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# Celebrating the victory and purification: *halal-bihalal* tradition in the Mangkunegaran Palace 1945-1978

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## Abstract

This study aims to analyze the history of *halal-bihalal* gathering held in the Mangkunegaran Palace. The tradition was carried out distinctively during the Mangkunegara VIII era in 1945-1978. The period marked the shift from the Colonial era to the Independent era of Indonesia, resulting in the dynamics of procession and aim of *halal-bihalal*. The culture-historical approach was employed to determine the specific pattern of phenomenon and to understand the morphology of culture. The stages of historical method, namely heuristics, criticism, historiography, and interpretation, were done. The results of research based on the theory of symbolism and the role of power show that *halal-bihalal* gathering in the Mangkunegaran reflected the social classes in which the invited guests with upper social level occupied the very very important personal seats. Nevertheless, the event also brought positive impact since people from various backgrounds could gather peacefully and eliminate the conflicts among the classes. As an implication, the tradition was perceived as an important event and held regularly. It was also popular outside the palace and imitated by Islamic organizations using the same term, *halal-bihalal*.

**Keywords:** *Idul Fitri, Halal-bihalal, Symbolism, Mangkunegara VIII*

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## Introduction

*Idul Fitri* is a victorious moment eagerly awaited by Muslims every year. In Indonesia, the celebration is simultaneously attached to a series of cultural practice and tradition. One of them is the tradition of *halal-bihalal*, serving as a reflection of Islamic teachings to nurture solidarity, unity, and compassion. The phenomenon manifests into a custom of visiting others and asking for their forgiveness (Rahmawati & Haryanto, 2020). For Indonesian people, it symbolizes Islam as a religion of tolerance and brings virtue as signified by the word *halal-bihalal*—which is interpreted as equally *halal* as forgiving each other after performing the fasting month of Ramadan—and it is a local Indonesian product, particularly the Javanese people (Misbah, 2018).

The Mangkunegaran had made the tradition of *halal-bihalal* as an icon in which in 1758, Mangkunegara I as the first ruler of Mangkunegaran invited other rulers as well as his courtiers and soldiers to attend the *halal-bihalal* gathering by holding a ceremony to the King and Empress of Mangkunegaran. The ritual of *sungkeman* an act of meeting the king in person to ask forgiveness and wish a happy *Idul Fitri* was also initially performed in this era and later, continually carried out by the descendants of Mangkunegara I. In the present study, the *halal-bihalal* tradition during the era of Mangkunegara VIII is investigated since it had distinguished implementation and goal by the time the Mangkunegaran underwent a social transition as the result of the end of the Dutch colonial era in Indonesia (Napsiah & Sanityastuti, 2020).

A former study (Zulfikar, 2018) has discussed the history of the *halal-bihalal* tradition during the Mangkunegara VIII era by explaining the procession and its impact, while (Saiful Hamka, 2019) has elaborated the notion proposed by Robert Redfield that the *Idul Fitri* festival in Java is more fun, cheerful and exhilarating than that celebrated in the Arabian Peninsula, as well as the relationship between *Idul Fitri* and the history of Islamization in Java that embodies into a tradition of Arab-Islamic civilization namely a great feast and essential local tradition for Javanese people. In a book entitled *Budaya Demayu: Nilai-nilai Historis, Estetis, dan Transendental* (The Culture of Demayu: Historical, Aesthetic and Transcendental Values), (Kasim, 2012) has emphasized the importance of maintaining and preserving culture, and how the culture potentially contributes to the development of Indonesian culture as a whole.

In overall, *halal-bihalal* is an Indonesian tradition that promotes unity, tolerance, and solidarity among the Muslims. It is a cultural symbol that represent the values of the Indonesian people and their unique interpretation of Islamic teachings (Metz, 1939). While previous studies has discussed the theme of *halal-bihalal* in the Mangkunegaran, including (Rahmawati & Haryanto, 2020), (Napsiah & Sanityastuti, 2020), (Misbah, 2018), (Iriany et al., 2019), and (Zulfikar, 2018), the present study attempts to figure out the history and procession of *halal-bihalal* during the Mangkunegara VIII era, which underwent different social circumstances from the former periods as it marked the end of the Dutch colonial era in Indonesia. This study also attempts to reveal the impact of *halal-bihalal* during the Mangkunegara VIII era based on the theories of symbolism and the role of power. Finally, this study will enriches the insight about the Indonesian culture and traditions associated with the values of tolerance and compassion in Islamic teachings as represented by the tradition of *halal-bihalal*.

