

Contained Student Protest The Symbolic Meaning of Urban Space during the 1998 Crisis in Jakarta¹

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ABSTRACT In this article a spatial analysis is presented of the 1998 riots and the 1965 October events in Indonesia. It shows the dynamic aspect of urban symbolic ecology by describing the meaning of space within the context of these influential social transformations. The comparison aims at a deeper understanding of spatial symbolism in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta. It is an example of renewed extended situational analysis.

INTRODUCTION

The resignation of President Soeharto on 21 May, 1998, and the subsequent installation of President Habibie are part of a reformatory process that has attracted ample attention from scholars in a wide range of disciplines. In the welter of discussions on the matter, the causes and consequences of the monetary crisis which triggered off the process and its accompanying social unrest frequently crop up. The decrease in economic activities and the sharp increase in poverty also feature prominently as items for research and policy making.

In this essay we propose to take another perspective and analyze the use of urban space during the political crisis - designated *reformasi* in Indonesian. The basic idea is that the events during this "reformation" were not randomly dispersed throughout the capital. On the contrary, the sites of the incidents had specific symbolic meanings chosen to convey the intentions of the particular groups involved to a wider public, even to the international forum covered by the mass media. The sites chosen or avoided for protests, riots, and rituals throw light on the significance of these places in Indonesian culture.

This analysis brings to light the configuration of urban meanings and its distribution in the Jakarta space. As such it may be considered part

of urban symbolic ecology,² a branch of urban anthropology which has much in common with cultural geography. This urban symbolic ecology is generally static in nature, as it often produces models describing the distribution of symbols and rituals in urban space. Although it is acknowledged that symbols come and go, congruent to the rhythm of power changes and social dynamics, in this essay using a situational analysis, we want to stress the importance of situational factors in the display and experience of urban meanings and symbolism. Spatial knowledge becomes particularly meaningful in the context of specific events.

In anthropological literature, alongside the situational analysis of one particular event the idea of extended situational analysis - in which several similar events are studied - has also been advanced.³ In this essay we want to apply this idea of extended situational analysis by comparing the symbolic ecology of the *reformasi* with that of the 1965 change in leadership which forced Sukarno to cede power to Soeharto. This will be reinforced by the introduction of data from the 1989 Chinese student revolt in Tian'anmen Square, Beijing, as presented by Pieke (1993). This will add depth to our insights into the symbolic use of urban space. The analyses of the spatial implications of the Indonesian 1998 and 1965 presidential transfers are based on interpretations of the complete set of reports in two Dutch newspapers, the *NRC* (later the *NRC Handelsblad*) and *Trouw*, supplemented by additional information from other Dutch and Indonesian newspapers and written sources.

TIAN'ANMEN AND MERDEKA SQUARES

Tian'anmen Square brims with great symbolic significance. It is the open space facing the South

Gate of the Imperial or Forbidden City. Pieke (1993: 157) states that in imperial times it was called the Heavenly Road, which marked the division between the sacred sphere of the emperor and the profane, outside world. This borderline served ritual purposes, such as providing the area for the promulgation of imperial edicts and the confirmation of death sentences. Later it became the place where many government buildings were located. In the communist era it was used for the mass rallies which formed part of the communist ritual repertoire. Basically, it was the site where the government met the people and therefore it also became a natural bone of contention. The more so because of the Monument of the Revolutionary Heroes which is located on the square and does not represent any specific segment of society. As Pieke writes:

'It is anonymous and can therefore in principle be appropriated by anybody. By occupying the Monument one styles oneself as the representative of the Chinese people, whose revolutionary qualities are the basis of the party's legitimate power. Occupation of the Monument is a way to appropriate the Communist Party's discourse of legitimate power to reprimand and challenge that same party. It is a way to attack the party with its own weapons, making it very difficult for that same party to suppress legitimately such a movement.' (Pieke, 1993: 160).

So, in historical and symbolic terms Tian'anmen Square is the most suitable place for a protest movement to incorporate and use as a basis for the communication of a revolutionary or reformist message. The students in Beijing were aware of this and chose this public place for the expression of their violently suppressed ideals.

Merdeka Square in the centre of Jakarta also has great symbolic power. It was one of the two main town squares of late colonial Batavia, the place where parades were held and people went to take the air. Nowadays, as Medan Merdeka, it has become the symbol of Indonesia's independence. The pivotal expression of this is the National Monument (Monas), located right in the centre of the square. It has the form of a pestle and mortar, referring to fertility by combining these male and female elements, and consists of three parts, namely the national museum in the

basement, the hall with the regalia of the state at ground level, and the golden flame symbolizing the spirit of the Indonesian people at the top of the column. The importance of the square is also demonstrated by the location of the presidential palace to the north, the town hall to the south, and the Istiqlal mosque, the cathedral, and Protestant church to the northeast.

