The development of *Nihonmachi* in Indonesia through culture, politics, and industry in Cikarang, Bekasi

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**Abstract.** This research is a continuation of research on *Nihonmachi* in Indonesia that is previously done in Blok M, Jakarta. It is done by looking at the economic relation between Japan and Indonesia and the effect of Japanese pop culture through a multidisciplinary method to explain how *Nihonmachi* in Indonesia is formed. The method used for gathering data is by ethnographic method, using interviews from multiple sources to gain several perspectives around the Japanese community formed in Cikarang that also hosts Sakura Matsuri annually. The results show that the Japanese living in Cikarang tends to be a more closed community because of the more segregated space in Cikarang. The Japanese can choose where they live and form a group exclusive to themselves, effectively forming a gated community. It can be concluded that the Japanese community in Cikarang develops a distinct identity that differs from the Japanese community in Blok M.

**Keywords:** Nihonmachi, Indonesia, culture, politics, industry

1. Introduction

*Nihonmachi* or Japantown is a term that is used to identify sizeable Japanese communities outside Japan. Japan has been migrating across the world since the 16-17th century. The research on *Nihonmachi* has been conducted in other countries. The research on *Nihonmachi* in the United States with a historical approach highlights Japanese Americans’ segregation experience [1, 2]. The Japanese diasporas are also spreading across South East Asia. Mayumi Ono and Igarashi have analyzed Japanese immigrants’ lifestyles in contemporary Malaysia [3, 4, 5]. Most Japanese immigrants in Malaysia are the elders from the middle to the high economic class that plan to stay for a long time, mainly with economic concerns as motivation. In Japan, this is commonly known as Long Stay (*rongusutei*). This move is endorsed by the government program Malaysia My Second Home (MM2H). This program is a continuation of the Look East Policy by Mahathir Mohamad in 1982. The socio-cultural relationship between Japan and Malaysia is often done by student exchange, exchanging language lessons, technologies, and promoting tourism between Japan and Malaysia.
In comparison to the case of America and Southeast Asia, the Japanese communities formed differently. Japanese communities in the United States have faced segregations motivated by race before finally being acknowledged and assimilated into the local culture. It is while creating a new identity that incorporates their imagination of “Japan”, but it is not quite similar to how people born and raised in Japan will behave. San Francisco, San Jose, Sacramento, and Los Angeles are some of the cities with Japantown in the United States. Meanwhile, Japanese communities formed in Southeast Asia commonly have strong connections with Japan and does not seem to assimilate with their host country as strongly as in America. It is also noted that the term Nihonmachi and Japantown having similar meanings, but are used differently. Nihonmachi is a term for Japanese communities in Southeast Asia, while Japantown is a term for Japanese communities in western countries.

In Indonesia, Japanese arrival has been recorded since the 1600s. At present, the Japanese population is estimated to be 19,717 [6]. According to the Japanese Foreign Ministry, the Japanese population can be seen in Surabaya, Bali, Jakarta, and Bekasi.

The presence of Japan in popular media increased in 1990, with Japanese cultural products entering the Indonesian market. Anime (Japanese animation) like Doraemon, Dragon Ball, Sailor Moon, and Voltus V is broadcasted across televisions [7]. These cultural products shaped the perception of Japan among Indonesians. Along with television media, Japanese themed festivals that bring Japanese traditional performances, music performances, cosplay competition also increase in numbers. For example, there are Anime Festival Asia (discontinued at the time of writing), Ennichisai in Blok M, government-supported Jak-Japan Matsuri in Jakarta. At the same time, Bekasi has Sakura Matsuri and Tanabata Matsuri.