This study employed the four stages of historical method, viz., heuristics, criticism, historiography, and interpretation (Daliman, 2015). Heuristics is the process of searching and collecting data, sources of data, scientific literature, books, newspapers, magazines, journals, and internet-based data related to the research theme (Hamid dan Madjid, 2008). In the present study, the process obtained several historical sources including primary, secondary, visual

sources, and files related to the theme of *halal-bihalal* and *Idul Fitri* in 1947, 1950, and 1951 (Zulfikar, 2018). Criticism was carried out toward historical sources, which are classified into external criticism and internal criticism. External criticism is used to validate the authenticity of a source, while internal criticism is used to verify historical facts. In the present study, both criticisms were used to criticize the source of archival data and then processed to be an accurate source (Iriany et al., 2019).

The stage of historiography is carried out to filter facts and to perform external criticism in which the result will be compiled to serve as a unified whole of facts. Daliman explains the three types of writing, namely narrative, descriptive, and analytical (Hakam, 2015). Interpretation involves the process of analyzing the collected data to identify specific patterns and findings during the study. The data are interpreted through the perspective of relevant theories and concepts as well as triangulation to link the data with the historical, social and cultural context of specific period (Misbah, 2018). It is required to arrange systematic writing that will provide exposure and interpretation at each stage of research.

### **Short concept of *halal-bihalal***

*Halal-bihalal* is a hallmark of the Indonesian people that reflects Islamic teachings on the emphasis towards unity, compassion, and solidarity among Muslims. Theories about symbolism in culture and the role of religion in promoting tolerance and peace can be used to explain why this tradition is momentous in Indonesia (Geertz, 1973). In addition, the influence of power and politics can be noticed from the history of the development of *halal-bihalal*, especially during the Mangkunegaran VIII era. It relates with theories about the role of power in shaping culture and traditions in society (Bourdieu, 1977). *Halal-bihalal* has been a moment to visit each other and to ask for forgiveness (Iriany et al., 2019). This tradition is a local product of Indonesian people, particularly Javanese, that symbolizes Islam as a culturally tolerant religion that promotes goodness (Bastomi, 1996). Meanwhile, *Soeara Moehammadiyah* introduced this tradition in 1926. But instead of physically shaking hand to ask for forgiveness, it was mediated by printed sheets of paper, suggesting that *halal-bihalal* can be performed in many ways.

The use of the term *halal-bihalal* at national level was initially proposed to reconcile and reduce domestic conflicts. It was suggested by K.H. Wahab Chasbullah mainly to strengthen the Indonesian unity due to intense internal conflict among political elites (Pringgodigdo, 1938). The moment of *Idul Fitri* was used to gather and forgive each other. *Halal-bihalal* allowed political elites to assemble their thoughts. In the development, it becomes a tradition for Indonesian people even an official event for many parties.

The Mangkunegaran initiated the tradition of *halal-bihalal* in 1758 during the era of Mangkunegara I and since then, it has been continually held by his successors. The present study will mainly discuss the tradition of *halal-bihalal* performed during the era of Mangkunegara VIII due to its distinctiveness from the previous ones.

### **History and development of *Halal-bihalal* in the Mangkunegaran**

*Idul Fitri* or *lebaran*, called *riyaya* in Java, is one of the most vivid and joyous religious festivals. The tradition of *halal-bihalal* comes from Arabic that means to justify each other by mutually asking for forgiveness. In Indonesia, this tradition is a representation of Islamic teachings of companionship, unity, and compassion between people. Introduced widely in 1926 (Muhammadiyah, 1979), it shifts into an official event for people to gather and ask

others for forgiveness. Nationally, the term of *halal-bihalal* was proposed by K.H. Wahab Chasbullah in 1938 with the aim to reconcile and reduce the internal conflict that occurred at that time.