Merdeka Square and Monas can be seen as the centre of a circle of monuments in Jakarta symbolizing Indonesian nation building. These monuments constitute the symbolic heritage of the Old Order vested under Sukarno. The New Order of Soeharto has set up its own constellation of monuments of which the Crocodile Hole constitutes the core. This memorial, laid out at the spot where six generals and one junior officer were killed by members of the 30 September Movement, symbolizes the sacrificial offering which inaugurated the New Order regime. The new condominiums and shopping centres erected on the fringes of Jakarta can within certain limits be interpreted as a third circle of urban symbolism. They refer to the rise of a new (middle) consumer class and the recent cooperation between government and private developers (Nas, 1993: 21).

This concentric configuration of symbols confirms the assumption that the central square would be the best place from which to challenge vested political interests. This explains why in the first instance in 1998, the oppositional parties led by Amin Rais set their sights on this location as the ideal place in which to extend their protests, which were initially mounted at the university campuses, particularly those of the Trisakti and Atma Jaya universities.⁴ The army, however, lost no time in letting them know that no such protest would be tolerated on Medan Merdeka and that it was prepared to intervene violently if necessary. After submitting to this ukase, the protesters were allowed to move to the grounds surrounding the parliament, which became the focus of contest for several days.

This diversion from Medan Merdeka to the parliament building is very fundamental to any comprehension of the meaning of the process. It indicates that the military were supporting the students, but only to a certain degree. The nation, national unity, and the presidential system

were not at stake and therefore they did not permit any student occupation of the national symbolic area. The issue was the handing over of the presidency, and that was considered a purely political matter, defined by parliamentary procedures. It was the parliament building that lay at the core of the *reformasi* and the central square remained inviolate, depicted in the newspapers as an empty space protected by troops armed with rifles at hand behind barb-wire-entanglements. The parliament building paradoxically became the focus of the events because its symbolism tends to pale in Indonesia, where democracy is "guided". This led to some confusion as its significance is interpreted differently in the foreign mass media, accustomed to full-fledged democracies, which consider the parliament to be the focus of national power.

CAMPUS, INTERNET, AND PARLIAMENT

The protest movement began on the campus, took root in the mass media, and was directed by the military to the parliament building. How did this process unfold?

Over the last few decades Indonesian society has been characterized by economic stability and growth. A modern sector has developed profiting from this economic success which is symbolized in Jakarta by modern shopping malls and high-rise condominiums. This has resulted in a growing polarization between a rising consumer class and the large mass of people who are either unemployed or eking out an existence in the informal sector. This situation formed the context of the 1998 events, which turned these social and economic conditions into a politically sensitive and highly tense situation (Marzali, 1998).

From the beginning of 1997, inevitably affected by the Asia crisis the Indonesian economy had been showing signs of stagnation. The value of the rupiah declined rapidly and the president asked help from the IMF, which promised US\$ 43 billion under set conditions. However, the government did not appear to be able or willing to meet the conditions of the IMF and the promised result was not forthcoming. Regulations introduced to meet the conditions of a second agreement with the IMF led to food riots on 9 February, 1998. President Soeharto was elected for the

seventh time on 11 March of that same year. From that date onwards students organized protest actions against the regime, particularly antagonistic to the person of the president. The police and army did not interfere and the protests were tolerated as long as they were restricted to the campuses ensuring that ordinary citizens were not involved. One factor the government had not counted on was that the protest actions taking place on a great number of campuses all over Indonesia were coordinated by the Internet. This medium became crucial to the distribution of information among the students themselves, and also to the outside world.⁵ Government suppression could be avoided, because no censorship of the Internet was possible at that moment. The situation continued to deteriorate. Under the pressure of a third agreement with the IMF, the government decided to suspend subsidies on energy. On this same day, 4 May, 1998, the Military-of-Staff, Wiranto, declared that the army would suppress any student demonstrations outside the campuses. The mark up on petrol prices caused urban riots in Medan, which led to plundering, particularly of Chinese shops. The army protected the local government, but did not intervene in the riots. During the night from 12 to 13 May, 1998, the counterinsurgency police under command of Prabowo shot six students at the University of Trisakti campus in Jakarta.⁶ The students organized a service of mourning for the victims in the university grounds. In the afternoon more than 5000 students left for the parliament building, while the army functioned as a shield between them and the police. The students were admonished not to demonstrate at the parliament grounds and returned to the campus. The next day massive riots took place in Jakarta in which besides attacks on some foreign companies Chinese shops were targeted, plundered and set on fire. The group of rioters and plunderers was said to be composed mainly of the poorer segments of the population. A later report states that the uproar and anti-Chinese atrocities were not as spontaneous as they seemed, but had been instigated by athletic young men with short hair (army rank and file) indicating the involvement of higher army circles.⁷ President Soeharto had to break off his visit to Egypt and lower the price of petrol the

