreign traders, such as Indians and Arabs, did the same. And when the Dutch colonial government found the pattern of this separated residence, it was suitable under their control. The Chinese lived in the Chinese quarter in towns and were governed by Chinese officers appointed by Dutch administrators (Coppel 1983:6).

During the early ninetieth century, the Dutch colonial government started to enforce this Chinese residential segregation more stringently. An edict, called *wijkenstelsel* (system of housing areas), was issued in order to prohibit Chinese people from residing in the centre of cities and they were legally bound to live in specific districts or designated quarters of towns, which in later periods evolved to be Chinatown or *Kampoeng Cina*.

Even if there was a desire of the Chinese to assimilate with the native people, this system made it impossible. For example, in the case of the Chinese that were totally assimilated with the Sundanese population in Cirebon - a village in West Java - they were forcibly removed into a Chinese quarter ghetto, recalled to their Chinese origin and made to be identified as Chinese (The 1966:186-190 in Coppel 1983:14).

Another system was added, the *passenstelsel* (system of passes) which required Chinese residents to hold a government pass while travelling outside the Chinese areas. One of the reasons argued by Dutch administrators was that it was necessary to protect the natives against economic exploitation by Chinese. According to Tan, it seemed to be contradictory because the Dutch administrative policy at the same time delegated tax-collecting monopolies to the Chinese which facilitated them to exploit the natives. It was more of an issue of controlling the social activities of Chinese people and ensuring that all economic, political, and social interactions between Chinese and native population was under Dutch colonial government's supervision (Tan 1963:10 in Coppel 1983:178). Unsurprisingly, the

systems gradually reinforced the existing concentrated location of Chinese residents in urban areas, and deepened even more the sense of a nation-based distinction in the heterogeneous Indonesian society, particularly towards Chinese population. Chinese were living in separated communities; they were definitely subjected to different regulations and systems, and as such were treated differently than other groups. This way of thinking resulted in the now common idea of discriminatory acts against Chinese.

When *wijkenstelsel* and *passenstelsel* finally were abolished in 1918, a few Chinese moved to rural areas, mostly to Sumatra where they worked as coolies in tobacco plantations or tin mines and to West Kalimantan where they mined gold and later ran small agricultural farms. In the 1930s, there was a return migration of Chinese from rural to urban areas. Some were even repatriated to China. One of the motivating reasons of this urbanization was the world economic depression which shook Sumatran mines and plantations. Taking into account the political unstable situation following the Japanese occupation and the Indonesian revolutionary movements; the Chinese urbanization process at that moment was insecure. Most Chinese living in rural areas looked for safer security protection in bigger towns and cities. In the 1960s, the Chinese urbanization increased due to both government regulations and once again, the issue of insecurity experienced by Chinese during the period of political turmoil (Coppel 1983:6-7). Ever since, major numbers of Chinese have settled down in urban districts.

As a result, until the present times, Chinese live concentrated in small areas in most towns and cities in Indonesia. These are usually located in and around business centers. Because of limited space and overpopulation, most Chinese live in *ruko - rumah toko* (shop house), a typical housing style which allows the shop owner to have space for a shop counter at the front of the house and live behind or above it. In the same neighborhood a Chinese temple will usually be found easily. In addition, a cinema or standard public amusement center will be available. This is very similar with what Chinese people had in their quarter (*wijk*) when the system of *wijkenstelsel* was still enforced (Coppel 1983:8).

Evidently, since the abolishment of *wijkenstelsel*, some Chinese now also live in different areas, e.g. the wealthier Chinese often prefer to live, together with the Indonesian elites, in more prestigious residential areas. The poorer Chinese live closely with other poorer non-Chinese Indonesians in slum *kampoeng* areas.

Since the beginning of the residential segregation, the notion of a strong distinction between Chinese and non-Chinese Indonesians has been spread. Their preference of limited residences in rural areas, and the tendency to live in quarters of towns or central urban business centers are convincingly influenced by pressure from outside the Chinese community, for instance by government regulations. The sense of the exclusiveness of Chinese “ghetto” housing was at the origin of the typical prejudice that Chinese exclusively detached themselves from Indonesian society, Coppel argues:

“[Even] in the absence of outside pressure to live in ghetto areas, the Chinese have shown little reluctance to leave them. Many, if not most, of those who have remained do so for business convenience; that is, because their livelihood is there, rather than from any desire to isolate themselves.”

(Coppel 1983:8)

4.1.2. Political Discrimination

“The Indonesian Chinese are caught on the horns of a dilemma if they consider political activity. If they engage in the politics of dissent, they are labeled subversive. If they support the authorities of the day, they are labeled opportunistic. And if they keep clear of politics, they are also opportunistic because they are said to be only interested in profit.”

(Coppel 1983:24)

Since the early beginning, the position of Chinese Indonesians in politics is vulnerable. Based on historical records, Chinese participation in political activities were very limited. Most of those activities were expressed through Chinese political parties. Yet, very few Chinese political parties were founded since the beginning of the Indonesian political movements. Very few Indonesian nationalist parties welcomed Chinese as members. Therefore, it was unsurprising that the Chinese Indonesians’ political orientation and loyalties were doubted by most Indonesian nationalists. Compared to some of the native people that did not actively engage in politics, they were similar in proportion. But, native people were not accused to be opportunistic because they were assumed to work hard for a living and did not have time for political involvement. On the other hand, Chinese were related to a particular stereotype that according to Coppel might be the result of “a rationalization for a dislike which has its roots elsewhere, primarily in their alienness and the opprobrium attached to their trading role” (Coppel 1983:25).

The reason of the limited political participations among Chinese people is most likely caused by the political restrictions set by most Indonesian nationalist parties. *Boedi Oetomo* (1908) and *Sarekat Islam* (1912) were two of the earliest Indonesian nationalist parties that stated not to admit Chinese members. Even when the situation progressed to be less anti-Chinese with the establishment of more neutral political parties, such as *Indische Partij* (1912) and *Indische Sociaal Democratische Vereeniging* (ISDV, 1914), the Chinese participation in politics was still inadequate, partly due to the dissimilar interests and shared ideas between most Chinese and the parties. In the 1930s, the *Partai Nasional Indonesia*, Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI) and later, *Gaboengan Politiek Indonesia* (GAPI), a combined Indonesian political force, had the similar idea of separating Chinese and native people which legally stated in its

constitution. They did not accept Chinese as core members; they were accepted only to the level of associate members²⁹.

In 1937, when the radical nationalist parties began to question whether *peranakan* Chinese should or should not be accepted as members, Hoesni Thamrin, a nationalist figure, argued that it would cause more internal confusion to accept *peranakan* members, due to the difference between Chinese and indigenous people. He said it would be easier to assimilate *peranakan* Arabs because they had much in common as Moslems. *Parindra*, another nationalist party, accepted and welcomed *peranakan* Chinese parties, such as *Partai Tionghoa Indonesia*, the Chinese Indonesian Party (PTI), but not individual *peranakan* Chinese (Suryadinata 1978:75).

Until 1939, *Gerindo* was the only Indonesian party which opened memberships to *peranakan* Chinese. In this condition, many Chinese were urged to optimize their struggle within racially defined limits no matter how they longed to fight together with the indigenous members for the cause of the Indonesian national purpose. Unsurprisingly, quite a significant number of Chinese joined the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI - *Partai Komunis Indonesia*) which they believed to have a radical and more, non-racial approach. Here, it is enough to state that the early Indonesian nationalist movements generally excluded the Chinese.

The Chinese political participation had reached its peak when Baperki, a political party established in 1954 by Chinese Indonesians for promoting Indonesian citizenships and eliminating discrimination, contested in the Indonesian elections and gained places for Chinese Indonesian representatives in the Indonesian parliament, yet not for long. After the PKI's coup d'état in 1965, Baperki and its members were bluntly accused to involve in communist movement. Since then, the Indonesian government saw assimilation ideas of Chinese-related organizations as a threat.

4.1.3. Proof of Citizenship: An Irony of Assimilation

“The legal regime that governs citizenship in Indonesia is complex and has undergone many changes since 1945, particularly as regards the status of the ethnic Chinese³⁰. The underlying structure is, however, clear.”

(Lindsey in Lindsey and Pausacker 2005:47)

²⁹ For further explanation on this issue, please refer to chapter three, point 3.2.

³⁰ The same review is also stated by Suryadinata 1992, 1997; Coppel 2002, pp. 14-47, 336-55.

“There must be a clear dividing line drawn between alien Chinese and WNI Chinese; and there must be no such line between the WNI Chinese and the indigenous Indonesian³¹.”

(Coppel 1983:75)

At the beginning of new Indonesian Republic, the colonial concept of the nation-based class distinction was converted into the distinction between “alien” and “citizen”. According to Coppel, this distinction easily turned to “a carrier of the colonial virus of racial separation” (Coppel 2002:24). Factually, as proven by the differences between the formal citizenship regulations and their practical implementations, Chinese Indonesians, whether they are labeled aliens or citizens, are continuously excluded and treated as a separate group. The actual enforcement of categories of “aliens” and “citizens” mean actually “Chinese” and “others” (Lindsey in Lindsey and Pausacker 2005:48).

Aliens, literally meaning non-Indonesian citizens, include Chinese citizens of another state, most likely the People’s Republic of China (PRC), and Chinese that are classified as “stateless” due to the impossibility to de facto acquire confirmed Indonesian citizenship. The Indonesian government offered citizenship to these alien Chinese by a process of citizenship application for *SBKRI* (*Surat Bukti Kewarganegaraan Republik Indonesia*)³², an official document to prove their nationality as real Indonesians. This application was discussed in 1980 in two Presidential Decisions, No. 2 and 13. The essential part of these Presidential Decisions was explained in paragraph IV (1) Law No. 62 of 1958 on Citizenship, as follows:

“An alien who was born and resides in the region of the Republic of Indonesia, whose father or mother was also born in the region of the Republic of Indonesia, may submit an application to the Minister of Justice to acquire Indonesian citizenship...”