Cikarang, Bekasi has been known to host Japanese companies since 1980. In 2009, industrial activities, primarily manufacturing, contributed 79.73% of the GDRP [8]. Developers like Lippo Cikarang made an industrial area that hosted not only Japanese but also European and East Asian companies. They also made infrastructures such as apartments, housings, and an elderly home that boasted “Japanese Standard” to attract customers. Property developer like PP Properti and Jababeka Residence have collaborated to construct a living area in Jababeka City dubbed as “Little Tokyo”. The construction is expected to be completed in 10 years and has a facility up to Japanese standards. This property mainly targets foreign workers and upper-middle-class undergraduates [7]. In April 2019, the Cikarang Japan School for Japanese expatriates’ children is also opened and currently has around 60 students applying [9].

This research is a continuation of research on Nihonmachi in Indonesia that is previously done in Blok M, Jakarta. Previous research looked at the economic relation between Japan and Indonesia and the effect of Japanese pop culture through a multidisciplinary method to explain how Nihonmachi in Indonesia was formed. This research will focus on Cikarang, Bekasi, where many Japanese companies are located, and the presence of Japanese infrastructures is increasing. This research will find the relationship between the development of the Japanese community in the Cikarang area and infrastructures around the area.

2. Concepts and method

Appadurai (1980) witnessed the change of the mass media and its circulation in the global world. According to him, migration and mass media circulation created a new instability in creating an imagined identity. It was because media were no longer confined in one nation, a diasporic public sphere. People and their imaginations met spontaneously and gave birth to new imaginations that consequently creates a plurality of imagined worlds [10]. This view can be used to analyze how the presence of Nihonmachi in Indonesia bring about a change of perception for the the Japanese living in Indonesia.

2.1. Soft power

In analyzing the development of Nihonmachi in a state and Japan’s relation in influencing its development, the concept of Soft Power by Joseph Nye is considered. It is the ability to influence
people’s actions for a certain agenda with economic power, culture, and politics [11]. This analysis looks into how Nihonmachi affects the investment flow from Japan to Indonesia.

The relationship between the consumption of imported goods by Indonesia and the appearance of Nihonmachi in Blok M that mostly operate businesses that provide culinary and leisurely activities can be explained by using what Alan Beardsworth and Alan Bryman refers to “Quasification” [12]. They saw the process of giving a certain theme in restaurants is a strategy to attract customers not just for the sake of profit but to pull the customers out momentarily from their tedious daily routines. Quasification can be defined as the process of fabricating an environment in such a way that it takes one away from daily reality. To be more specific, the quasification that happens in Blok M is one that they defined as ethnic theming, which ethnical symbols like decorations, music, and wares were used to create the impression of an exotic but recognizable culture.

The foods served also plays a role in the theming process. Still, the choice of theme and foods are often dependent on the associations of food, place, and people that have already existed within the host society. In other words, the stereotypes of society are imagined by the host society. The problem of authenticity in the themes and the foods is subordinate to the demands of the consumers [12]. This theory is not exclusive only to restaurants. For example, if one looks at the promotional video about Jababeka City Little Tokyo, the visual elements in the video are the stereotyped ethnical symbol of Japanese.

As a global phenomenon, gated communities refer to a type of housing development, which has strong access control. It means that fences and gate close this community, in which mostly gates are controlled at least by one guard. In the big communities, controlling is done by patrolling and CCTV as well. In particular, they are seen to encourage affluent groups to increase their social distance from what is perceived as ‘the other’. One of the main reasons for upper-class people seeing living in the form of central settlement, surrounded by the fences and walls, is the perceived security it provides [13].

This research will primarily use a qualitative approach. It is with the initial assumption of the economic relation between Japan and Indonesia as the primary cause of the formation of the Japanese community in Blok M and Cikarang. The technique used in the data gathering is ethnography, which combines field observation along with staged interviews with the respondents concerning the development of the Japanese community in Indonesia. Along with the interviews, additional literature reviews concerning government policy, the bilateral relationship between Indonesia and Japan, and property reports are also added to give other contexts on the state of Nihonmachi in Indonesia. The interviews will be done in Indonesian and will be translated into English in the quotations used in this article. Table 1 shows a list of questions in Bahasa and English.