next day, 15 May. He had talks with the students. While peace was being restored in Jakarta, many foreigners and Indonesian Chinese fled the country. A number of protesters gathered in East Jakarta at the golf course where the president and his elite group were regular players. The student protests continued and on 18 May, 1998, the students occupied the parliamentary building and grounds without any intervention by the police or army. Prabowo seemed to have opted for the side of Wiranto. The students had to enter the grounds through a small opening in the heavy gate. They often wore jackets in the colours of their university. Their activities were coordinated by the use of the Internet and mobile telephones. During the daytime there was singing and the playing of drums, while political cabaret and serious discussions also featured as prominent activities. Well-known persons were received at the grounds as visitors and gave speeches. Businessmen provided the students with water and food. Sometimes the atmosphere became really festive. During the nights, groups of sleeping students, sometimes with the head on their satchels, lay scattered over the grounds.

Talks took place between the president, Wiranto, Prabowo, and Vice-President Habibie. The chairman of the parliament, Harmoko, the leader of the largest Muslim party, Abdul Rahman Wahid, and the leader of the second Muslim party in Indonesia, Amien Rais, made official statements pro and contra the president. But, finally, the unrelenting student protests led to Soeharto's resignation during a sober twenty-minute ceremony on 21 May, 1998, at the presidential palace on Merdeka Square. At the parliament grounds some students expressed their joy at the news that Soeharto had resigned by jumping into the large pond situated in front of the parliament and wading through the water. Their delight was short-lived. As soon as they learned that Vice-President Habibie was his successor they resumed their protest, because Habibie was considered a member of the Soeharto clan. On 22 and 23 May the parliament grounds were filled with pro-Habibie demonstrators and skirmishes took place between the two groups. On the night of 23 to 24 May, the military cleared the parliament building and grounds. No force was used; the superior numbers of soldiers were sufficient

to get their message across. The students were persuaded to leave the grounds by a naked show of force. Buses transported them to the nearest campus. The clearance of the parliament grounds signalled that the temporary coalition between the students and the army had terminated.

This description of the use of space by the students during the *reformasi* reveals that the student activities can be characterized as "contained protest". For a long time the military was able to restrict the student unrest to the level of the campus. It did not spill over to the golf course frequented by the president because of the limited symbolic significance of this site. Only after the rise of tension between two branches of the army and the involvement of the common people in street riots, did the protest gain momentum and was allowed to extend over to the grounds of parliament. This much was permissible but an invasion of the central square was not tolerated. After the goals of the protest movement were considered to have been realized and President Soeharto had stepped down, the character of containment in the actions of the military emerged inexorably, which caused disappointment to and strong feelings of frustration among a great number of students.

SHOPS, HOTELS, AND RINGROADS

The spill over from campus protest containment at the lowest level to the protest containment at the level of the parliament grounds was triggered off by the killing of the students at Trisakti University and the subsequent mob riots and assaults on Chinese shops.

After the riots in Medan sparked off by the rise in the petrol price, the unrest spread to Jakarta. The plundering began near Trisakti University, where the students had been shot. From there it diffused to the western part of Jakarta and to the nearby city of Tangerang. Along the road to Tangerang, shops and factories were attacked.⁸ In the course of the day, the Chinese ward, Glodok, was plundered and buildings were set alight. Electronics appeared to be the most popular object of plunder among the robbers. The textile market at Tanah Abang and the shops along the Mangga Dua Boulevard also suffered severely, according to the newspaper reports.