Despite the familiarity of the term *halal-bihalal* among people, it cannot be found in the Scriptures. Nikolaos Van Dam, a Dutch ambassador to Indonesia and also an expert on Arabic, suggested that the term came from the word *halal* in Arabic, but it is a uniquely Indonesian term. He once presumed that the term existed in the Arabic language and tradition, yet he failed to find it both in dictionaries and practices. Finally, he concluded that the term actually came from the Muslims in Indonesia (Direktorat Jendral Pendidikan Islam, 2018). Based on evidence and primary source, the use of the term in the public space has existed since 1924. It is evidenced by the statement regarding *halal-bihalal* written in the *Soeara Moehammadijah* 5<sup>th</sup> Edition of 1924 (published in April 1924) ahead of *Idul Fitri* in 1924, which fell on May 6. A member of a branch of the Muhammadiyah from Gombang, Central Java, Rachmad, wrote a column entitled *Hari Raja 'Iedil Fithri'*. In this article, the writer conveyed keywords related to the month of Ramadan and the tradition of the holiday, namely *Oemoemnja pada hari raja 'Iedil fithri kita sama chalal bil chalal* (Generally, during *Idul Fitri*, we have *halal-bihalal*) (Muhammadiyah, 2019).

The history of *halal-bihalal* can be traced back to 1948 when Kyai Wahab proposed the event to gather political elites and named it *halal-bihalal* (Asiyah Udji, 2015). Motivated by the non-conducive political situation at that time hence, it aimed to conciliate the strains between political elites. The moment of *Idul Fitri* was the perfect moment to hold the gathering in which the guests could sit together and ask for forgiveness. Furthermore, *halal-bihalal* could be a medium to unite the political elites—who were feuding and had different standpoints—to collaborate and build the strength of the newly independent nation (Napsiah & Sanityastuti, 2020).

The presence of the term *halal-bihalal* on an edition of *Soeara Moehammadijah* in 1924, precisely ahead of *Idul Fitri*, suggested that the tradition had been well-known among people. The tradition of gathering to celebrate *Idul Fitri* had been carried out in Java and Sumatra, particularly in the distribution area of *Soeara Moehammadijah*. The magazine indirectly disseminated *halal-bihalal* as a tradition of the Archipelago. In its development, it allocated a space for the readers to wish a blessed *Idul Fitri* and ask for forgiveness to others, at an affordable cost. It indicated that the tradition also employed modern means such as writing media.

Recently, the research journal *Halal-bihalal Tradition in Java 2010-2015* suggests that *halal-bihalal* gathering is often performed by a family or relative called *Bani*—which describes family ties or family tree. It is used to refer a large family with numerous members comprising approximately four generations, namely children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren. *Halal-bihalal* becomes a moment of hospitality and a means of strengthening and introducing the family tree (Direktorat Jendral Pendidikan Islam, 2018). In 2020, however, *Idul Fitri* was celebrated differently due to the shifts in social interaction caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtual *halal-bihalal* was done due to spatial and movement restriction, bringing both positive and negative impacts. The positive impact can be seen in terms of technology as it can provide positive energy since the goal of *halal-bihalal* is to achieve proximity. However, it lessens personal attachment as during the virtual *halal-bihalal*, expression such as sadness and happiness cannot be expressed (Napsiah & Sanityastuti, 2020).

Initially, *halal-bihalal* was carried out as a simple gathering with *sungkeman* to Mangkunegara I and family as the main event. The tradition was continued by Mangkunegara II to VI, despite the absence of documents of its implementation. It was shifted into a more official event during Mangkunegara VII, and called as *Alal-bihalal* during Mangkunegara VIII (Arsip Mangkunegara No. 4026, 1945). In 1978, it had officially named as *Halal-bihalal* (Arsip Mangkunegara No. 4243, 1948). Several archives recorded the arrangement of event held as an official Mangkunegaran tradition.

The tradition of *halal-bihalal* has experienced a development. Based on the archives on *halal-bihalal*, during the Mangkunegara VII era, it became a lively event. During the Mangkunegara VIII era, it was carried out as an attractive event while people from various background were invited. In addition, open invitation was also circulated (Arsip Mangkunegara No. 841, 1945). The event was organized thoroughly by a special committee. It was also combined with other occasions, such as the celebration of Independence Day or the birthday party for the queen consort of Mangkunegara VIII (Arsip Mangkunegara No. 841, 1945). In overall, *halal-bihalal* had been an event awaited by people during the rule of the Mangkunegara.