Table 1. The List of Question in Bahasa and English.

| Pertanyaan wawancara sesi pertama: | 1st session questions: |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Asalnya dari daerah mana?         | Where do you come from? |
| Where                             | When did you start to live in Indonesia? |
| Kapan menetap di Indonesia?       | What is your job now? |
| Sedang bekerja sebagai apa?       | Since you live in Indonesia, have you ever thought to return to Japan? |
| Selama tinggal di Indonesia apakah pernah berpikir untuk balik ke Jepang? | What is your opinion if you compare Indonesia and Japan? |
| Bagaimana pendapat tentang Indonesia dibanding dengan Jepang? | Do you join any Japan community? |
| Apakah mengikuti kegiatan komunitas Jepang? | As a Japan property agent, what do you think about Japanese expatriate living in Indonesia? |
| Sebagai agen property Jepang, bagaimana biasanya expat Jepang tinggal di Indonesia? | Where does the Japanese expatriate live? |
| Di mana biasanya Expat Jepang tinggal? | How long does usually Japanese expatriate live in Indonesia? |
| Berapa lama Expat Jepang biasanya tinggal | What do you think about the relationships |
### Pertanyaan buat sesi selanjutnya:

- Apakah Nagayama-san juga menyediakan layanan penjualan rumah expat yang menetap lama di Indonesia?
- Berapa harga yang ditawarkan untuk expat Jepang di Indonesia? (Daerah dekat Blok M dan Cikarang)
- Kira-kira ada berapa banyak genchisaiyou di Jakarta?
- Biasanya alasan menjadi genchisaiyou di Indonesia adalah?
- Apakah ada perbedaan gaya hidup genchisaiyou dengan expat Jepang yang ke Indonesia untuk penugasan kerja?
- Apa tren pilihan tempat tinggal expat di Indonesia? Apa lebih sering di Jakarta atau Tangerang?
- Di Ennichisai merangkap tugas apa?
- Apakah para genchisaiyou punya aktivitas berkumpul yang lain selain festival?
- Ada kenal expat Jepang yang paling lama tinggal di Indonesia?
- Bagaimana mencari informasi tentang komunitas Jepang di Cikarang?
- Apa saja fasilitas yang ditawarkan buat apartemen expat?
- Standar seperti apa yang dipakai agar tempat tinggal yang ditawarkan dinyatakan layak buat disewakan? Apakah mengikuti desain apartemen di Jepang?
- Adakah orang pension yang pindah ke Indonesia juga?

| 2nd session questions: |
|-------------------------|
| - Does Nagayama-san sell house for Japanese expatriate that lives for long duration in Indonesia? |
| - How much is the price offered for the Japanese expatriate in Indonesia (Bloks M area and Cikarang area)? |
| - How many do you think genchisaiyou in Jakarta? |
| - What do you think is the basic reason of become genchisaiyou in Indonesia? |
| - Is there any different lifestyle between genchisaiyou and Japanese expatriate that come to Indonesia for business? |
| - What is the trend for housing region for Japanese expatriate? Jakarta or in Tangerang? |
| - What is your duty in Ennichisai? |
| - Apart from festival, does genchisaiyou have other regular gathering? |
| - Do you know the any Japanese expatriate that live the longest in Indonesia? |
| - Do you know how to get information about Japanese community in Cikarang? |
| - What are the facilities offered for Japanese expatriate’s apartment? |
| - What is the standard used to measure the place that is ready to be used? |
| - Is the design following the design of Japanese apartment? |
| - Is pension people move to Indonesia too? |

3. The development of Nihonmachi in Jakarta and Cikarang

The preliminary findings of researching the Nihonmachi started with an interview session with MY, ET, FD, and DS simultaneously. From the interview, it is known that the Japanese expatriates in Cikarang formed a community such as Cikarang Japan Club. Once a month, they gather in a place called Japan Information Center in Trivium Terrace apartment. It has libraries and meeting rooms, while also offering Indonesian language tutors. One of the employees explains that this place has been created since 2016, and is often used as a meeting place, especially for the preparation of Tanabata Matsuri.