Plumes of smoke and piles of ashes marked the burning sites. Merdeka Square and the presidential palace were safeguarded by army protection. Many Chinese and foreigners hid themselves in their houses or took refuge in international hotels. Some of them tried to escape the burning city or even to flee the country altogether and took the toll-road heading for the airport. Eyewitnesses reported that cars were pelted with stones. In the international mass media foreigners reported the aggression shown by groups along the road, the effect heightened by shots of the broken windows to their cars. The burning of the mall at Klender, East Jakarta, probably cost more than 200 lives, among them most likely including those of plunderers. Photographs of rows of carbonized bodies were prominent in the mass media. On 18 May Christern⁹ reported that the riots had led to several thousand buildings being partly damaged or totally destroyed, including the premises of hundreds of banks. Adding to the mounting damage, more than thousand houses were plundered, two churches burned down, and thousands of cars and motorcycles damaged. Jakarta had become a ghost town full of burned out symbols.

The riots brought the economic and social life to a standstill. The people of Jakarta lapsed into a state of shock when they began to realize what was happening. The Internet was one of the means people used to express their anxieties. CNN live television programmes of the events in Jakarta were a very important source from which people could gather information on the course of events. The situation in Jakarta resembled a state of war. People were attacked by gangs and robbed. Information about what was happening was diligently sought in order to be prepared for eventual flashpoints.

The Chinese population group in particular found itself playing the role of a scapegoat. Their shops were plundered and burned and in some cases the owner died in the fire. Visualizing themselves as victims some time in the future, some Chinese decided to leave the country.

BARRACKS, PRISONS, AND BANKS

Although the students figured prominently in the protests, especially enjoying wide cover-

age in the mass media, the role of the military was clearly crucial during the process. It was the military that allowed the students to get on with their actions. In this way the four levels of protest containment - campus, parliament, Merdeka Square, and Chinese ward - gradually evolved with the military as the major factor. Dominant thought they were, this did not mean that the military dictated the whole process. Undermined by the shooting by the Jakarta troops of the counterinsurgency police under Prabowo and the intervention of the military headed by Chief-of-Staff Wiranto, the campus level of containment became untenable. The students had to be allowed to occupy the parliament grounds. This leniency did not extend to the third level of containment which remained under firm control of the military who informally declared that they would not hesitate to create a new Tian'anmen incident should mass demonstrations take place on Merdeka Square and the presidential palace. The fourth level, the atrocities committed in the Chinese ward, remained for some time at least beyond military control. This shows that, to a certain extent the army dominated the process that led to the succession of Soeharto by Habibie, and the Chief-of-Staff, Wiranto, emerged as the victor. As the barracks themselves are highly protected places, they did not attain any symbolic value. It was at non-army sites with a high symbolic value that the soldiers played their role in the events.

The other victors of the *reformasi* process were some of the political opponents of Soeharto, who were granted pardons by President Habibie and were allowed to leave prison.¹⁰ One of the most prominent among them was Muchtar Pakpahan, the trade union leader, who had been sentenced for subversive activities. Another was Sri Bintang Pamungkas, a professor at the Universitas Indonesia, who lost his job for dissident political activities. When these well-known prisoners were freed, Cipinang prison momentarily found itself at the centre of attention of the mass media. The fact that many other opponents of the Soeharto government remained imprisoned, however, was a reason for those pardoned to demand the freedom of these fellow-prisoners before they themselves would leave prison. This extracted a promise from the Minister of Justice

that gradually other prisoners would be set free during the next few months.

The third type of urban site that grew in importance after Habibie took over is the bank buildings. Shaken by the political instability and the uncertainty about the value of the rupiah, people kept on the safe side by withdrawing their savings from the banks, especially those with ties to Soeharto and his clan members. Rumours that the banks were no longer able to pay caused a run on withdrawals. Pictures of mobs in front of the bank buildings dominated the papers. The Bank BCA, owned by Liem Sioe Liong who is reported to have worked hand in glove with Soeharto, was even put under government control.¹¹

HALIM

This analysis of the 1998 protests invites a comparison with the 1965 events. How was the Jakarta space used during this so-called abortive coup? And were the same levels of containment evident at that time?