(Lindsey in Lindsey and Pausacker 2005:49)

³¹ This statement was derived from a letter addressed by Sindhunata, the Head of LPKB (*Lembaga Pembina Kesatuan Bangsa*: Institute for the Development of National Unity) about the position of LPKB vis-à-vis Chinese issue. This letter was sent to Soeharto on 23 March 1966. There was no more information about how Soeharto reacted on this letter in dealing with policies towards Chinese people.

³² Although obligatory regulation of obtaining SBKRI has been abolished with Presidential Decree No. 56 of 1996, in practical reality SBKRI is still considered important and required for most of bureaucratic processes, especially by local officials. According to common perception of major society, this is caused by the lack of socialization of this Presidential Decree, so that most Chinese-origin people are not familiar with the changing legal construction, and also reluctant attitude of most government officials regarding the implementation of this decree, particularly due to the notion of keeping SBKRI as source of accessing extra money from bribes.

The SBKRI was from the beginning misused as a source of corruption for government officials, particularly on the local level. The cost of applying for the SBKRI status can be as much as Rp. 7.5 million (around US\$ 885)³³. For most Chinese Indonesians, this is unaffordable, considering that the annual income in the country is only around US\$ 946 (DFAT 2003). Therefore, they are trapped as “stateless” without the possibility to break through (Lindsey in Lindsey and Pausacker 2005:49). Other alien groups, e.g. Arabs and Indians, are left in peace or they encounter no difficulties to become citizens.

For Chinese-origin Indonesians who have applied or were confirmed as Indonesian citizens, other obstacles arose. First and as usual, the distinction between *orang asli* (people originated from Indonesia) and *orang bangsa lain* (people originated from alien nation) blocked the Chinese Indonesians to be fully accepted as “citizens”. Even although Paragraph 26(1) of the Indonesian Constitution states:

“Citizens are persons who are original Indonesians [orang-orang bangsa Indonesia asli] and persons of other nations [orang-orang bangsa lain] who have acquired legal status as citizens.”

(Lindsey in Lindsey and Pausacker 2005:50)

Second, even though they are confirmed in their Indonesian citizenship by the naturalization process³⁴, Chinese Indonesians are still required to obtain SBKRI. By having SBKRI as a proof of real Indonesian citizenship, the Chinese Indonesians are easily marked to be distinctive. The notion of the discrimination system regarding SBKRI is stated in Article 14 of Law No. 62 of 1958 on Citizenship:

“Any person who needs to prove his or her Indonesian citizenship whilst not having any document that proves that he or she possesses or obtains or inherits the possession or the obtaining of the citizenship, may ask the Civil Court of his or her residential area to determine whether or not he or she is an Indonesian citizen, according to normal civil proceedings...”

(Lindsey in Lindsey and Pausacker 2005:50)

The requirement of proof of Indonesian citizenship for Chinese-origin Indonesians is mentioned in Presidential Decision No. 52 of 1977, as follows:

³³ Refer also to Suryadinata 1997, p.117.

³⁴ For more detailed explanation, see chapter three, point 3.1.

“6(1) Every Indonesian citizen who needs to prove his Indonesian citizenship may obtain a Surat Bukti Kewarganegaraan Republik Indonesia [SBKRI or Proof of Indonesian Citizenship Documents].

6(2) The Ministry of Justice is responsible for the issuance of Proof of Indonesian Citizenship Document mentioned in subsection 1.”

(Lindsey in Lindsey and Pausacker 2005:51)

The Ministry of Justice Regulation No. 3/4/12/1978 emphasizes in Section 1 that “every citizen who needs to prove his or her citizenship may submit his or her application to the Ministry of Justice to obtain the SBKRI” (Lindsey in Lindsey and Pausacker 2005:51).

Although in the legal wording there is no single word referring specifically to Chinese ethnic, it is commonly understood that these regulations apply to Chinese-origin people. Consequently, SBKRI has become very important for proving the “realness” of Indonesian citizenships for Chinese origins.

Another discriminatory act regarding citizenships is the coded identity discrimination. It is common knowledge that the Chinese Indonesians’ identity cards (*Kartu Tanda Penduduk - KTP*) and passports are coded to indicate that they are of Chinese origin³⁵ (Lindsey in Lindsey and Pausacker 2005:51). Until 1990s, identity cards and passports numbers started with zero for Chinese Indonesians’. Since 1979, this coding system was protested and finally, in 1990 there was a decision to stop it. Suryadinata claims that this zero code has been replaced with a more subtle code, still allowing the authorities or government officials to recognize people as to be of Chinese-origin (Suryadinata 1992:200 in order to target them as forced to pay bribes, be subject to extortions or other discriminatory acts. Most Indonesians, Chinese and non-Chinese, confirmed the existence of subtle coded identity card and its actual discriminatory implications (Lindsey in Lindsey and Pausacker 2005:55).

Convincingly, SBKRI and the coded identity system has substituted the Dutch colonial *passenstelsel*, a system to monitor mobilization of Foreign Orientals (read: Chinese) (Coppel 2002:371).

Also, in the wider scope of societal structure, the SBKRI influences education rights by being an official requirement for access to most state and some private universities. Without SBKRI, Chinese Indonesians are excluded from educational opportunities, or by obtaining SBKRI as proof of being of Chinese origin, their chances to enter universities would be limited to quotas that prioritize *pribumi*. Either having or not, SBKRI was a key to treat them discriminatively.

³⁵ Similar confirmation is found in Coppel 2002, p. 397 and Suryadinata 1992, pp. 200-1.

4.1.4. Economic Discrimination

Trading and economic aspect could not be separated from understanding Chinese minorities in Indonesia. Wertheim claimed Chinese in Southeast Asia as a 'trading minority' (Wertheim 1964, chapter 3 in Coppel 1983:19). The Chinese - Indonesian relation has been built on centuries of trading. So Chinese were seen as economic beings, which later flourished the prejudice of Chinese as 'economic animals'. However, it is important to mention that Chinese in Indonesia have done as well, and as poorly, as in other Southeast Asian countries. In general, their involvements in economic activities and business investment are undeniably significant inside the host countries. Because of the economic strength, Chinese Indonesians often possess a higher standard of living as an immigrant community, compared to indigenous people. Yet, the facts that they have made notable contributions to Indonesia and their preference of living in Indonesia rather than to repatriate to their forefathers' land, do not automatically guarantee their position within Indonesian structural society. Stereotypes and discrimination against Chinese was inevitable in some ways.

Ang affirmed the economic superiority of Chinese in Indonesia as simply a result of cultural condition in which they were put in.

“...incidentally, that the cultural conditions were established early on in which ethnic Chinese could be most successful in the quest for upward mobility that is [...] the game in [...] capitalist society...”

(Ang, I. in Morris and de Bary 2001:34)

When the Dutch colonial government set the class distinction among Europeans as the first class, the Chinese as Foreign Orientals as the second, and native people as the lowest class they implied constraints and different treatments for the Chinese. Chinese at that period had managed a role in society and livings for themselves which structurally placed them in a relation of power and tension as well as advantage and superiority vis-à-vis indigenous people who were placed in the bottom of the colonial hierarchy.

At decolonization era, the economic superiority of Chinese did not cease. Once more, due to the situational condition of retreating Dutch and the position of indigenous people who were one step behind in trading advancement (Ang, I. in Morris and de Bary 2001:35). Nevertheless, this advanced position of Chinese was not well responded by most natives. Many still thought that Chinese were the responsible people of slowly developing native economy and later prejudices accused Chinese as cause of the problem in Indonesia economic stability due to their 'dirty' way of doing business.

“... by utterly discarding all canons of justice and humanitarian principles, and through every sort of manipulation they [Chinese people] have succeeded in dominating the economy of the Indonesian people. Furthermore, through

smuggling, hoarding, and speculation, [...] Chinese have been opposing the growth towards economic stability in Indonesia.”

(Ambekar and Divekar 1964:248)

As a result, this framework of thinking among native Indonesians led to an economic ban and anti-Chinese discrimination. For example: in 1959, President Soekarno decided to ban particularly Chinese small business activities in rural areas to grant *pribumi* Indonesia.

Later in 1967, with the issue of Presidential Instruction No.37 of 1967 which limited the economic opportunities of Chinese Indonesians by forming *Badan Koordinasi Masalah Cina* (Coordinating Body for Chinese Matters), prejudicial thoughts about Chinese as being at the root of the economic problems for native people incited more discriminatory regulations. The Presidential Instruction of 1968 gave the authorities the control of monitoring foreign Chinese economic activities.

Hence, the economic priorities and opportunities were given to non-Chinese Indonesians who were most likely assumed as ‘weaker’ economic groups and thus, needed to be protected against Chinese economic domination.

“Since in the principle of the Government is also agreed that economically weak groups should be given special protection the decisive question is: will the Government recognize that at present the economically [weaker] group coincides with the autochthonous Indonesian businessmen and the economically stronger group with those of Chinese descent?”

(Muaja 1958: 35 in Coppel 1983:18)

Since then, series of regulations were issued in the favor of native Indonesians and opposed Chinese in almost every economic segment. For instance, the Central Bank of Indonesia Circular Letters No. SE 6/37/UPK/1973 on Investment Credit for Small Business and No. 10/5/UPPB/1977 on Share Ownership by Indigenous Indonesians which basically established structural economic system of favorable treatment only for indigenous Indonesians (Lindsey in Lindsey and Pausacker 2005:56). The term ‘small business’ used in the regulation referred to business owned by indigenous Indonesians which excluded Chinese Indonesian business at all levels from the investment credit opportunity.

The notion of indigenous business in weaker position compared to Chinese was strengthened by Presidential decrees in 1979-1980 which once again gave preferential priority to ‘the economically weaker group’. Although the Indonesian government had denied any racist or discriminatory accent conceived within the decrees, the intention, and moreover, during the

implementation, concentrated well in favor of indigenous business to which a major percentage of capital was given (Coppel, Mabbett and Mabbett 1982:7).

