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AA 研フォーラム

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場所：AA 研 304 室

報告者名：トゥファイル， ファジャール・イブヌ（AA 研外国人研究員）

報告タイトル："Figure of the Chinese: The May 1998 Riots in Indonesia and Its Investigative Process"

Figures of the Chinese and Urban Riots in Indonesia, 1970s – 1990s

Fadjar Ibnu Thufail

Abstract:

Since Indonesia gained independence in 1945, the country has witnessed numerous urban riots, some of which called ethnic conflicts, others religious conflicts, and quite a few of them called “anti-Chinese” riots. My research seeks to answer why some urban riots are called “anti-Chinese” violence. In other words, it seeks to examine why and how interpretations of the events highlight the Chinese as a social category of ethnic group. To answer the question, I am analyzing the production of social figure in the discourses of urban riots in Palu and Bandung in 1973, Ujung Pandang (Makassar) and Solo in 1980, and Jakarta and Solo in 1998. The study critically examines how the signification of narrative and visual representations of the riots returns to a figure of *etnik Cina* (ethnic Chinese). I suggest that the figure recounted in the riot narratives and depicted in the visual representations embodies an idea of a frightening, ambiguous, but at the same time a desired state. Such ideas of the state emerge around critical events in the 1970s and the 1980s when the New Order sought to consolidate its political power, also in 1998 when it gradually lost the power. Drawing on the concept of “sacrificial crisis” developed by Rene Girard and “critical event” by Veena Das I argue that the figure of the *etnik Cina* signifies an anxiety over the collapsing of differences and boundary between the legal and “illegal” citizen within the Indonesian national fold. At the same time, it also masks the inability of the state to exercise sovereign power to control and domesticate its subject.

My talk draws on a chapter of a book manuscript that I am writing on the *etnik Cina* as a social figure in the riots. In the talk I discuss the theoretical perspective of the state as an idea and suggests how the perspective sheds light on the state as an important political construct and social imaginary in the time of critical events and sacrificial crisis. I also discussed approaches to theorize state sovereignty through social figure. Then I describe the May 1998 riots taking place in Jakarta and Solo and analyze the work of the Joint Fact Finding Team (TGPF), an official fact finding team created by the Indonesian government to investigate the riots and the allegation of mass rape against the Chinese women. I examine the narrative practice of the TGPF by focusing on a “verification session” to learn about the construction of *etnik Cina* figure as a “victim” of racial violence. Even though I did not discuss it in the talk, I

would argue that the New Order state has unsuccessfully attempted to categorize and domesticate the Chinese as an ethnic citizen in the national fold. The discursive construction of the riots narratives always returns to this elusive figure, and as the Other, it has always come to haunt the New Order state's political sovereignty and drive the state to what Begona Aretxaga calls a "maddening state". Highlighting the Chinese (*etnik Cina*) as a social figure in the riots is a discursive tool employed by the New Order state to reinstitute the boundary of the "Other" within the national fold, and only a properly maintained categorical distinction would keep the state from "maddening."