The 1965 October events began with the murder on seven Indonesian army officers in the early morning of 1 October.¹² The group responsible for these murders claimed that the officers were attempting to mount a coup against President Sukarno. On the first of October, the Movement announced on Radio Jakarta that General Untung had arrested the leaders of the Council of Generals, who were said to have planned a *coup d'état* for 5 October. Untung's action was called the 30 September Movement and it was said to be supported by officers and troops from all the armed forces. Soon after that, it was announced that a National Revolutionary Council would be formed. This Council would organize national elections, which would ensure the representation of all the political currents in parliament (Holtzappel, 1979: 217). The Indonesian army under the leadership of General Soeharto occupied Merdeka Square (near the studio of Radio Jakarta) and, without firing a shot, they were able to regain control of this central place. The divisions loyal to the Council were driven away from the Square by pangs of hunger: some of them later joined the troops of Soeharto, the others left for Halim (Crouch, 1978: 130-131). Af-

ter this defection, President Sukarno regained control of the country. On the morning of 2 October, commando troops from the parachute regiment advanced to the airport of Halim, which also fell back under army control (Crouch, 1978: 133). This was not the final note as parts of the 30 September Movement were still active in other parts of Java, and it took the Indonesian army about a month to defeat them. There is no evidence that the PKI leadership had made any political deals with the 30 September Movement. No communist groups were involved either in the events on the early morning of 1 October, or on Merdeka Square (Holtzappel, 1979: 234-235). Nevertheless the PKI were blamed for being the instigators of the 30 September Movement (Holtzappel, 1979: 227).¹³ Belief in this allegation soon resulted in a series of anticommunist actions headed by (mostly young) Muslims.

Besides Merdeka Square and the radio station located there where the public part of the events took off, the airport at Halim has become by far the most important symbolic urban site associated with the 1965 events. It gained general currency under the local place name, Lubang Buaya (Crocodile Hole). The monument laid out there by President Soeharto refers to the sacrifice required for the establishment of the New Order. The large monument erected on the spot where the bodies of the officers murdered by the members of the 30 September Movement were found, houses statues of the victims, a *pendopo* over the hole, a building in which the interrogations are displayed, and a small rear gallery with photographs of the victims alive and laid out in their coffins. In 1965 the death of the officers was followed by seven days of national mourning and the 5 October celebration of the Day of the Armed Forces was cancelled.

The significance of the Halim events is also shown by the refusal of the Chinese and Cuban embassies in Jakarta to honour the request of the Indonesian government that flags be flown at half-mast.¹⁴ By ignoring this request, the Chinese and Cuban governments made an important statement, namely that they did not fully disapprove of the actions of the 30 September Movement. The role of the Chinese and Cuban embassies in what happened leads us to a third level of symbolic meaning. The events of 1965

took place in an international situation dominated by the Cold War. This context was to some extent expressed by the use of international space during the events. Anticommunist Muslim demonstrators used the space in front of the Chinese and American embassies to express their opinions about the international context of the October events. The demonstrators paid tribute to the United States by shouting 'Long live America'. Meanwhile the Indonesian military violated the international space of the Chinese embassy, by investigating the office of the Chinese trade attaché.¹⁵ The government of Indonesia, however, denied responsibility for this event. In military circles an anti-Chinese attitude was gaining ground, so it is not unlikely that the military made use of this international space in its search for a way to express its opinion within margins acceptable to the Indonesian government. This international dimension of the 1965 events runs more or less parallel to the role of the Internet and international mass media in the 1998 crisis.

The anticommunist actions undertaken by Muslim demonstrators constitute the fourth level of symbolic meaning. This series of anticommunist 'demonstrations' was directed mainly at the demolishing, burning, and plundering of properties belonging to the communist party throughout Java, Bali, and Sumatra. In Jakarta the houses of the political leaders of the PKI,¹⁶ Aidit, Lukman and Njoto, and the buildings of the communist youth and student organization were the main objectives of the Muslim demonstrators.¹⁷ There is no question about the aim of these protests, which was the total banning of the communist party in Indonesia.

The interrelationships between government, armed forces, and political groups is to some extent reflected in the four levels of symbolic space with their particular symbolic meanings, namely Merdeka Square and the radio studio, Halim, the foreign embassies, and the communist properties. Merdeka Square and the radio station reflect the symbolic and factual power over the nation. Halim (in the shape of Crocodile Hole) symbolizes the birth of the New Order, and for a long time has been honoured as such by the government, the armed forces, and political groups alike in Indonesia. After the October

murders, none of these groups made any attempt to violate this symbolic site. The anticommunist actions taken by Muslims were directed mainly towards the embassies of communist states and at communist property. Although these actions might also have been considered an act against the Indonesian government and Indonesian unity, the Indonesian armed forces took no direct action against the Muslim demonstrators. In part this can be explained by the anticommunist attitude gaining ground in the military, but it also owes something to the army's role as an intermediary between the government and the Indonesian people. The Indonesian government was against any anticommunist actions because these were seen as leading to a break up of Indonesian unity. Its dilemma was that at the same time the army had to neutralize the 30 September movement. Muslim and other religious groups were calling for the banning of the communist party and the Indonesian army was highly sympathetic to their call.¹⁸ The government, however, waited until 19 October to ban the PKI. This means that the army was caught between these two positions for about half a month. This gave the demonstrators room to manoeuvre. The investigation of the office of the Chinese trade attaché by Indonesian soldiers, without the government taking responsibility for this act, should also be considered in this light.