To be noticed, those examples above are not the complete lists of discriminative anti-Chinese economic regulations. They are given to understand how Chinese Indonesians must deal with restrictions and limited economic opportunities which shape their life structures. Despite all the economic discriminations, both alien and Indonesian-citizen Chinese have played a major role in Indonesian economic.

4.1.5. Educational Discrimination

The Dutch colonial government first introduced Dutch schools in 1816, for Dutch children. At that time neither native Indonesians nor Chinese had the right to enter these schools. In 1864 though, this regulation was altered, but only very few native and Chinese children were admitted in practice. Later in 1871, the Dutch government established specific schools for native Indonesian children, but neglected the Chinese. The Dutch government, in an official statement of 1896, stated that it was not responsible nor had any obligation to provide Chinese children with education. Chinese children were only admitted to Dutch or vernacular schools if there were vacancies left. Chinese children had neither priority nor preference in education (Suryadinata 1978:5).

It incited the Chinese community to provide their own schools for their children. *Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan* (THHK - The Chinese Association) opened schools in 1901 which were financed and managed by the Chinese community. These schools soon became well-known, and in later years received support from the Chinese Imperial Government. Scholarships to study in China were granted and Chinese officials were sent to assist Chinese schools in the East Indies. The support from the Chinese Imperial Government caused the Dutch colonial government to fear losing power over Chinese. To counter-balance this, in 1908, the Dutch authorities opened the first Dutch primary school for Chinese, the *Hollandsch-Chineesche School* (HCS) in Jakarta, followed by other big cities. In 1911, the Dutch government opened a *Europeesche Lagere School* (EPS) for Chinese, separated from schools for native Indonesians (*Inlanders*), and converted HCS to secondary schools. There was a clear distinction between schools for Indonesian and Chinese children which once again, strengthened the feeling that Chinese people were not part of the Indonesian nation.

During the Japanese occupation (1942-1945), the educational system was totally changed. Dutch and Western schools were banned. From 1 August 1942, only Indonesian and Chinese schools were allowed to continue. The Japanese Imperial Government demanded that Chinese, both *peranakan* and *totok*, should be treated “with impartial disdain and forced their organizations into a single mold” (Skinner 1961:360). More Chinese were encouraged to study in Chinese schools than Indonesian. As a result, many of *peranakan* Chinese were

obliged to resinification³⁶ (or according to Suryadinata: *totokization*) since they became more exposed with heavy education of Chinese language and culture (Suryadinata 1978: 21).

Shortly after the Indonesian Independence in 1945, the Dutch-controlled Federal government showed their support for Chinese schools by giving subsidies and granting teaching certificates to Chinese teachers, particularly in the hope of gaining the support from the Chinese for a restoration for Dutch power in Indonesia. With the transfer of full sovereignty to Indonesian in December 1949, the Dutch influence slowly ceased and Indonesia came in control.

In 1950, the Indonesian government stopped subsidies to Chinese schools. Later in 1952, the government began to effectively have more control over these schools by requiring all Chinese schools to register at the Ministry of Education and teach the Indonesian language for at least four hours per week. Yet, unlike the Dutch system that saw Chinese schools as merely another kind of Indonesian private schools, the Indonesian government labeled the Chinese-schools as “alien” (*Sekolah Asing*) (Suryadinata 1978:21-23).

This distinction of “alien schools” was worsened by the outbreak of regional rebellions in 1957. The Indonesian government decided that, in view of the tense situation at that time, control over Chinese schools had to be firmly established. In 6 November 1957, Djuanda, the Minister of Defence, established a regulation to forbid all Indonesian citizens to attend “alien schools”. This was specifically aimed at Chinese schools. No new school was allowed to open and all textbooks had to be screened by the Ministry of Education. The result was that statistic reports mentioned that there were 2,000 Chinese-medium schools with 450,000 students in November 1957. This number fell to 850 Chinese-medium schools left with some 150,000 students in July 1958. Those schools were located in areas decided by the Ministry of Education. Simultaneously, 1,100 Chinese schools were officially urged to convert to Indonesian national schools (Suryadinata 1978:26-27).

The PKI's coup d'état brought the most revolutionary result in the official attitude towards Chinese. Alien Chinese organizations became illegal. On 6 July 1966, the Indonesian government issued a decree to close all Chinese-medium schools. Schools or universities built by Baperki, were placed under Indonesian authority and converted to Indonesian national educational assets. For example, Ureca (Baperki's former university) was converted to *Universitas Trisakti*. The composition of students was completely changed; Chinese were no longer the majority in their former schools.

Chinese were forced to attend Indonesian national schools³⁷, both private and public. But seats for Chinese students were limited and the priority usually went to native Indonesian

³⁶ Resinification or *totokization* is the term used to describe the process of undoing assimilation of *peranakan Chinese*. During resinification which was promoted by Japanese occupation, all Chinese-background residents, particularly *peranakan Chinese*, were required to engage themselves in stronger Chinese identity, both by promoting the use of Chinese language and culture in schools and various public activities.

³⁷ For quite large numbers of former Chinese-medium school students, this conversion was very difficult. First of all is due to their incapability of using Indonesian language. In former Chinese schools, Chinese language was

students. Numerous Chinese students ended up with no education. The Indonesian government of that period was afraid that students might be recruited by remaining PKI elements, and thus become a threat to the Indonesian nation. Sometime later, the government issued a Presidential Regulation No. B12/Pres./I/1968, authorizing the establishment of schools assisted by Chinese communities. *Sekolah Nasional Project Khusus* (SNPC or Special Project National School). These started in 1969 under direct supervision of the Ministry of Education. Although these schools opened for foreign Chinese and Indonesian-citizen Chinese, most of the students were foreign Chinese. Once again, when these SNPCs grew in numbers and spread all over, the Indonesian government decided to shut the system down and convert all remaining schools to Indonesian national schools in 1974 (Suryadinata 1978:30-31).

Another issue in educational discrimination towards Chinese Indonesians is the Article 7-9 of the Presidential Instruction No. 37 of 1967 on Main Government Policies for People of Chinese Descent, this read that Chinese-origin citizens could be given up to forty per cent of the seats offered in national schools, and the composition of each class should consist more of native Indonesian students than Chinese Indonesians. This Presidential Instruction was not followed in practice³⁸ and is clearly in contradiction with Article 7 of Law No. 2 of 1989 on the National Education System that stated:

"The enrollment of a participant in an educational unit shall be done without differentiation based on sex, religion, ethnicity, race, social, and economic status..."

(Lindsey in Lindsey and Pausacker 2005: 56)

In conclusion, the educational system in Indonesia since the early period has differed for native and Chinese people. Chinese-origin Indonesian citizens were always considered as "alien", thus suffered a different treatment and had fewer opportunities for educational access and facilitations.

emphasized, especially during resinification period. They had hardships in following lessons in full Indonesian language. Besides, as a result of PKI coup d'état, all things related to Chinese were suspected and degraded. So, many Chinese students suffered for accusation or discrimination, most likely by native students. Consequently, many Chinese students quitted their studies.

³⁸ It is commonly understood that both the implementation and enforcement of governmental regulations in actual reality are not similar with the written version. For example, the regulation of giving Chinese-origin citizens forty per cent of seat-offered quotas in educational institutes is not exactly executed in such way. Most of public educational institutes allocate less than forty per cent seats for Chinese-origin students. In fact, it is frequently less than twenty per cent.

4.2. Forced Assimilation: The Abolishment of Chinese Cultural Identity

Soon after the end of the Second World War, several new states were established in the Southeast Asian region. Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Singapore declared their independence. The issue of 'ethno-nation' and 'indigenous social-nation' arose in those countries. These issues were based on indigenous groups. Borrowing from Suryadinata's argument: the ethnic Chinese in these nations "are not on par with the indigenous minorities or the homeland minorities" (Suryadinata 1997:3). In other parts of the world, minorities are often encouraged to maintain their cultural distinctiveness, particularly the indigenous minorities; but the ethnic Chinese were strongly urged to assimilate with the indigenous-based national culture.

The issue of Chinese ethnicity in Southeast Asia has proven to be similar in all countries there except Singapore that is the only country in which ethnic Chinese do not have to assimilate with the indigenous culture. According to Feagin and Feagin, assimilation is "a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups. By sharing their experience and history, they are incorporated with them in a common cultural life (Feagin and Feagin 1996:36). During the assimilation process, these persons or groups lose the cultural characteristics that distinguish them from the majority group in which they are assimilated.

The ethnic Chinese in Indonesia were not only required to totally assimilate with the indigenous Indonesian culture, but also to erase all relations with China. Coppel, Mabbett and Mabbett describe the Chinese-origin Indonesians' situation of required assimilation, as:

"Hence Chinese who would be citizens [of Indonesia] are asked to shed not merely allegiance to China, but increasingly their Chinese social and cultural practices as well. This process that has gone furthest in Indonesia has been accelerated by government action to control or even outlaw Chinese-language schools and newspapers, to promote the use of the national language, and in various other ways."

(Coppel, Mabbett and Mabbett 1982:8)

The assimilation process of Chinese Indonesians started when the first migration wave came and began to mix with the indigenous people and thus, *peranakan* Chinese were born as a result of either intermarriage or strong cultural assimilation. But with the turning point of the PKI coup d'état, the Indonesian government established an attitude of assimilation policy which generally meant to force the assimilation process of Chinese-origin Indonesian citizens to indigenous culture.

Starting with banning Chinese schools all over the country in 1966, Indonesian government continued to clear all tracks of relations with China and Chinese culture by issuing several

anti-Chinese formal regulations. The first was the Presidential Circular SE-06/Pres Kab/6/1967 which replaced the use of word “Tionghoa” with “Tjina” (*Cina*), a word which is commonly perceived to be derogative or pejorative. Then followed the Cabinet Presidium Directive No. 37/U/IN/6/1967 regarding basic policies to solve Chinese “problems”, and also Presidential Directive No. 14/ 1967 which regulated limited exposure of Chinese religion, belief, and customs in the public sphere.