From the interview with MY, the expatriates’ preference to live in the apartment has increased in the last 3-5 years. Traffic congestion and distance from the workplace are the reasons to find a more strategic location to live. Lippo Cikarang, the area developer, is also making sure that the infrastructures are built to attract more Japanese by building apartments, malls, and schools. The most significant development
in the Cikarang Japanese community will probably be the opening of the Japanese school. It will be an important development for the community because until recently, most families chose to live in Jakarta even though they work in Cikarang because the school is only available in Jakarta. In 2019, we finally had a school in Cikarang. For the factories in the area, businesses prefer to use the privately-owned power plant rather than the state-owned power plant. The primary reason is that the factories want a stable power supply for the factories to ensure smooth operation.

These interviews mirror the target market for the city developers in Cikarang. Cikarang has been known as an industrial area for foreign companies from Europe and Asian countries. To support the demands of companies and expatriates, living quarters, apartments, and power plants are made to ensure free traffic congestion for traveling to the workplace and ensuring smooth factory operation. Looking at the available data of Japanese companies in Cikarang, Most of the companies is dominated by manufacturing companies, specifically the automotive companies, followed by general machinery and steel. There is a need for a privately-owned power plant that prioritizes the desirable factory. It is also important to note that even though manufacturing has been commonly known to dominate Cikarang, the exact number of Japanese companies in Cikarang has not been documented very well, even when visiting government websites (kemenperin.go.id) or trade organization (www.kadin-indonesia.com). The data may exist, but it is not released to the public. According to Toto Bartholomeus, CEO of PT Lippo Cikarang, during his speech in Sakura Matsuri 2018 that Japanese companies in Lippo Cikarang area alone reached 1500, but the list could not be found through internet searches. So by the end of this research period, the only possible method is to manually check the companies one by one with the tenant list from some of the land developers like Jababeka, MM2100, and EJIP, and look at addresses from klikalamat.com. With the current method, only 223 companies have been confirmed to be a Japanese company in 7 industrial sectors in Cikarang [14]. Therefore, further research needs to consider this obstacle and hopefully gain some contacts or methods to gather the data. However, Japanese people are not the sole driving force of these city planning. One of the local community called Komunitas Alumni Jepang Indonesia (KAJI) often participates in the events that include Japanese elements.

KAJI, formed in 2010, is a community consisted of people that have study experience in Japan. In the interview with FD, a KAJI member who works as one of the committees for Sakura Matsuri, gives some perspective about the interaction of Japanese expatriates in Cikarang. FD claims that most of their interactions are mostly happening during the preparation of the event. At the same time, FD argues that this is because they have conflicting work schedules. This statement seems to highlight the difference between Japanese expatriates living in Jakarta and Cikarang. From the previous research on Japantown in Blok M, Japanese and local people have to share space in their daily activities such as offices and restaurants, so interactions between them are encouraged. Meanwhile, in Cikarang, Japanese expatriates tend to be gated communities. Unlike Blok M, where locals already can choose where they live using the newly built apartments or houses that target the Japanese demography, so they often are separated from local people. Due to this, they can choose which neighbor they interact with. One of the more interesting information from FD is that the Sakura Matsuri is started not by the Japanese Residents, but by the Lippo group, by saying “Sakura Matsuri started in 2012. The idea of starting was actually from us and not from the Japanese community. Lippo lent us some areas to use, so we started working from the available resources. I was excited at that time. From that point, we went through and arrived at our eighth festival this year. Other than Sakura Matsuri, there were also Dragon Matsuri and Momiji Matsuri, and there were other projects that we were also working on.”