CONCLUSION

The 1998 and 1965 events in Indonesia demonstrate unique spatial dynamics, which are revealing in exposing the relationships between the parties involved. They embody a top-down crisis in the 1965 events and a bottom-up structure in the 1998 process. In both emergency situations the army played a crucial intermediary role. Pertinently, the extended situational analysis indicates the constant and variable use of space and as such enlightens the core values of Indonesian state foundation and formation.

The most fundamental and permanent site is Merdeka Square, which functions as the symbol of the independence and unity of the Indonesian State, besides physically offering the site of the presidential residence. This place played a central role in both crises. In 1965 the crisis

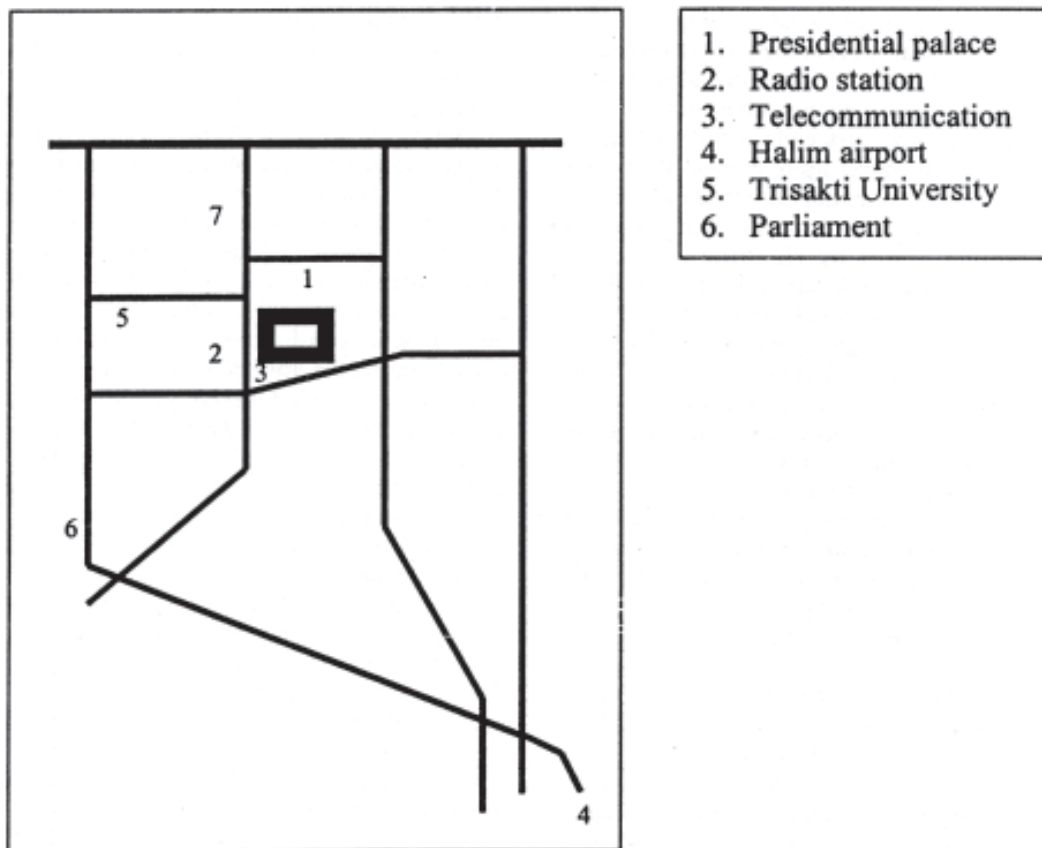


Fig. 1. Schematic representation of some important sites in Jakarta

began there and in 1998 it was made dominant by avoidance, in other words the military prevented the student protest from spilling over to a higher level. Merdeka Square is situated fairly and squarely at the top of the hierarchy of political symbols in Indonesia. It is a constant reminder of the victims who had to be sacrificed to found the nation. It is an "offering" place, housing in its basement the museum with dioramas of crucial historical events, literally showing the suffering, struggles and initiatives that laid the foundations of liberation and independence.