Next, came the Presidential Decree No. 127/U/Kep/12/1966 that states in its Preamble that in consideration of: “...the need for standardization and control in regulating the change and addition of surnames, as step to *homogenize* Indonesian citizens [and] Act No. 4/1961 about the Change and Addition of Surnames” [My Emphasis]. This regulation strongly emphasized that Chinese-origin Indonesians were required to change their names from the standard three-word or two-word Chinese names into “*pribumi*-sounding ‘indigenous Indonesian names³⁹...names in conformity with those customarily used in Indonesian community’, as a token of ‘the process of assimilation’” (Lindsey in Lindsey and Pausacker 2005:55). The idea was initiated by the Head of the Institute for the Development of National Unity (LPKB - *Lembaga Pembina Kesatuan Bangsa*) as the catalyst of assimilation, as published in the *Antara* newspaper in 13 November 1966:

“A true Indonesian name will serve as an amulet to become true Indonesian.”

(Ramanathan 1994:126)

Soon after this the Indonesian government formed several organizations for monitoring the Chinese Indonesian assimilation process. *Staff Chusan Urusan Tjina* (SCUT - Special Staff for Dealing with Chinese Affairs) and *Badan Kontak Urusan Tjina* (BKUT - Contact Body for Chinese Affairs) were created for this purpose.

The limitation of the Chinese's socio-cultural scope was even more narrowed by the limitation of public use of Chinese language. The Presidential Instruction No. 49/V/IN/8/1967 banned the use of publications and advertisements using Chinese characters. Later, this regulation was repeatedly highlighted by a Circular Letter of the Ministry of Information No. 2/SE/Ditjen/PPG/K/1988. Ironically, other non-Romanized scripts were not banned, such as Arabic or even Chinese-derived Japanese *kanji*.

³⁹ Most Chinese adopted Western names for first names and Javanese or Sundanese names for surnames. Generally, there was a relation of syllable used in Chinese surname and adaptation in Indonesian surnames. For example: one with the surname “林” (Lin or Liem in Hokkien dialect) might adopt “Limantoro” or “Halim” as Indonesian-sounding names. Both “Limantoro” and “Halim” contained “Lim” that matched the Chinese surname. Therefore, often people may tell the original Chinese surname or know that person was related to Chinese from his surname name. For more details on Chinese-Indonesian name changing, please refer to Sutanto, I. in http://web.archive.org/web/20080130133021/http://www.fib.ui.ac.id/index1.php?id=view_news&ct_news=75.

During this assimilation period, all imports, sale and distribution of Chinese publications were also banned by a Decree of the Minister of Trade and Cooperatives No. 286 of 1978. From then on, Chinese Indonesian assimilation was no longer a natural interaction process, but considered to be addressed as a national issue. This was in contrast to what Marger derived from Milton Gordon's assimilation theory that cultural assimilation which entailed a process of acculturation from the part of the minority to become "alike" in cultural patterns, such as language, behavior, belief, custom and values, and moreover, should be natural and evolutionary (Marger 2003:112-114). In the case of Chinese Indonesian, it became "forced assimilation".

4.3. Conclusion

Since the Dutch colonial government established nation-based distinction between Chinese and non-Chinese Indonesians, the issue has brought more than just a historical record. Even when the official edict was abolished, the idea of separated nations and Chinese an "alien nation" remain still. Departed from the sense of "alien" Chinese, particular treatments and attitude have been executed to distinguish Chinese from other ethnic groups in Indonesia. Therefore, Chinese-origin people are required to repudiate their Chinese culture and communal identity in order to be assimilated as "real" Indonesians (*Indonesia asli*). The notion of Chinese as separated group also leads to both legal and practical discriminatory acts toward Chinese-origin people which widely cover major aspects from politics to socio-economics. Furthermore, both sense of Chinese as "alien" and accepted discriminatory acts in daily lives incite flourishing certain stereotypes which finally result in anti-Chinese prejudices and later, was used as justification for executing violence acts against Chinese during instable period of political turmoil and economic instability which will be discussed in the following chapter.

5. Anti-Chinese Violence: Judging, Scapegoating, and Legitimizing Violence

This chapter aims to clarify the circular causal relation between stereotypes, scapegoating, and the outbreaks of violence against Chinese Indonesians during several major structural changes in politics and the economy. First, I will treat the stereotypes which were formed and how they lasted for a long period. Then I will show how compatible this feeling is with the anti-Chinese scapegoating spread widely among indigenous people. Second, I will examine anti-Chinese riots and violence in the time of political changes and economic instability in order to see how these structural changes provided a medium to legitimate ethnically framed violence. Last, I will discuss cultural violence in the framework of discourse and normality of anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia.

5.1. Stereotypes and Prejudices: From Discriminations to Scapegoating

Being a Chinese-origin Indonesian is not only similar with belonging to “foreign nation”, but it is also considered as belonging to separate group labeled with negative attributes. Coppel wrote a composite stereotyping description of Chinese Indonesians, taken from openly published writings about them:

“The Chinese are clannish, they keep aloof socially and prefer to live in separate areas. They cling persistently to the culture of their ancestral homeland. Their loyalty to Indonesia is dubious at best; at worst they are downright hostile to Indonesia. Chinese who apparently identify with Indonesia are not genuine; they are only pretending to do so for opportunistic reasons, rather than from a true sense of identification with the country and its people. This opportunism is characteristic of a people concerned with money, trade and business. They are not, like Indonesians, dedicated to ideals. Having been given a favored position by the Dutch, the Chinese dominate the Indonesian economy, oppressing the Indonesian masses and preventing the rise of a national (i.e. indigenous) entrepreneurial class. Not content with their dominant position, they also engage in economic subversion, since they are expert in bribery and smuggling.”⁴⁰

(Coppel 1983:5)

The term “stereotype” originally referred to a printing process to create reproductions but later is used to define generalized and widely accepted beliefs about attributes of members of a particular group. A stereotype is more descriptive rather than derogatory; it performs as

⁴⁰ The anti-semitic newspaper *Der Sturmer* wrote, before and during the 1939-1945 war, almost identical editorials about the Jews in Europe. This indicates the similar sense of stereotyping claimed against other ethnic groups.

the perception of group members as “generic example of a type rather than as individuals” (Ashmore and Del Boca 1981). However, constructed stereotypes might possibly lead to prejudices which could be described as “an attitude towards the members of some groups based solely on their memberships in those groups”⁴¹. Both stereotypes and prejudices could be positive, but are more often, over-generalized or negative. Related to the previous description of the Chinese Indonesian, no attempt has been made so far to discover what proportions or parts of Indonesians believe it. Yet, although many would take at least some Chinese as exceptions to the generalized stereotypes, the frequency of such an image appear in what Indonesians write and say about Chinese origins, including the governmental statement of the so-called “Chinese problem”⁴², and on the top of this, arguments among Chinese themselves to counteract them⁴³, convinced that the issue of stereotyping is far from unimportant (Coppel 1983:5-6).

The stereotypes and prejudices toward Chinese Indonesians were most likely originating from historical relation and social categorization. The Chinese and Indonesian relationship was in the beginning mainly about trading and economy. Due to the New Order policy of limiting Chinese-origin citizens in participating in most social activities except the economy, Chinese-origin Indonesians are now usually perceived as “economic animals”⁴⁴. The stereotype of economic animals was literally perceived as the ignorance of Chinese Indonesians about the country situation, socio-political concern and indigenous people; all they are believed to care about is making money for their own profits, even if they need to make use of others (i.e. indigenous people). This kind of stereotypes is well described, as:

“The Chinese don’t mind who holds the cow so long as they can milk it.”

⁴¹ See more explanation in Utah State University website at <http://www.usu.edu/psy3510/prejudice.html>.

⁴² “Chinese problems” or “Chinese matters” were the term used to describe the importance of governmental acts to counter so-called Chinese threats in native economy. Therefore, it was considered necessary to establish certain governmental body in order to deal with this issue. To see more explanation, please refer to chapter four, point 4.1.4.

⁴³ Quite some numbers of Chinese associations or even individuals have tried to neutralize the stereotypes and prejudices toward them. Most likely basic argument is Chinese Indonesians have lived for many centuries within Indonesian society and thus, should be accepted as part of one Indonesia. Another argument is Chinese Indonesians are not only economic animals; they have contributed in building Indonesia as well. To see examples of these arguments, please refer to <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/city/chinese-indonesians-hope-full-measure-of-may-tragedy-will-be-known/374533> .

⁴⁴ Under Soeharto’s New Order Regime, there were several regulations to limit Chinese-origin Indonesian citizens in most socio-political aspects. To see further explanation, please refer to previous chapter three. Even if the regulation was not in explicit written about Chinese banning in politics, once again, in daily practices Chinese Indonesians were given less or no opportunities. This situation was possible due to the coded identity card which could identify Chinese-origin citizens. Therefore, Chinese Indonesians were only allowed to participate in economic aspect, still with the second priority of facilitations or government subsidies compared to indigenous Indonesians. However, Chinese Indonesians have made notable remarks in economy and thus, created another negative attributes of them as economic animals.

(Purcell 1965:462)

or

"We can divide the Chinese community into three major groups according to their political persuasion, viz.:

- a. Communist (Chinese People's Republic);*
- b. Kuo Min Tang (Nationalist China); and*
- c. those who have no specific opinion so that they don't care whether they are citizens of Indonesia, communist China or nationalist China so long as they can do business or trade with a view to profit..."*

(Indonesia, Staf Umum Angkatan Darat I 1967:46 in Coppel 1983:24)

Related to social categorization, the former Dutch colonial nation-based class system has had a deep impact in flourishing Chinese stereotypes and negative prejudices. Indonesians have long been familiar with the concept of the Chinese-origin Indonesians as a separate group. Therefore, it is common to identify them differently as "we" and "they". Often, the acknowledgement of oneself as Chinese or non-Chinese Indonesian make it easy to determine generalized stereotypes and attitude toward members of other groups. Freeman mentions in his remarks about social identity that "it is based on membership in a social group or category, together with its evaluative and affective connotation" (Freeman 2001:292). The evaluative and affective connotation also relates to how they influence the perceived image of stereotypes toward a person or people of other groups.

