The Influence of Political Economy on the River Landscape of Banjarmasin during the Sultanate Period (1526-1860)

Abstract

Banjarmasin, the capital of South Kalimantan Province, is well known as a thousand river city in Indonesia. Situated on a fluvial plain and close to the mouth of the Barito River, the landscape had experienced transformation as a result of interaction between the physical environment and human actions. The urban development of Banjarmasin started when this area was designated as the capital and commercial port of the Banjarmasin sultanate in 1526. During the Southeast Asia age of commerce, this state got recognized as a pepper-growing country in the seventeenth century which brought its entrepôt entering the maritime trade network in the region. The increase of trade in this sultanate, however, exposed this state in numerous conflicts which were considerably induced by pepper trade.
This paper explores landscape changes in Banjarmasin town during the sultanate period (1526-1860) which identified through several keystone processes. These processes which presumably affected spatial and physical landscape elements, include warfare, contacts with foreign traders, and the divided territory under the treaties with the Dutch. The spatial transformation had been determined by the creation of space for political, economic and settlement functions. Meanwhile, the royal compound, trading port, and fortification became the elements that defined the development of this city. With its fluvial terrain and tidal-swamp environment, the urban life in Banjarmasin was extended on the rivers which made this city different from other port cities in the archipelago which grew on the coastland.

**Keywords**: political-economy factors, landscape transformation, landscape history, river city

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