

Pluralism And Existence Of Ethnic Diversity In Medan, Indonesia

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Abstract: The focus of this research is Pluralism in Medan. The purposes of this research are 1) To explain the condition in Medan 2) To describe the existence of ethnic diversity in Medan 3) To analyze the influence of western culture towards ethnic diversity in Medan. This research used qualitative method, while the data were collected by conducting interviews. The field findings showed that migrants in Medan City, who still implemented the traditional cultural values in their daily life during the colonial period, and the stronger sense of ethnicity of the society arise in Medan. Gradually, the economic growth and cultural diversity in the urban society of Medan, make the society experiences a cultural transformation. The assembly of various tribes in Medan due to economic factors, makes the migrants to adapt quickly and leave their own culture, so that it gradually shifts the cultural values. The shift of cultural values is assumed to lose their identity from a particular tribe. The society in Medan city, in their daily lives, have been using Bahasa Indonesia and almost do not longer know their tribal languages.

Keywords: ethnic diversity, cultural transformation, Pluralism and cultural transformation.

1 INTRODUCTION

AS the capital city of North Sumatra Province, Medan consists of diverse cultures, religions and cultures. Ethnically, its society can be divided into two categories namely, indigenous and immigrant. The indigenous group consists of Melayu, Karonese and Simalungun. While the immigrant group consists of Mandailing, Minangkabau, Acehese, Javanese, Angkola, Batavia, Chinese, Indian and so on. When the Dutch government made Medan as the Capital of East Sumatra in the 19th century, Medan was developed very rapidly. The rapid development could not be separated from the presence of tobacco plantation industry which was founded in the 19th century. The expansion of plantation areas was also followed by the very large labor needs. The planters did not look for local workers to work in their plantations (Malay, Karonese and Simalungun), since they were not willing to be permanent workers (Ray, 1976). The planters brought labors in from outside region of Sumatra, such as Chinese labors who were brought through Penang, Singapore as the Chinese labor market through brokers. In order to increase the number of labors, the planters brought in the labors from Java (Pelzer, 1978). The high needs of labors attracted migrants from different regions to the plantation areas, either as workers or not. If there were only Malay, Karonese and Simalungun people in Medan at the beginning, there were then Mandailing, Minangkabau and Acehese people coming to Medan. They did not work as plantation workers, but as traders, teachers, plantation administration workers and others. Medan was getting crowded by people and having ethnic diversity, which consists of Malay, Karonese, Acehese, Minang, Javanese, Madurese, Batak, Chinese, Arabian and Indian. The expansion of Medan into Gemente in 1909, made the city center divided into several ethnic settlements.

The Indian, Chinese, and Arabian settlements bordered with the European settlement. The Indonesian native settlement, for example, Malay, Mandailings, Aceh, Minangkabau settlements were located in the suburbs. People who lived in the urban areas were considered as "Gubernamen people", while those who lived in the suburbs were considered as "people of the Sultan". Meanwhile, all contract laborers (Chinese, Javanese, Banjarese) stayed on the plantations and those who worked for the Dutch and European companies, despite living in Sultanate areas, administratively, were not considered as the people of Sultan (Pelly, 1994). The Dutch colonial government applied the discriminative social separation border, separating the population groups in Medan based on their own cultures, so that they could have a life in accordance with their own cultures. In these settlement groups, the relationships and social involvement traditional activities of their tribes from of their origins were still be able to carry out, as in their origins. However, on the other hand, the Dutch had made Medan city to be a certain stereotype. Due to this ethnic diversity, there was a mutual distrust between one tribe to another as well as strong ethnic rivalry, and there was no indication of open interaction between them. The social and cultural structures created by the colonial, although it had a separated life between Gubernamen and Sultan, but at one point, in Medan City, it would eventually affect the shift in cultural values. The cultural values shift may result from the assembly of the various tribes, especially from the influence of the lifestyle of the Dutch people around the Gubernamen. The Dutch had called themselves as the rulers and made the native culture in Medan in addition to the Malay culture in the Sultanate. The proclamation of Indonesian independence on 17 August 1945, had brought changes in social and cultural structures in Medan. It made Medan has no dominant culture. The vacuum of host led to the arise of Batak Toba tribe in Medan massively. The arrival of Batak Toba was due to the absence of dominant culture in Medan. The excellence received by Batak Toba, in addition to have some positions in government, there are too many people think that Toba is a native tribe of Medan which is identical its temper. People do not understand that the temper exists in Medan is not because of its people, but it had been created by the Dutch colonial era. In Medan, both before and after independence, has been filled by the tribe diversity. In order to preserve