When stereotypes and prejudices spread widely in a society, discrimination arises. As discussed in the previous chapter about discrimination, it refers closely to behavior towards members of certain groups based on constructed images. In other words, discrimination - most of the time - is the behavioral manifestation of prejudicial attitude towards other groups. Due to the stereotypes and prejudices that Chinese-origin people are mainly concerned about money and most likely would "endanger" the existence of indigenous people, certain acts of discriminations have been performed against them, not only in legal governmental regulations, but also as "everyday discrimination"⁴⁵.

⁴⁵ Everyday discrimination is used as a term to describe how Chinese Indonesian (or people who are assumed as Chinese-origin) are treated differently in daily lives. For example, it is commonly accepted if a Chinese Indonesian buys goods from traditional market which the seller is non-Chinese Indonesian, he will be charged with higher prices, only because the most of the sellers assume Chinese origins must be rich and they have taken advantages from native people. Therefore, it is well-accepted to take benefits back from them. Another example is in the school admission. If the school officers assume someone as Chinese-origin, they will give higher amount of money for school subsidies which practically means so-called Chinese people need to pay more to the school due to the

Marger, in “Power-Conflict Theory”, has created the link between prejudices and discriminatory actions performed by dominant ethnic group (Marger 2003:99). Prejudicial beliefs and discriminations are used by the major group, both in direct and indirect ways, to secure its power and privileges in structures of society. When the major group’s position is challenged, it will respond through prejudices and discriminations against minor group (2003:99). Regardless banned boundaries and limitations for them, Chinese Indonesians as minor “foreign” group have been well performing in the economic sector which to some extent is considered to threaten the native economic opportunities and existence. When the negative stereotype arose and non-Chinese people were insecure of their dominance, prejudices and discriminations started growing.

In more evolved form, this prejudicial behavior also took form in scapegoating. Deducted from a medical definition, scapegoating is described as follows:

“Process in which the mechanisms of projection or displacement are utilized in focusing feelings of aggression, hostility, frustration, etc., upon another individual or group; the *actual* amount of blame *is* being unwarranted.”⁴⁶
(Emphasis added)

The tendency of putting Chinese-origin Indonesians as scapegoats has been proven during major shocks of political changes or economic instability. In a later part of this chapter, we will see more description on the manifestation of anti-Chinese sentiments into violent acts. Based on ubiquitous judgment and prejudices, Chinese were blamed as a cause of political turmoil and economic crisis.

“...the widespread belief of many Indonesians that the Chinese controlled the economy, local and national, and that they were corrupt. [...] It was the masses who made the fall of Soeharto possible – believing that they, the *wong cilik*⁴⁷, the little people, were being neglected – and it can be argued that they never really sympathized with notions of democracy in any universal sense. Hatreds associated with the ethnic Chinese as corrupt and opportunistic were not dispelled...”

(Purdey in Lindsey and Pausacker 2005:17-18)

perception of Chinese as a richer group. During author’s several conversations with both Chinese and non-Chinese Indonesians, similar stories and the notion of everyday discrimination were commonly confirmed.

⁴⁶ See more in <http://www.mondofacto.com/facts/dictionary?scapegoating>.

⁴⁷ *Wong Cilik* literally means little people. It is used to describe people from lower class of society, particularly rural peasants and labor workers, who were abandoned during the era of Soeharto’s sophisticated economy.

5.2. Riots in the Name of Anti-Chinese Sentiment: Between Structural Changes and Ethnically Framed Violence

“Our blood will never mix with Chinese blood...Actually we hate the Chinese, but we couldn’t do anything about them before...”

(Sutanjo, a 38-year-old resident of Gresik, East Java: Kristof 1998, quoted in Purdey in Lindsey and Pausacker 2005:17)

“The brutal attack resulted in popular anger directed at [...] *a certain Chinese-origin Indonesian*. However, fuelled by the latent anti-Chinese sentiment, this soon transformed into anger at all ethnic Chinese. People felt that [*his*] actions were ‘typical’ Chinese’ behavior, especially for Chinese businessmen. They felt that the Chinese ‘always’ bribed state officials, particularly the police and the military.”

(Budiman in Lindsey and Pausacker 2005:95-96)

Several similar stories about prejudicial resentments toward Chinese ethnic might be found quite common in Chinese-non-Chinese Indonesian relations. To live with the label of “foreign nation” and having to deal with directed prejudices or discrimination in many forms has been adapted by Chinese Indonesians. However, the latent problem has not ceased thus far. As discussed in preceding chapters, Chinese Indonesians have had a vulnerable position in Indonesian society. Although it seems like they have been left in peace for quite some times since several dreadful anti-Chinese riots, there is no guarantee that their lives would be saved, as quoted:

“The ethnic Chinese would learn that *even reformasi*⁴⁸ did not mean equal rights and a decline in their victimization in Indonesia.” (Emphasis added)

(Purdey in Lindsey and Pausacker 2005:18)

This phenomenon of the Chinese Indonesians vulnerable position could be well-fitted in Galtung’s concept of negative and positive peace (Galtung 1969:172-174, 183-185). As long as the state condition is relatively stable, direct violence against ethnic Chinese is rarely seen. Yet, this does not mean that they have reached a positive peace which is characterized by

⁴⁸ *Reformasi* refers to the massive movement of Indonesian people who wanted to replace Soeharto’s regime with a free corruption, collusion, and nepotism state (which generally known by propaganda anti-KKN – anti *Korupsi, Kolusi, Nepotisme* against Soeharto and his people), and also struggle for more decentralized government with more focus on the welfare of grass root people.

positive elements of equality, justice, and human rights. Constant prejudices and “everyday discrimination” still take place. Furthermore, most Chinese-origin people in Indonesia are aware that if there will be any turmoil in the state, either in politics or economy, the probability to accuse them as scapegoat will not be low, and therefore, it is normal for many of them to arrange a back-up plan for their life and livings in case any hostile riots occur⁴⁹. This is considered as negative peace where there is “only” an absence of violence while the underlying conflicts remain subtly under carpet. Hence, in as assumed in the prelude one may consider anti-Chinese riots running parallel with political changes and economic instability.

5.2.1. Before 1965

The period before 1965 was labeled as having the most dynamic ups and downs in Indonesian history. Started by the early rise of Indonesian nationalism, the struggle of Indonesian independence during the idealistic regime of Soekarno, that was ultimately not capable to fully fill the people’s stomach, and it finally ended with the establishment of Soeharto’s New Order Regime, Indonesia had been through political and economic major changes. During those moving situations, several anti-Chinese riots occurred.

In early 1912, when the earliest Indonesian proto-nationalism movements began, a series of anti-Chinese riots took place in Surakarta - Central Java and Surabaya - East Java. These two big cities were considered as major cities in trade. SI (Sarekat Islam), the organization of Moslem merchants, was believed to direct the riots, although no SI leaders were directly held responsible. The cause of these riots was business rivalry between Chinese and local merchants. In Surakarta, the Chinese were heavily involved in *batik* trading (Javanese traditional cloth) and dominated, together with Arab merchants, since early in the nineteenth century access to the raw materials for *batik* making. Therefore, local merchants became insecure about their trading activities. It is interesting to highlight that the violent acts were only targeted to Chinese, while according to business rivalry situation; Arab merchants also took over local business. For this matter, SI leader remarked that Chinese were the only target due to the fact that they were major rival in business, and also had a different culture and religion. Arab merchants were considered as brothers who shared the same Moslem religion (Suryadinata 1978:66).

From that remark of SI leader, the anti-Chinese riots that happened are considered as conflict under the frame of ethnicity. Eriksen emphasizes that “ethnicity” refers to “an aspect of social relationship between agents who consider themselves as culturally distinctive from

⁴⁹ This similar notion is spread among Chinese Indonesians. It is commonly understood if Chinese Indonesian families always open for a chance for fleeing outside Indonesia in case any riots threaten their lives or livings. Some of them establish contacts outside country which allow them to find another destination during period of instability. Others, usually from wealthy family, arrange emergency plan in order to leave the country as soon as possible, even in some cases they ask (read: pay) state officers to provide first access and protection if there will be any threatening riots.

members of other groups with whom they have a minimum regular interaction” (Eriksen 2002:12). Local people considered the Chinese as a different group with a different culture and religion, and thus, the constructed social relationship between these groups was fragile as a result of existing stereotypes and prejudices.

Soon after, in 1918 similar riots occurred in Kudus - Central Java. Once again, it was the manifestation of a conflict of interests between local Chinese businessmen and indigenous merchants. Both Chinese and local people blamed each other with prejudicial arguments. For example, Chinese were considered to be greedy and harmful to local businesses while the indigenous were violent and hostile. During the riot, Chinese were killed and injured. Many Chinese houses in Kudus Tua, a local area, were burned (1978:66). Due to the lack of data recorded, no specific numbers of victims or lost properties are available.

One year after the declaration of Indonesian independence, in June 1946 a series of riots erupted in Tangerang - West Java. This was started by the unwarranted accusation that the Chinese were pro-Dutch colonialists and thus, had strong reason to be agents of NICA (*Nederlandsch Indië Civil Administratie* - Dutch Indies Civil Administration) which recently was established to restore the Dutch influence in Indonesia after the defeat of Japanese imperialism. Chinese were bluntly accused to be less, or even to be disloyal to the newly established Indonesian Republic. According to a record of *Palang Merah Jang Seng le* (Jang Seng le Red Cross), 653 Chinese were killed, including 136 women and 36 children, and 1,268 houses were burned down (Setiono 2003).