Besides this permanent "offering" place located at the core of city and nation, both crises created a new place of sacrifice, namely the Croco-

dile Hole, where the officers were killed, and Trisakti University Campus where the students were shot. We are curious to know how the Trisakti sacrifice is and will be expressed spatially. Will a monument be erected at the campus? Time will tell.

Both events teach us that communication is crucial in times of political crises. In 1965, the first actions involved the radio station and in 1998 the students were organized by using mobile telephones and the Internet. Means of communication have clearly changed, modern technology rendering them less bound to one particular space.

Communication is particularly relevant in

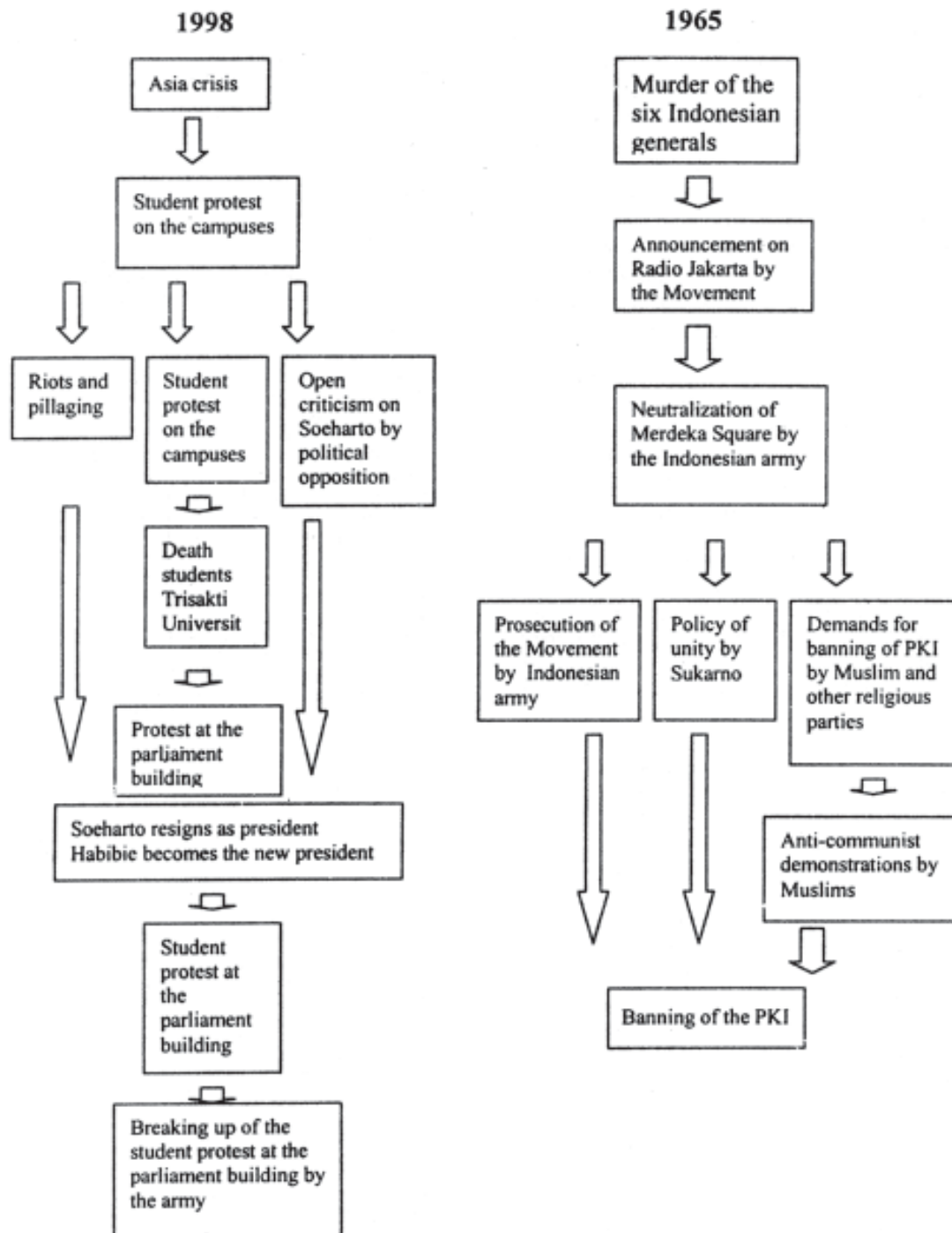


Fig. 2. Schematic representation of the 1998 and 1965 events

relation to the context in which the turmoil occurs. In 1965, the influence of the international context became clear from the role of the foreign embassies (and their intelligence services), some of which were targeted by demonstrations, while others were left in peace. The international context of this crisis was partly space bound and strongly political in character. In 1998, the role of the International Monetary Fund was crucial as one of the flashpoints of the crisis, while TV and the Internet served the positioning of the various parties in the world arena. The international context was mainly economic in character. The national context had been determined by a long-term process of growing social polarization, created by the rise of a consumer class.