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the tribes, Medan preserves its cultures by establishing some associations of race or religion. Mandailing people, both before and after the opening of plantations, had arrived in East Sumatra. In East Sumatra, they were accepted by the natives, in addition to have Islamic religion and good education, so that many of them working in the government and was one of important groups at that time. In order not to lose their identity, they certainly tried to preserve it by establishing religious and tribal associations (Pelly, 1994). Religious associations, such as Al Jamiatul Wasliyah (Al -Wasliyah) involve in social and religious activities. While the tribal associations, such as Mandailing Student Association/Ikatan Mahasiswa Mandailing (IMATAPSEL), Mandailing Family Association/Himpunan Keluarga Besar Mandailing (Hikma), of which the members consist of Mandailing people, are to keep the tribal solidarity. In contrast to the Minangkabau people, the arrival of the Minangkabau people in East Sumatra has a purpose to trade. Although most of Minangkabau people are Muslim, they do not have to adapt to the native people. In order to preserve their identity, they apply an Islamic identity on Minangkabau, and establish tribal associations in Medan (Pelly, 1994: 262), such as Minangkabau Cultural Coordination Agency/Badan Kordinasi Kebudayaan Minangkabau (BKKM), aims at coordinating the activities from the origin villages. These associations were made by Minangkabau people to preserve their identity as Muslims and Minangkabau people. Currently, Medan is composed of ethnic and cultural diversity. Although during the Dutch colonial, the sustainability of traditional cultures was still preserved, but the younger generation is currently losing their respect to their own cultures. In addition, due to the time of their birth among the ethnic diversity in Medan, they can not be separated from the influences of information and technology that cannot be retained anymore, which cause a shift in cultural values budaya. If it is allowed, it is worried that the young generation will lose its identity as a particular tribe in strengthening the national integrity.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 History of Medan City

In ancient times, Medan was a village known as Kampung Medan (Medan Village). Medan was founded by a Karonese man, named Guru Patimpus in 1590 (Dada Meuraxa, 1975). He lived in Karo plateau areas, namely Berastagi and Kabanjahe. Karonese was the first tribe live in Medan. At the beginning of its development, it was a small village called "Medan Putri". The development of "Medan Putri" was inseparable from its strategic position because it was located at the confluence of the Deli and Babura rivers, not far from Putri Hijau road now. These rivers once were the trade routes which were relatively crowded, and thus Medan Putri village which was the forerunner of Medan City, quickly developed into a very important transit port. Furthermore, Kampung Medan was under the Malay Sultanate. The development of "Medan Putri" was inseparable from tobacco plantations. In 1863, Sultan Deli gave a plot of land to Jacob Nienhuys to be made as a tobacco plantation. The tobacco treaty was signed by the Dutch Government and Sultan Deli in 1865. Subsequently, in 1869, Nienhuys relocated the headquarter of Deli Mij from Labuhan to the Kampung Medan. Due to

this relocation, Medan quickly became the center of government activity and trade, as well as the most dominant area to the economic development. The rapid economic development changed Deli into a popular trading center. Given the tobacco trading activities which were already very broad and growing, Nienhuys relocated his office from Labuhan to "Medan Putri" village. Thus the "Medan Putri" village became increasingly crowded and was developed with a name known as Medan City. The development of Medan Putri as a trading center had encouraged it into the center of government. By 1879, the capital city of East Sumatra Resident was relocated from Bengkalis to Medan, Deli Sultanate Palace which was originally located in Labuhan was also relocated when the Maimoon Palace had been built in 1891, and thus the capital city of Deli had moved to Medan. When the Dutch colonial government made Medan as the capital city of East Sumatra in the 19th century, the growth of the city of Medan occurred very rapidly. The rapid development could not be separated from the presence of the tobacco industry that began to establish in the 19th century. This expansion would raise some problems for the colonial government, especially on the labor problem, since the local people did not like to work on the plantations owned by the colonial government. Therefore, in order to meet the need of labors to be employed in these plantations, the colonial government finally seek the labors to be employed in the plantations from outside Sumatra.