Later, on 10 May 1963, another series of riots took place in Bandung - West Java. This was started by a fight between *pribumi* (local) and *non-pribumi* students, particularly of Chinese descent. The campus fight turned to serious anti-Chinese riots in Bandung, and later spread quickly over to cities in Java and Sumatra, notably to Jogjakarta, Malang, Surabaya, and Medan. This spill-over effect was due to the shared solidarity among communal group. Most non-Chinese people claimed that it was necessary for them to defend their “brethren” who were believed to be violated by Chinese. Taking from Gurr’s review, this sense of communal group identity is caused by “common descent, shared historical experiences, and valued cultural traits, including a shared belief” (Gurr 2007:131). All those sources of communal identity were fulfilled in this case. The Indigenous Indonesians believed that they shared the common descent as non-Chinese, had similar historical experiences which in most publications perceived the Chinese Indonesians as a separate “foreign nation”, with the same culture and religion, as Chinese descents were assumed to have. Another reason for the riots was a rising sense among local people that suspected that Chinese at that time started to gain more power in state structures because Soekarno established good relations with China and

his *Nasakom* (*Nasionalis, Agama, Komunis* - Nationalist, Religion, Communism) ideology allowed more room for Chinese political participation⁵⁰.

Here, looking over several anti-Chinese riots during Indonesian historical dynamics, stereotypes and existing prejudices which normally remained untouched in “peaceful” time became sensitively suspicious and effectively aggressive in behavioral manifestation during periods with political changes in the early nationalistic era and independence period, as well as during economic rivalry which disturbed the balance of local economic domination.

5.2.2. After the Coup d'état of 1965 by the PKI

“Fear is an important problem in its own right. It makes life miserable for those who fear and prompts citizens to take actions that make their neighborhoods even more dangerous.”

(Mark H. Moore and Robert Trojanovic)

After the PKI's Coup d'état on September 30, 1965, the fear of communism was spread all over the country. Almost everywhere persons were accused of having a relationship with the PKI. The massacre of PKI members and those suspected to relate with with them began several months after the coup d'état and the Chinese were not the exception. Opinions of the number of Chinese Indonesians who were the victims of massacre differ greatly because precise numbers were not recorded. The US based *Life* magazine and the prestigious Hong Kong *Far Eastern Economic Review* claimed that hundreds of thousands of Chinese were killed. Robert Shaplen estimated that around 20,000 Chinese were massacred. Surprisingly the New China News Agency, which used to actively vocalize information on anti-Chinese sentiments and persecution in Indonesia, estimated the number of victims in the first six months after the coup only at several “hundreds”⁵¹ (Coppel 1983:58). Other publishers estimate the range of Chinese victims as up to 50,000, but this number in reports made by other sources was considered as being exaggerated, due to their emotional involvement (Coppel, Mabbett and Mabbett 1982:11). Compared to the total number of victims, the number of victimized Chinese seems relatively small. But anti-Chinese violence had been occurring for a long period and it lasted at least till two years after the coup. The fact of anti-Chinese violence was highlighted by Coppel, as follows:

⁵⁰ According to several talks with people who lived through that period, they convince that one of the reasons was due to this feeling of insecurity and fear that Chinese people might take over their positions, not only in economic rivalry, but also in state politics.

⁵¹ See more in *Life* (Australian edition) on 22 July 1968, *Far Eastern Economic Review* on 22 April 1966, Robert Shaplen in *Time Out of Hand* (New York) in 1969, p.164, and *Peking Review* 21 on 20 May 1966.

“In general, however, the most characteristic form of anti-Chinese violence in the immediate post-coup years was not killing, violence to the person or incarceration, but damage to property, such as the despoiling, looting and burning of shops, schools, houses, and cars. This is not to say that the other form of violence did not occur or that the Chinese population was not in continual dread that they might occur. Their fear was real enough, and understandably so.”

(Coppel 1983:58)

The Chinese community as a whole was accused of being involved with communism and China, and suffered accordingly. Anti-Chinese sentiments with the usual stereotypes and prejudices became stronger as did scapegoating that had been going on since previous incidents. The anti-Chinese violence during this period was not only out to destroy the communist-related Chinese, but simply to completely annihilate the Chinese culture and all relations with China.

During these anti-Chinese demonstrations, buildings of Chinese schools or organizations were smeared with texts as: *Milik R.I.* (Property belonging to the Republic of Indonesia). Chinese owned buildings, shops, houses, and personal property, such as motor cycles and cars were smashed. More anti-Chinese acts were the public burning of Chinese flags, portraits of Chinese political leaders and all sorts of Chinese language publications found during the looting by demonstrators (1983:60).

Those anti-Chinese violent acts, without active intervention of the police or of the army, were happening till two years after the coup in all major islands of Indonesia, except West Irian⁵². The worst outbreaks happened in Medan and Makassar and were associated with demonstrations against the Chinese consulate. In Makassar on 10 November 1965, the violent acts were more directed against property than people. The destruction of properties was recorded in a protest note by the Chinese embassy, 2,000 shops and houses of Chinese households were damaged in varying degrees. Later this caused approximately 1,000 bankruptcies. Still later, on 10 December of the same year 1965, Medan suffered from similar demonstrations. Here, the violent acts were targeted more against people than properties. Demonstrators “rampaged through the city, pulling Chinese off pedicabs and motor scooters, hacking at them with long knives, ransacking their stalls in the Central Market, killing or wounding all who resisted. There may have been as many as 200 victims killed, not counting the wounded” (1983:60-61).

Evidently, Chinese people have paid with more than “just” the loss of lives and properties. The coup, massacres, and violent demonstrations strengthened the existing long standing anti-Chinese feelings. As discussed earlier in chapter three, many discriminatory regulations against Chinese were established shortly after 1965. This phenomenon continuously lingered

⁵² West Irian province is now named as Papua.

during Soeharto's New Order Regime which officially existed from 1966 to 1998. On this matter, Shaplen wrote, as follows:

“All [Chinese people] had become the scapegoats under Suharto's New Order. Although they had proved themselves virtually indispensable as skilled workers, merchants, middlemen and money-handlers, controlling somewhere between 30 and 40% of the national economy, they had been pilloried in the wake of the attempted coup because of Peking's suspected involvement in it. The attacks against them, both before and after suspension of relations between Peking and Djakarta in October 1967, represented a continuing emotional outlet for the pent-up tensions of the Indonesian, although they had generally accepted the presence of Chinese in Indonesia as a commercial and financial necessity.”

(Shaplen in Coppel, Mabbett and Mabbett 1982:11. Emphasis added)

At this point, it is important to emphasize that the fact that those violent conflicts between Chinese and non-Chinese Indonesians does not automatically mean that they were ethnic conflicts. Brubaker, writes that ethnic conflict should not simply been understood as a conflict between ethnic groups (Brubaker 2004:35-37). He reminds us very carefully not to overethnicize conflicts or to see them exclusively framed in ethnic groups. The “ethnic” quality of “ethnic violence” does not refer to the violent act itself, but must consider and describe violent behaviors of the perpetrators (2004:42-43). What makes violent conflict between Chinese and non-Chinese Indonesian an ethnically framed conflict is the constructed ethnic identities. In constructivism, ethnic identities are socially constructed for explaining ethnic violence (Fearon and Laitin 2000:846-847). Crystallization of ethnic identities takes place most of the times, during a period of conflict. As a result, stronger groupness is often caused by violent conflicts. In the case of Chinese Indonesians, the evidences of following legal discriminations and continuous anti-Chinese violent acts after the communists were massacred confirmed the previous concept. Non-Chinese people identified themselves more strongly and clearly as a separate community from “alien” Chinese; nourished negative stereotypes and prejudices toward Chinese, and therefore, opened opportunities for other anti-Chinese riots.

5.2.3. May Riots 1998: The Turning Point

At the end of Soeharto's New Order regime, a particular tragic series of riots happened in 13-15 May 1998. Although it started by peaceful demonstrations of students against Soeharto's corrupt government⁵³, it soon turned to anti-Chinese riots. These events shocked Indonesia as well as other countries. Although the series of riots happened in several places, such as

⁵³ Further explanation about the end of Soeharto's regime and student demonstrations refers to chapter two, point 2.3.

Bandung, Surakarta, Medan, the most severe riots occurred in Jakarta. Since, for most Indonesians, Jakarta as the capital city of Indonesia has sufficient military protection that should have made it almost impossible for such riots to happen spontaneously⁵⁴. The city was paralyzed for several days as a result of these riots. During these riots, large masses of people were “allowed” to pillage stores and shops⁵⁵. They burned and damaged about 704 buildings and houses. More than a thousand died and thousands more suffered from material loss or injuries during three days of severe riots. (Pattiradjawane 2000: 225, 230-238). Other sources estimated that it was around 1,500 people were killed and 4,000 buildings were damaged⁵⁶. However, the exact number was never officially mentioned. For more details about losses suffered from the May 1998 Riots, see the following table.

Table 5.3.2.1

Record of Damaged Properties during May 1998 Riots

(Adapted from *Kompas* of 3 July 2003 in <http://www.yabina.org/artikel/A6.01.HTM>, accessed on 8 August 2010)

Properties	Amount
Markets	13
<i>Rumah toko (Ruko)</i>	2.479
Mall/Plaza	40
Shops	1.604
Garages	45
Public Offices	2

⁵⁴ This kind of opinion could be found among some Chinese, especially during Soeharto’s ruling period. The author was told during several conversations with Chinese people that although before May 1998 there had been already some riots took place in diverse places, they believed that Jakarta would be prevented from the riots due to the military protection.