With some of KAJI members acting as the advisor, Sakura Matsuri is one of the most popular Japanese themed festivals in Bekasi, so this comes at a surprise that Japanese people or Japanese Embassy usually initiates other large Japanese themed festivals. It hints that Lippo group is aware of the potential in having a festival to attract people. Other than festivals, KAJI community also does several Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to bolster its acceptance among the people. KAJI also bridges many events that connect Japanese and to the local investment opportunity.
As mentioned in the previous paragraph, this research is a continuation of Nihonmachi analysis in Indonesia. The previous efforts focused on Blok M. The dynamics found in Nihonmachi in Blok M and Cikarang show significant differences. If Nihonmachi in Blok M blends better with the local community because they have to share the same space not only through work but also cultural events such as Ennichisai, Nihonmachi in Cikarang shows a more gated community. The Japanese and local people do not tend to interact with each other because they have more options to separate from other groups. Cikarang is a growing satellite city with new cities built. It essentially filters out the type of residence that will inhabit it. Unlike in Jakarta, which has a long-lived population, it is not always possible to be relocated and forces the Japanese to share their space and encourage them to interact. Meanwhile, the Japanese in Cikarang choose to fill space exclusively with Japanese people to feel a sense of security and comfort.

4. Conclusion
This research is a continuation of the analysis of Nihonmachi in Indonesia, with the previous attempt focuses on Blok M. The dynamics found in Nihonmachi in Blok M and Cikarang exhibits noticeable differences. If Nihonmachi in Blok M blends better with the local people due to sharing the same space together not only through work but also through cultural events like Ennichisai, the Nihonmachi in Cikarang exhibits a more gated community. The Japanese and local people are not inclined to interact with each other due to having more option to segregate themselves with other groups. Cikarang, being a satellite city that is constantly developing with new cities built, essentially filters the type of residence that will inhabit it. It is unlike Jakarta that has residents staying for a long time. So, it is not always possible to relocate and forces the Japanese to share their space and incline them to interact with each other. Meanwhile, the Japanese in Cikarang can have the option to fill a space exclusively with Japanese for the perceived sense of safety and convenience, such as strategic living space that provides security, easy access to shopping, food, and workplace, and Japanese school. It effectively creates a gated community because of the ability to exclude themselves from the local people shown by the interview with FD that Japanese people only meet if the situation calls for it.

This research is early research of Nihonmachi in Indonesia. It barely scratches the surface using the available resource of information, and most likely have a lot of things that have not been covered and encountered some problems. The problems encountered in this research is primarily the availability of data that can be accessed, such as the number of Japanese living in Cikarang or how many companies are there. The internet searches on this topic only give the estimates through news articles or claims from figures in Cikarang. Thus, accurate data cannot be proven at the time of writing this. As an alternative, we interview some Japanese people or local people who are very familiar with Japanese activities in Cikarang. Still, it is also proven quite difficult since there are only a few chances to interview them, or they recommend another possible interview candidate. Hence, data from interviews are also limited. To further explore this research, the researchers will need a connection with insider figures that knows about the Japanese activities in Cikarang. It can be Japanese people to whom we inquire about their living experience in Cikarang and the land developers who possibly have more accurate data on Japanese residents and their companies.

In conclusion, Nihonmachi between Blok M and Cikarang shows a different dynamic in interacting with their environment. Japanese that live near Blok M area tends to be more open, while the Japanese in Cikarang show a more closed community. The space that Japanese inhabits has an impact on how they interact. However, it is important to note that unlike the Japanese community in American Japantown, most of the Japanese that live in Jakarta and Cikarang are mostly from Japan rather than being born in Nihonmachi of Jakarta or Cikarang. Thus, they do not exhibit the sense of communal identity that Japanese descendant from American Japantown creates. The Japanese in Nihonmachi mainly shows a cosmopolitan attitude in Blok M or a closed community in Cikarang. As pointed earlier, this research is only at its early stage. Therefore further research is needed. More factual data such as numbers of residence and Japanese infrastructures are needed to make a clearer picture. More interviews are also needed to build a perspective on Japanese experience in Jakarta and Cikarang.
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