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### **How to escape from the traffic congestion in Jakarta**

Being stuck in Jakarta's rush hour is probably a nightmare for people from outside Jakarta. Cars and other types of vehicles are everywhere and they are honking continuously for hours. For the record, Jakarta is in the first rank of the world for its congested traffic, which is measured by how many cars stops on the road, according to the Stop-Start Index. This leads to a fact that there are two sides of a coin for people living in Jakarta; people may have such accessibility to go wherever they want, but they have to deal with an everlasting traffic jam that should be their first obstacle to live in this city. Therefore, in order to design a good traffic management, the government should be able to analyze and provide solutions on how the massive development of Jakarta's infrastructure and huge number of populations lead to traffic congestions in Jakarta.

One way to understand the reason traffic in Jakarta has become worse than any other city in this world is looking at it historically. Apparently, the relation between the historical development of the traffic and road development in Jakarta is rarely discussed in the public. According to Lonely Planet, Sunda Kelapa, which was the name of Jakarta during pre-colonial era in 15<sup>th</sup> century, was only a small rural area in Java Island where people visited for trading. Then, people built roads to connect the city to the port, and during colonial era, the Dutch had been developing the same road in this city to connect business districts and government offices. As the time progresses, there was a massive economic growth 15 years after the Indonesian government took over Jakarta as the capital city. This was presumably the reason why Jakarta was so crowded because the people in Jakarta started buying cars. Furthermore, many people

came from rural areas, but the local government was not prepared for this (Parameswaran, 2015). This eventually led to traffic congestions as the number of cars dramatically increased. Then, in 2004, the government issued an ambitious project a system of public transportation to solve the traffic problem, which was called “Trans Jakarta”. The government adopted this idea from a Colombian transportation system in Bogota, known as “Trans Milenio” (Associated Press).

Despite the government’s effort to solve the traffic problems, the traffic seems not showing any promising changes. Some people are still complaining that the government should build more roads in order to accommodate more vehicles. However, that is not a good solution because rather than building more roads, the government should build a reliable public transportation so that they could motivate people to use public transportations. Vuhic (1991) and Newman (1995) in Mackett and Edward (1998) have noted that the rail-based transportation is a very effective solution to deal with traffic problems. At this moment, the only rail-based transportation in Jakarta, Commuter Line, is an example where people commute one place to another. Combined with the MRTs, the traffic will not be as crowded because people start to use public transportations. Another argument is about making several policies to make use of private vehicles even stricter. Another way is to make a policy of Electronic Road Pricing (ERP). The Jakarta’s government is currently planning to issue this policy because it works perfectly in Singapore. According to DAC&Cities, 65 per cent of the commuters in Singapore are now using public transportation because of the ERP system the Singapore government introduced in 1975 (Sustainable Cities, 2014). Hence, the government should force people not to use their own vehicle and use public transportation instead.

In addition to support the argument of using public transportation, the Jakarta’s government can also be inspired from a comparative study of traffic management in Singapore since both cities have similar characteristics. For example, both cities have issued several policies to

reduce the number of vehicles on the roads. Jakarta has the three-in-one traffic policy; similarly, Singapore has a restricted zone for vehicles. According to Goh (2002), the restricted zone requires drivers to buy a license who wish to pass certain roads during the busy hours. Similarly, the Jakarta's three-in-one is prohibiting drivers to pass certain roads during the busy hours unless there are three or more passengers in a car. In comparison to one another, the policy in Singapore is stricter because the driver mandatorily has to buy the license, whereas in Jakarta, it is less strict because the driver could manipulate the number of passengers by renting the paid passengers known as jockeys, which are illegal riders for being the third passenger in the car. Thus, the restricted zone in Singapore is a better solution since it forces the private vehicle users to use public transportation to commute to and in the city.

To sum up, the traffic problems in Jakarta are indeed not an easy thing to solve. However, the government should be able to solve the traffic congestion in Jakarta by finding solutions by examining the traffic jam historically, the recommended ways to overcome the traffic, and the comparison of the traffic management in Jakarta and Singapore. Furthermore, the government could also be stricter in terms of issuing policies. It will be a great start if people would obey those policies that the government made for the sake of the free-flow traffic, so Jakarta's traffic will not be as crowded as it is today.

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