⁵⁵ The use of word “allowed” in this context refers to the ignorance of Soeharto’s government to calm down the chaotic situation. During three days of intensive riots, very few numbers of police and state apparatus came to the spot to handle the situation. According to opinions of some observers in this case, Indonesian military forces will be able to stop the riots much earlier if they were ordered to. The refusal of Soeharto’s government to address the riots earlier was later related to military involvement in perpetrating these riots based on report of *Tim Gabungan Pencari Fakta* (Joined Team of Fact Findings). This team was formed to investigate the riots after public pressure urged the government to show more concern on this case. See more in Human Rights Watch Report 1998.

⁵⁶ See <http://www.esri.com/news/arcnews/fall01articles/may1998riot.html>.

Police Offices	11
Private Offices	383
Banks	65
Restaurants	24
Hotels	12
Gas Stations	9
Public Buses / Transports	8
Cars / Motorcycles	1.119
Movie Theaters	80

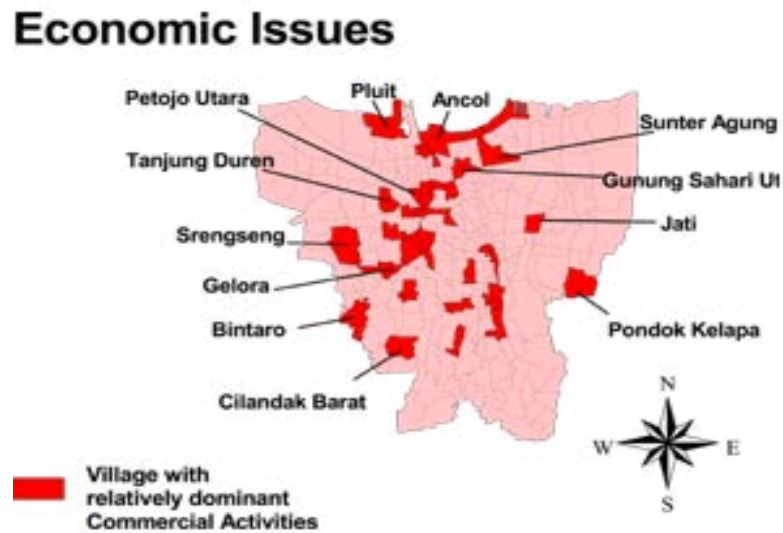
Although the victims in those riots were people from diverse ethnic groups, there was a general insight among Chinese and non-Chinese people that it was considered as anti-Chinese riots. Underlined evidences of this perception are most of the buildings, houses or business cites which were destroyed or burned belong to Chinese Indonesians as reflected in Table 5.3.2.1 that the highest numbers of damaged properties were *ruko*⁵⁷ where most likely associated with Chinese typical house and business residents, and also Figure 5.3.2.2 that the targeted damage was concentrated on commercial areas where most Chinese Indonesian business located. There were also numerous rapes straightforwardly targeted to Chinese Indonesian women (Pattiradjawane 2000: 238-247). Moreover, the perpetrators and rioters shouted anti-Chinese yells while they were executing those violent acts (2000: 224). According to a journalists report the May 1998 Riots were the most appalling anti-Chinese communal violence in Indonesia and so this tragedy has planted a deep fear and trauma among Chinese Indonesian community which later influenced their changes of perception of communal identity (Jusuf et al 2007:177).

⁵⁷ See chapter four, point 4.1.1 about related sense of *ruko* with typical Chinese residents.

Figure 5.3.2.2

Central Areas of May 1998 Riots in Jakarta

(Adapted from <http://www.esri.com/news/arcnews/fall01/articles/may1998riot.html>)



The damage to buildings during the May 1998 riot was concentrated in villages with dominant commercial activities

Undoubtedly, the May 1998 Riots leave us with several questions. If anti-Chinese riots were caused merely by the existing negative stereotypes and prejudices attributed to Chinese as a separate nation, why did the riots not happen earlier after previous riots during the post-PKI coup? Why were Chinese Indonesians who had been treated under the “forced assimilation” of Soeharto’s New Order still considered as “alien” group, and therefore easily targeted as scapegoats and victims of ethnically framed violence? What made that these stereotypes and prejudicial attitudes ended in violent behaviors?

“There is a phenomenon whereby things are easily ignited because the situation is very difficult.”

(Endro Suyitno, Head of DPRD, Central Java: *Suara Pembaruan*, 8 September 1998 in Purdey in Lindey and Pausacker 2005:25)

Regarding present tendency of ethnically framed conflicts, they generally relate to two major structural changes in political and economy life (Ayoob 2001:127-128). Therefore, understanding the ethnically framed conflict during the May 1998 Riots should be approached from a broader viewpoint, outside the conflict itself.

According to Schmid, a conflict is a result of incompatible interest built into the structure of the system where it is located (Schmid 1968:220-221). In the case of the May 1998 Riots, the Indonesian society has been suffering from the Asian economic crisis of 1997 and the failure of Soeharto's government to address people's needs that led the majority to seek for another way to fulfill their demands. The changes in structures created new communal demands. When the government fails to address those expectations, people will turn to other groups to serve their interests which may fuel communal tension and cause group clashes (Gurr 1994:163-165). In combination with insecurity and instability during political changes, conflicts among ethnic groups will be intensified (Ayoob 2001:136). The instability and insecurity during 1997-1998, which could no longer be handled by Soeharto's government, led people to see themselves more in group scale than as an alternative answer to new demands. The sense of "we" and "they", Chinese and non-Chinese became more solid. Although Chinese during the period of Soeharto's rule have more or less adapted themselves to the "forced assimilation" process, the historical, old image of separate group, a "foreign nation", came to the surface again.

Also, anti-Chinese riots in May 1998 cannot be seen as just a result of inequality between rich and poor. What led to the outbreak of violent acts was more in "horizontal inequality" which means the sense of inequalities under the frame of ethnic cleavages (Annan 1999). The underlying stereotype of Chinese people as a wealthy group which gained their welfare by taking benefits from indigenous people would not be as severe as it had been unless it was portrayed in sense of "Chinese and non-Chinese inequality". The evidence of this remark can be found by observing the way people protected their properties during the riots. Many houses, shops or buildings were signed with "*Milik Pribumi*"⁵⁸ (Belong to Native People), or sometimes just abbreviated to "*Milik Pri*", in order to stop rioters to damage or destroy. Ironically, this sign confirmed a tragic discrepancy with the goal of assimilation process. The impression was it was acceptable to damage or loot *non-pribumi*'s properties because they were not part of "us". Again, Chinese were portrayed as separated group, and a long "forced assimilation" process still could not made them "Indonesian". This attitude clearly showed that May 1998 Riots was ethnically framed either by perpetrators or people who directly experienced.

Then, why did May 1998 riots not occur earlier? As argued before, horizontal inequality played significant role in the outbreak of ethnically framed violence. Horizontal inequality mostly results in communal frustration. Frustration is considered to be a key of human capacity to

⁵⁸ Term of "*pribumi*" was relatively used to smoothen the sharp wording of Chinese and non-Chinese in Indonesian language. Therefore, people used to choose *pribumi* (native) and *non-pribumi* (foreigner) to describe the distinction. However, it is important to know that in most cases, *non-pribumi* equals to Chinese-origin people.

transform latent tension into actual violence towards other groups (Gaay Fortman and Kortekass 1998:366-367). Once more, negative stereotypes and anti-Chinese prejudices, which were stronger during instable collapse New Order regime, together with severe effects of economic crisis, led to a feeling of communal frustration among non-Chinese.

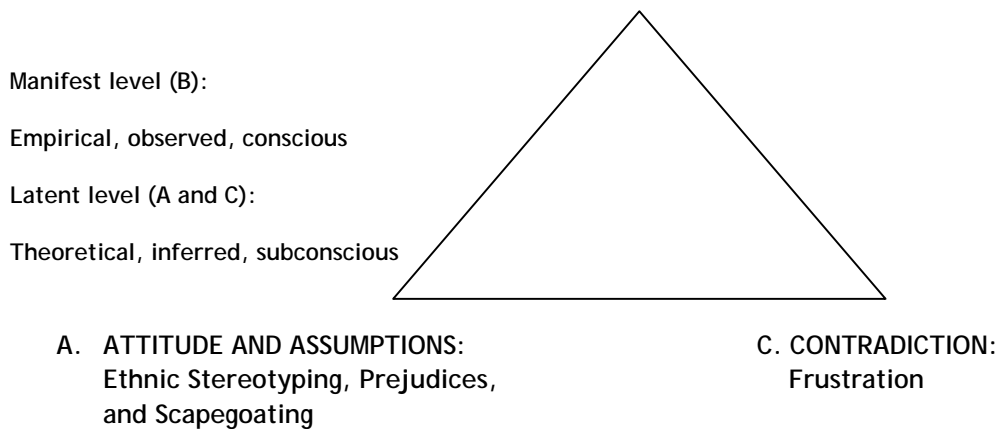
Refer to Galtung’s conflict triangle, frustration is considered as contradiction form (Galtung 1996:72). In regard of Indonesia and its multi-ethnic aspect, underlying assumptions, which takes form in general stereotyping, and attitude as negative prejudices and acceptable “everyday discrimination”, will easily fuel Chinese ethnic scapegoating. At this point, sense of grievances and group cohesion become stronger, and thus, creates a medium of actual violence (Østby 2008:146-148). As a result, from hidden form of conflict, a group will manifest in actual violent behavior against other as applied in Figure 5.2.3.3.

Figure 5.3.2.3

The Application of Galtung’s Conflict Triangle

(Adapted from Galtung 1996:72 Emphasis added)

B. BEHAVIOR: Aggressiveness and Violence Conflicts



This condition explains the transformation of stereotypes and anti-Chinese prejudices to scapegoating which ended in violent riots in 1998. Also need to note that structural changes, such as political turmoil near the end Soeharto’s regime and economic crisis, have crucial influence in this transformation process. That is why the riots did not occur earlier. Therefore, one may conclude that anti-Chinese violent riots would likely take place during period of structural changes which opens opportunities for underlying attitude and assumption to be expressed as aggressive behavior. It is most likely applicable also to explain anti-

Chinese riots after May 1998, still in the context of political instability during Habibie's Reformation government and remaining effects of economic crisis⁵⁹.