### **Halal-bihalal in the Mangkunegara VIII era (1945-1978)**

The national tradition of *halal-bihalal* was suggested by Kyai Wahab in 1948 as a medium for gathering political elites (Asiyah Udji, 2015). It was prompted by the political situation of Indonesia in which the conflicts among political elites were rampant. Thus, the moment of *Idul Fitri* was perceived as a perfect moment to invite them over for having a friendly gathering and asking for forgiveness to each other.

The first documented *halal-bihalal* was held on 21/22 August 1948 and started at 7 p.m. The committee had the preparation completed by the time and was ready to welcome the guests. At 9:00 p.m., the *miyosan* was started, meaning Mangkunegara and the royal family came to meet the guest. When Mangkunegara entered the room, the guests had to stand in homage to Mangkunegara. At 10:00 p.m., the guests were served with traditional snacks such as *risoles* and *lemper*, and beverages such as tea and coffee (Arsip Mangkunegaran No. 495, 1948). Subsequently, the guests were allowed to meet Mangkunegara in person called *sowan*. They either directly wished a blessed *Idul Fitri* and asked for forgiveness (42 guests) or approached Mangkunegara to hand over greeting cards (91 guests). However, some guests did not perform *sowan* (49 guests). It was recorded that those who were invited started with ticket number 1035, of which 657 were responded while 378 were not. Totally, the invited guests were 730 people. About 150 security guards were on duty, chaired by R.M.P.S. Wirasoerata. At around 2:00 a.m., Mangkunegara requested a meeting for the heads of hamlets (*padusunan*) to build brotherhood between them. At 6 a.m., before going home, food parcels were distributed to the guests as souvenir (Arsip Mangkunegaran No. 495, 1948).

On 30 October 1975, the Mangkunegaran also held the tradition of *halal-bihalal*. The archives recorded the timeline of the event. At 09:30 a.m., the invited former royal soldiers gathered at a hall called *Prangwedanan*. At 10:00 a.m., Mangkunegara VIII and the royal family came to the hall. At 10:05 a.m., the Elders met Mangkunegara VIII in person to wish a blessed *Idul Fitri* and ask for forgiveness. At 10:30 a.m., Mangkunegara VIII gave a speech to respond the Elders. At 10:45 a.m., the convivial event was begun, and the food and beverages were served. At 11:15 a.m., Mangkunegara VIII and the royal family left the hall. At 12:00/13:00 p.m., the event was ended (Arsip Mangkunegaran No. 77, 1975). It was relatively

short as it was held in the morning with *sowan* or meeting Mangkunegara VIII in person as the only core event. However, in this event, several performing arts were presented to entertain the guests, including the Gambiyong dance and the Bambang Cakil dance.

### **Greetings from Mangkunegara VIII and other officials**

In 1946, Mangkunegara VIII was unable to attend *halal-bihalal* but the reason for his absence was not mentioned. Therefore, the representative of the Mangkunegaran made a speech to substitute him. Because the event was held after during the euphoria of Indonesian Independence, the speech was opened by shouting "*Merdeka*" meaning freedom. The speech was the appeal for unity and the significance of education as the foundation of the People's Knowledge Center/*Balai Pengetahuan Rakyat* (Arsip Mangkunegaran No. 565, 1948). The center was under the auspices of the Mangkunegaran and mainly focused on education. The speech delivered by the representative from the Mangkunegaran was adjusted to the conditions and situation at that time. The Independence Day was celebrated for the first time in 1946. Therefore, unity and education were the central themes to accelerate excellence and progress of the nation.

On 21 September 1948, Mangkunegara VIII delivered a speech at the Mangkunegaran Palace with the theme of independence. He emphasized the importance of national unity to maintain independence, which had only been 3 years. The issues related to the national ideology and democracy were also alluded. The essence of the speech was independence, nationalism, and the unity of Indonesians (Arsip Mangkunegara No. 565, 1948).

In 1975, Mangkunegara VIII hosted *halal-bihalal* and delivered a speech that contained his gratitude for the loyalty of people to the Mangkunegaran, his apologies as the respond to previous greeting and apologies by the Elders, his wish for the continuity of the Wiroprodjo Association, the importance of the unity of the Mangkunegaran members for the development of Indonesia, and his wish and expectation for the Indonesian nation (Arsip Mangkunegara No. 565, 1948). The speeches delivered by both Mangkunegara and his representative were mainly the advice to uphold unity to maintain independence and sovereignty. It was adapted to the conditions and circumstances at that time in which the country was still in the early years of independence.