Both events had a particular phase in which the crises spilled over to the mass of the population. In 1965, this led to the mass murder of people considered communists, and, in 1998, the Chinese shop-owners became the target because of their, real or supposed, privileged economic position. The chaotic, lawless situation, which evolves during a crisis situation, provokes violent scapegoat behaviour against minority groups.

In general terms our conclusion is that our extended situational analysis sheds significant light on the relations between the different parties assigned a role in the emergency situations researched. It shows the spatial permanence and variability of the events and displays the hierarchy and dynamics of locational symbolism. In the 1998 events the symbolic levels of urban space were made up by the campuses, parliament with the Internet, Merdeka Square, and the Chinese ward. In 1965 Merdeka Square and the radio station, Halim, the embassies, and the so-called communist properties formed the distinctive levels of symbolic space. This extended situational analysis proves the crucial role of the national and international context as reflected in the configuration of urban spatial symbolism.

NOTES

- 1 We are grateful to Rosemary Robson, who corrected the English.
- 2 For a description of symbolic ecology, see Nas (1998).
- 3 For a methodological treatise on the situational analysis and extended situational analysis, see J.

- van Velsen (1967).
- 4 The campus of the most important university, Universitas Indonesia, is located far from the city centre at Depok. This means that the students had to meet at some other place in Jakarta.
- 5 M.-J. Klaver, "Chatten" over de rellen in Jakarta, *NRC Handelsblad*, 16 May 1998; S. Thoenes, De studenten bewapenen zich met e-mail en websites, *Vrij Nederland*, 16 May 1998, p. 18-19; H. Ede Botje, Indonesië op Internet, *Vrij Nederland*, 16 May 1998, p. 18.
- 6 This action of the special military unit under Prabowo has led to an interpretation of the events as a classic family feud. The son-in-law, Prabowo, by creating this incident, planned to get rid of and seize the "throne" of his father-in-law, Soeharto. In this version of the events the top official of the army, General Wiranto, played no great role in the fall of Soeharto. See F. Vermeulen, "Indonesië zal functioneel desintegreren": Ex-minister Sarwono Kusumaatmadja, *NRC Handelsblad*, 3 November 1998.
- 7 F. Vermeulen, Jakarta niet blij met rapport plundering, *NRC Handelsblad*, 4 November 1998. This article mentions the report of the Commission Darusman, in which the systematic character of the plundering and raping of the Chinese women, as well as the probable involvement of army units are pointed out.
- 8 F. Vermeulen, Soeharto "zwicht alleen voor volk": Jakarta geteisterd door plundersaars, *NRC Handelsblad*, 14 May 1998.
- 9 M. Christern, "Het einde van ons leven hier", *NRC Handelsblad*, 18 May 1998.
- 10 F. Vermeulen, Pakpahan: Alleen de smaak is veranderd, *NRC Handelsblad*, 26 May 1998.
- 11 Door onze correspondent, Bank BCA in Indonesië onder curatele, *NRC Handelsblad*, 29 May 1998.
- 12 For more elaborate descriptions and interpretations of the 1965 October events, see Gunawan (1968), Holtzappel (1979), and Pohan (1988). Pohan claims that the PKI did not play an important role in the incident of 30 September and that 'it was an internal army affair' (Pohan 1988: 41).
- 13 "Anti-communistische sfeer bij het leger", *NRC*, 7 October 1965.
- 14 De week van Z tot Z, *NRC*, 9 October 1965.
- 15 Indonesische leger gaat politieke achtergrond van de revolutie na, *NRC*, 18 October 1965.
- 16 PKI stands for Partai Komunis Indonesia (Communist Party of Indonesia).
- 17 Weer anti-communistische actie te Djogjakarta, *NRC*, 14 October 1965.
- 18 Strijd om Djogjakarta woedt nog voort, *NRC*, 6 October 1965.

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