5.3. Cultural Violence, Discourse and Normality of Violence in Indonesia

Acts of violence has generally been perceived as inseparable part of Indonesian dynamics, including anti-Chinese violence. As explained in previous discussions, numbers of violent acts against Chinese Indonesians has been performed during long time period, as stated:

“Under New Order and beyond, anti-Chinese violence as a discourse, and, particularly, as an act, was considered normal or everyday rather than extraordinary in Indonesian society. The state was complicit in creating a context in which this explanation was beneficial not only to its institution, but also to the masses (*massa*)⁶⁰ who engage in violence. The New Order state utilized anti-Chinese hostility in society to deflect blame, to preserve a fear of violence, and to cultivate an “outsider” against whom they could define “insider”. As the consequence, the *massa* and the specialists involved in carrying out acts of violence, which were represented as anti-Chinese, were assured of impunity.”

(Purdey in Lindsey and Pausacker 2005:33)

From above description, three points might be drawn. First, the use of anti-Chinese violence, both in discourse and acts, is accepted to be normal. Violence, according to Galtung, is “the cause of the difference between the potential and the actual, between what could have been and what is” (Galtung 1968:168). Drawing lines from this argument, he distinguishes “direct violence” (including the act of killing, maiming, siege, sanctions, misery, desocialization, resocialization, secondary citizen, repression, detention, and expulsion) from “structural violence” (including the act of exploitation, penetration, segmentation, marginalization, and fragmentation) (Galtung 1996:197). Violence against Chinese Indonesians fulfills both criteria of direct and structural violence. Moreover, anti-Chinese violence is considered as vertical violence which was proven by the act of Indonesian government to establish legal discriminations and sharpen segmentation and horizontal violence which involved the act of

⁵⁹ Several anti-Chinese riots took place after May 1998. For example, on 7 September 1998 in Kebumen – Central Java, anti-Chinese riots caused eighty shops, houses, and factories as well as dozens of vehicles and public facilities were looted and destroyed, with an estimated total cost of Rp5 billion (Purdey in Lindsey and Pausacker 2005:25; Saharjo 1999:41). On 7 March 1999, violence riot occurred in southern Bandung, dozens of people damaged and destroyed buildings and properties of ten *ruko*, school building owned by Christian organization, and a Chinese Indonesian church (Purdey in Lindsey and Pausacker 2005:28).

⁶⁰ See Siegel (20001:27-29) for a discussion of the use of the term “*massa*” in Indonesia. Siegel discusses the way in which the use of *massa* led to the absence of agency on the part of individuals involved in mass violence.

other non-Chinese Indonesians to perform such violence (Darwin in Ananta 2003:123-124). Both vertical and horizontal violence shaped the mind of cultural violence in Indonesia. Cultural violence is described as “aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence — exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science (logic, mathematics) — that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence (Galtung 1996:196).

Anti-Chinese violence has been accepted as “tolerable value” inside Indonesian society, by all means of historical stereotypes, prejudices, both everyday and legal discriminations, whether riots were present or not. Particularly, New Order government had significant influence to establish a set of identifying factors of certain patterns and themes of violence as anti-Chinese. Over time, this discourse developed strong memories about so-called anti-Chinese events, as well as an understanding of these patterns to violence, and unexceptionally, as Horowitz argued, also knowledge of its impunity in Indonesian society (Purdey in Lindey and Pausacker 2005:33). Hiding under discourse of the impunity state and *massa*, none of perpetrators were subjected to be responsible. Therefore, anti-Chinese violence was not only perceived as “normal” occurrence, but also inevitable in certain levels. This notion strengthened a sense of a legitimate use of violence towards Chinese.

Second, the language and discourse within Indonesian society⁶¹, particularly popularized by New Order’s propaganda and policies, persistently questioned the position of Chinese Indonesian, their citizenships, and their “belonging” to Indonesian nation (2005:33). Again, the old image of separated “foreign” group was fed. Due to the distinction of Chinese and *pribumi*, the majority was brought up with a notion of acceptable sense to benefit, or even violate members of other group⁶². This perception did not only allow state and *massa* to escape repercussions for violent acts, but also facilitate understanding of ethnically framed violence as more complex result of constructed elements than merely ethnicity issue. Yet again, it created a context in which either government or *massa* could present anti-Chinese prejudices, discriminations, and violence as justifiable, normal, and in some cases, legitimate and legal (2005:34).

Third, the actualization of cultural violence in anti-Chinese riots echoed an important dependency on influence and effects of structural changes. Munir, former head of the Commission for Disappeared and Victims of Violence (*Kontras*), portrayed this violence “as the result of the shift from a political process that had been in place for a long time to something different but not yet certain” (2005:17), stating that:

⁶¹ For example, the use of Chinese and non-Chinese of language and discourse in explaining everyday events, such as: an argument between a Chinese employer and his employee, a fight between a Chinese and *pribumi*, a motor vehicle accident involving an ethnic Chinese, etc. The “Chineseness” was frequently emphasized. It confirmed the nation-based distinction between Chinese and non-Chinese — contrast to what New Order regime mentioned in assimilation discourse.

⁶² See earlier discussion about the use of word “*Milik Pribumi*” which protected certain buildings from looting and damage.

“The culture of violence which is now occurring is a process where there is an open situation but the level of political awareness among the people is weak, so people are easily incited and played off against each other — as a choice of political communication. Consequently conflicts become widespread.” (Bulletin *Jaring* 1998)

(2005:17)

Structural changes in transitional period and still, remained effects of economic crisis at that time opened provided medium in which cultural violence might take place in severe riots. The tendency of conflict spreading could be seen as phenomenon when people expressed their frustration, fueled existing prejudices and discrimination, altered to scapegoating act of violence targeted to Chinese.

5.3. Conclusion

The issue of anti-Chinese violence could not be seen as simply ethnically frame violence. Looking through all discussion on several anti-Chinese riots, one undeniable key factor which showed similar condition in those riots was structural changes. Before 1965, Indonesia dealt with economic decline and unstable, changing government during state-building process. In 1965, Indonesia was struck by fearful trauma of communism coup d’etat which brought further implications in changing society structures and balance of power. Then in 1997, economic crisis resulted in unthinkable shock to thirty-two year old regime of Soeharto which later was collapse 1998. Along with all those structural changes, anti-Chinese riots occurred in various places with one shared perception of Chinese as separated group. Added up to communal frustration during period of turmoil, general stereotypes, negative prejudices and accepted discriminations incited sense of scapegoating Chinese as a cause of the problems. Furthermore, it authorized the use of violence towards Chinese as normal, usual, inevitable occurrence which was legitimized under the context of cultural violence. To sum up, the relation between assumptions and attitude of prejudices and discriminations, frustration during structural changes, and violent behavior manifestation have illustrated solid foundation in understanding anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia.

6. Conclusion

Chinese ethnicity has been an inseparable part of Indonesian history. The Sino-Indonesian relation and Chinese migration to Indonesia had formed a bond. Chinese-origin people in Indonesia are still considered as belonging to a “foreign nation” by most of non-Chinese Indonesians. This perception departed from the nation-based class which was established during Dutch colonial time. Chinese were treated differently and were legally segregated from indigenous people. Over centuries, the notion of Chinese as separated group remained strong, and general stereotyping against them flourished. Chinese are portrayed as “economic animals” that are money-oriented and see us, indigenous people, for their own benefits. They are disloyal to the Indonesian nation, and therefore, they are ignorant about Indonesia and indigenous people. These stereotypes led to negative prejudices toward Chinese ethnics.

Chinese were generally discriminated in almost every aspect of lives and livings. Their citizenships and loyalty were always questioned. Thus, they were not allowed to participate in politics as fully as native people. Chinese were simply given space to be involved in economic activities which evidently have contributed in the development of Indonesian economy.

After the PKI coup d'état in 1965, the position of the Chinese became worse. Discriminatory acts committed against them were no longer informal and “everyday”, but also legal according to New Order governmental policies and regulations. Now they were required to assimilate and be more “Indonesian”. Yet, the assimilation process did not only demand them to adapt into Indonesian culture and language, but also need to abolish everything related to Chinese culture. This was simply an act of “forced assimilation”. However, most Chinese Indonesians accepted the condition and dealt with “everyday discriminations” as well as legal ones.

Those stereotypes, prejudices and discriminations led to anti-Chinese sentiments. During periods of political changes and economic instabilities, Chinese would most likely be the scapegoat which resulted in several anti-Chinese riots. This phenomenon is well explained through Galtung's conflict triangle where assumptions of stereotypes and attitude of prejudices and discriminations, put together with frustration during structural changes, will lead into the manifestation of violence. This chained reaction happened in a repeating pattern. Looking through the thesis, three major periods of structural changes pre-1965, after the communist coup in 1965, and at the end of New Order's regime in 1997-1998 resulted in severe anti-Chinese riots. Among these, the May 1998 Riots were the most traumatic, the most influential. The event has inspired the Chinese community to struggle together for equality, protection, and abolishment of discriminations. Such movement inside Chinese community never happened before.

Ironically, the intensive discourse of Chinese and non-Chinese groups, particularly during Soeharto's ruling period, had left deep marks in Indonesian society. The majority became used to anti-Chinese discrimination and violence and this resulted in the end to the

acceptance of anti-Chinese violence as normal, inevitable, and in some cases, legal. Historical records show that no perpetrators during anti-Chinese riots were ever held to be responsible. This fact, either consciously or non-consciously, gave people the understanding of a normality of anti-Chinese violence and impunity for the perpetrators as long as it was labeled under the term “state” or “*massa*”. At this point, anti-Chinese violence was considered as cultural violence that was generally justifiable to some cultural values.

This thesis is limited up to the period of May 1998 Riots and still leaves open opportunities for future researchers to build new findings on it.

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