### **The invited and the guest.**

*Halal-bihalal* held by the Mangkunegaran was an annual event. It was a forum for people to gather and ask for forgiveness to others in Shawwal, the month after Ramadan. The event was attended by numbers of royal guests. Invitations was circulated throughout the Mangkunegaran area. It was typically a modest but also extraordinary at the same time. The invited guests were selected and designed according to the event. They came from various backgrounds, ranging from the royal families and officials to ordinary people.

In 1951, *halal-bihalal* was held on Thursday, 18/19 July at 7:00 p.m. At the same time, 18 July was also the celebration of the birthday of the queen consort, G.Kdj Putri, while 19 July was also the anniversary of the coronation of Mangkunegara VIII. Therefore, the events was held simultaneously for cost efficiency. The invitation was signed by the chairman of the committee, first secretary, and second secretary. Those who attended the event had to receive invitation cards. The committee collected the data of guests in advance. It was done to prevent the overflow of guests due to the limitation of space and funding (Arsip Mangkunegaran No. 502, 1951). The guests were required to fill out the invitation before attending the event.

Totally, five sheets of archives recorded the invited guests, showing approximately 107 guests. Apart from writing their names, they were also required to pay dues beforehand. As the event of *halal-bihalal* and birthday party was held, all guests wrote their names in the guest book and pay dues to the committee for the celebration funds.

The committee for *halal-bihalal* in the Mangkunegaran announced an open invitation in 1957. The event was opened to the public, yet the guests were limited due to the lack of space. The committee carried out the registration to overcome the overflow of guests. Additionally, toddlers were prohibited to attend the event and the parents would be charged 15 IDR as a fine. In overall, the public in general was allowed to attend the event with some restrictions. Based on the analysis of archives, the invited guests were mostly relatives. For seats, they were adjusted based on social strata in which families and relatives were distinguished by their seats from ordinary guests.

### The event funding

The Mangkunegaran allocated approximately 10753.5 IDR for the *halal-bihalal* in 1948. It was a fairly large number at that time. In the archive statement, the sources of funding were also elaborated. It showed that the Mangkunegaran Palace contributed 11950 IDR while the committee contributed 26600.50 IDR of which it did not include special funding from 150 guests (Arsip Mangkunegara No. 497, 1948).

The economic assets of the Mangkunegaran also financially contributed to the event. One of the funders was a sugar distributor, PT. Astrini. In the 1948 Funding Archive, many sponsors were recorded for providing assistance in the form of goods such as rice, coconut, peanuts, cassava, tea, bananas, cigarettes, and so on. In addition, they also provided financial support ranging from 100 to 1500 IDR, with a total of 5500 IDR. The fund was used to meet the budget for the event.

In the archives of 1951, the necessities required for organizing the *halal-bihalal* event and sources of funding were listed thoroughly. The return for the event, as much as 2664 IDR, was obtained from the dues from the regents under the auspices of the Mangkunegaran. It was used to purchase consumption needs, equipment, and wages, and the remaining was 1145 IDR. Every area in the Duchy of Mangkunegaran had to pay dues determined and adjusted according to the number of residents. The amount was 329.50 IDR. In addition, enterprises that had good relations with the Mangkunegaran, such as Javasta Alstokvis NV, also provided supports and facilities. Based on the archives and interview, the budget was carefully planned with allocation for consumption as the highest. Principally, the funding for *halal-bihalal* event at the Mangkunegaran was financed by community contributions, Mangkunegaran economic assets, and also sponsors who financially and non-financially supported the event.

In 1978, the *halal-bihalal* gathering was held on August 5, 1978 (Arsip Mangkunegara No. 4243, 1948). In the timeline of the event, at 4:00 p.p., all the equipment was completely prepared. At 6:30 p.p., all committee members were standby according to their respective tasks. At 7:00 p.m., the guests started to come and filled out the guest book. At 7:25 p.m., the committee arranged for the guests to occupy their seats. At 7:35 p.m., Mangkunegara VIII and the queen consort attended the event accompanied by the *Puspawarna* chorus. At 7:40 p.m., all royal officials greeted Mangkunegara VIII and the queen consort. At 7:45 p.m., Mangkunegara VIII delivered a speech followed by the speech by the committee at 7:50 p.m. At 7:55 p.m., *sowan* was performed. In the process, Mangkunegara VIII and the queen consort went down to the bottom of the stairs while the royal officials started to greet them in person,

followed by the invited guests. The guests gathered and shook hands after *sowan*. During the process, the traditional music and songs called *gending* were played. At 8:15 p.m., traditional snacks and tea were served. At 8:30 p.m., Mangkunegara left and went to the palace. At 8:35 p.m., religious lecture was delivered by Mr. Tarutirtoko. At 8:50 p.m., social gathering was begun while the main course and dessert were served. At 9:30 p.m., the committee delivered announcement. At 10:00 p.m., the was officially closed (Arsip Mangkunegara No. 4243, 1948).

## **Influence of *halal-bihalal* gathering for the Mangkunegaran community**

### **Political influence**

The tradition of *halal-bihalal* in the Mangkunegaran had a positive impact on politics. The history recorded that the official *halal-bihalal* at the State Palace or *Istana Negara* was a political strategy to unite the political elites (Budiardjo, 2007). It shows the political impact of the event. *Halal-bihalal* was often held as a gathering event between the royal family and the community in general. It strengthened the political relations between the parties. It was similar to the positive impact of *halal-bihalal* for the State Palace in which it became a forum for reinforcing internal political relations and government colleagues. Based on the archives of *Idul Fitri* greetings conveyed by the president and staff, the good political relations occurred between the Indonesian government and the Mangkunegaran. Despite the Mangkunegaran was not an autonomous government, the Mangkunegaran still firmly carried out and preserved the traditions that had been carried out by the predecessors.

During the period of the Japanese occupation, the Mangkunegara suffered an unfavorable condition. Under the circumstance, Mangkunegara VIII was determined to hold his authority and to ease the burden on the people by protecting them from the cruelty of the Japanese army. During the period, Mangkunegara VIII was also in charge of the education sector (ranging from primary to secondary education) and pawnshop (Arsip Mangkunegara No. 841, 1945). Nevertheless, the security affairs, such as police and military, were still being handled by the Japanese government (Bastomi, 1996 : 79-85). Yet after the Indonesia's independence, on the basis of a Decree from the first President of the Republic of Indonesia, Ir. Soekarno, dated August 19, 1945, the Mangkunegaran was determined as a part of the territory of the Republic of Indonesia. Based on the decree, Mangkunegara VIII was assigned to maintain the safety and to foster the royal families and people in general. In this regard, the Colomadu and Tasikmadu Sugar Factories were no longer owned by Mangkunegara VIII but the assets of the Republic of Indonesia.

Mangkunegara VIII had enormous power, both internal and external, in the Palace and the State. He had to deal with the anti-self-governing movement and reformed several policies. The protracted anti-self-governing movement escalated due to the involvement of other forces from the opposition, resulting in a forum that joined the struggle union to Surakarta. It took place after the capital of the Republic of Indonesia was moved from Jakarta to Yogyakarta due to the conflict between the Indonesian government and the Dutch. The presence of the opposition in Surakarta exacerbated the chaotic political situations (Bakhtiar, 2007). The struggle union of the opposition and anti-self-governing movement finally gave rise to similar movement in Surakarta. In the midst of a deteriorating political condition, Mangkunegara VIII continued to carry out the existing tradition. *Halal-bihalal* was held under the responsibility of the Mangkunegaran Royal Family of Suryasumirat (*Hubungan Keluarga Mangkunegaran Suryasumirat*), which had a position in the political system in the

Mangkunegaran. The gathering was focused to strengthen the relations among the royal families and people in general, as well as to control the political situations at that time (Bastomi, 1996 : 54).

### **Social influence**

The influence of a tradition on social life is usually powerful. According to the archive on the open invitation to the public, it was stated that the public could take part in *halal-bihalal* gathering when the seat was still available. Furthermore, the public was allowed to bring their own chairs, indicating a barrier in the social strata (Arsip Mangkunegara No. 497, 1948). The gathering reflected the classification in society. In the archive of the timeline, the invited guests with higher social strata would occupy the VVIP seats, while those with lower strata were classified as ordinary guests. The social status adjusted the type of position and rank, forming three classes of society, namely upper, middle, and lower social class (Agus Salim, 2002). The upper class comprised the royal families of the Mangkunegaran, the middle class was those with special invitations, and the lower social class is the people in general.

The social classes can be identified from the type of guests and the seats during the *halal-bihalal* gathering. While the royal families were compartmentalized according to social status, social class, and certain groups, they were still categorized as the upper social class. Nevertheless, during the gathering, all groups of people greeted and asked for forgiveness to each other. They were determined to establish a good relationship between each other (Arsip Mangkunegara No. 841, 1945). Basically, the *halal-bihalal* gathering in the Mangkunegaran had a social influence on the social status of people as indicated by the arrangement of the guest seats. The grouping of social strata was divided into three, namely, upper social class (Mangkunegara and relatives or royal families), middle social class (the invited VIP guests) and lower social class (people in general) (Arsip Mangkunegaran No. 4243, 1978). The positive impact of the *halal-bihalal* gathering for the social realm was that despite the different social strata, the guests could gather and minimize the potential conflicts in society.

### **Economic influence**

Although insignificant, *halal-bihalal* had an impact on the economy of the Mangkunegaran. The funding of the event was a shared responsibility, indicating a good microeconomic system (within the scope of the Mangkunegaran). Based on the archives, the officials and relatives of the Mangkunegaran had their earnings deducted by approximately 2.5% for the implementation of *halal-bihalal*. The contribution was approximately 2.5% while the highest was 6.25%. The highest contribution was also adjusted to the salary earned. Using the method, the funding was organized appropriately without solely burdening the public for the funding (Arsip Mangkunegaran No. 509, 1951).

Principally, the event of *halal-bihalal* had an economic impact on people. It did not add income to the community but instead, reducing their income with the obligation to pay dues for the event. It was recorded in the archive of salary deductions for *halal-bihalal*, as well as the archives of open invitations for the general public. In these open invitations, a certain fee was charged to the guests who brought children and requested for additional seats. Thus, people's income was reduced to contribute for the event. The positive impact was that the upper class distributed more dues as indicated by the archives of sponsors for *halal-bihalal*.

## Religious influence

Many anthropological and Islamic studies suggested the strong relationship between Islam and Javanese culture. Most of them discussed the phenomenon of Javanese Islam, particularly the related traditions that have been carried out by the predecessors. Religion, however, is inseparable from the cycle of life in the social and spiritual spheres of people. The Mangkunegaran is a descendant of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom—which carried out a considerable acculturation (Bastomi, 1996). Consequently, numerous Islamic traditions were generated and are regularly held in the Mangkunegaran. Among popular rituals are *Grebeg Maulid* and *Kirab Suro*. The *halal-bihalal* gathering was also rooted in the religious teachings about the good relations with family and acquaintances. It is in accordance with the Hadith of the Prophet that maintaining such good relations will enhance wealth and extend one's life. Based on the meaning, *halal-bihalal* aims to justify or to make change of something for a better one (Sukri, 2016: 4).

From the religious standpoint, *halal-bihalal* has a profound spiritual and social influences. Spiritually, it provides peace of mind as people can forgive one another. Socially, it can strengthen brotherhood among Muslims and promote peace in society. For the Mangkunegara community and family, the event has a spiritual impact as it enables them to gather with people from various backgrounds, to maintain the good relations with others, and to ask for forgiveness in the month of Shawwal.

## Conclusion

*Halal-bihalal* gathering comprised a series of procession and agenda, either the simple or luxurious design. During the gathering, art performances such as Gambyong and Bambangan Cakil traditional dances were presented to entertain the invited guests. The committee was determined to sincerely organize the event. Even though the event was simply attended by several relatives or royal families, it was still held regularly. Nevertheless, the 1948 *halal-bihalal* gathering was distinguished due to the nuances of independence. It was held simultaneously with the celebration of Indonesian independence. Mangkunegara VIII and other officials delivered speeches that mainly conveyed religious teachings and nationalism to the guests. In his speech in 1975, Mangkunegara VIII expressed his gratitude for the loyalty of the Mangkunegaran community, asked the Elders for their forgiveness, wished the longevity for Wiroprodjo Association, emphasized the importance of the unity of the Mangkunegaran for development of the Republic of Indonesia, and conveyed his expectations for the Republic of Indonesia. The gathering was used to adjust to the conditions and circumstances at that time in which Mangkunegara VIII felt the responsibility to maintain the safety of the people and to strengthen nationalism among people since Indonesia was still in the early years of independence.

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