3 METHOD

Based on problems in such research, the methodology used is the more precise analysis of history tracing. As well as the descriptive method was selected as the way in solving the problem. Then the data in the analysis of this descriptive method with a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach so that it is more in reference to the approach of the description or overview of the objects examined, based on the data that appear as is, and describe systematically will facts the situation factually and closely. Systems and methods used to obtain information or material material from a scientific knowledge called scientific methodology. On the other hand in the activities to find new things are certain principles or solutions (problem solving) of the research. Curiosity is one of the basic characteristics of humans. This trait will encourage people to ask for knowledge. Every human who has a healthy mind certainly has knowledge, whether in the form of facts, concepts, principles, or procedures about an object. Knowledge can be owned thanks to experience or through interaction between humans and their environment. Universally, there are three types of knowledge that have been based on human life, namely: (1) logic that can distinguish between right and wrong; (2) ethics that can distinguish between good and bad; and (3) aesthetics that can distinguish between beautiful and ugly. Sensitivity possessed, is the basic capital in obtaining that knowledge. So the research method is a way of working to be able to understand the object of research. Many definitions of research depend on their respective points of view. Research can be defined as an attempt to find the right answer to a problem based on logic and supported by empirical facts. It can also be said that research is an activity carried out systematically through the process of

collecting data, processing data, and drawing conclusions based on data using certain methods and. Research as an effort to get the truth must be based on the scientific thinking process as outlined in the scientific method. The scientific method is the basic framework for the creation of scientific knowledge. Research carried out using the scientific method contains two important elements namely observation and reasoning. The scientific method is based on the idea that if a statement wants to be accepted as a truth then the statement must be verified or tested empirically (based on facts). The scientific method is the basic framework for the creation of scientific knowledge. Research carried out using the scientific method contains two important elements namely observation and reasoning. The scientific method is based on the idea that if a statement wants to be accepted as a truth then the statement must be verified or tested empirically (based on facts).

4 RESULT

4.1 The Arise of Ethnic Diversity in Medan

The plantations in East Sumatera started to grow since 1865, when Jacobus Nienhuis conducted an experiment of planting tobacco in Deli. After getting a success in his experiment, he tried to acquire the concession rights to use the land for 99 years. In 1869, a company named Deli Maatschappij was established which operated in planting tobacco in East Sumatera. Furthermore, there were many companies that develop very rapidly, such as Deli Maschappij which had 9 Onderneming, Holland Sumatera Tbk Maaschappij which had 13 Onderneming, and several other maaschappij. The rapid growth of the plantations, brought major changes in the distribution patterns and composition of the population, the more the settlements, the more increasing the number of labors required. The planters did not look for local workers to work in their plantations (Malay, Karonese and Simalungun), since they were not willing to be permanent workers. The planters brought labors in from outside region of Sumatera, such as Chinese labors who were brought through Penang, Singapore as the Chinese labor market through brokers. In order to increase the number of labors, the planters brought in the labors from Java.⁶ The life of plantation community in East Sumatera was known as the life of the contract laborers. It gives a general overview in this area, that is the characteristics of life apart from the natives, both economically, socially and culturally. They were treated as coolies with very small gain in return for very hard work. There was no possibility for them to relinquish their status as contract laborers, because they were bound by treaties. The high needs of labors attracted migrants from different regions to the plantation areas, either as workers or not. If there were only Malay, Karonese and Simalungun people in Medan at the beginning, there were then Mandailing, Minangkabau and Acehese people coming to Medan. They did not work as plantation workers, but as traders, teachers, plantation administration workers and others. Medan was getting crowded by people and having ethnic diversity, which consists of Malay, Karonese, Acehese, Minang, Javanese, Madurese, Batak, Chinese, Arabian and Indian. The expansion of Medan into Gemente in 1909, made the city center divided into several ethnic settlements.

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they were still be able to stay in Medan. Furthermore, this moment is also an opportunity for the Batak (Toba) tribe to migrate massively to Medan, since they considered that there is no longer the dominant culture in Medan. It is also very unfortunate, since there are many people outside assumed that the native people of Medan is the Batak (Toba) people. Medan people is known as a temper people, identical to the temper character of Toba people. Yet the temper people in Medan is not because of the Toba people, but the Dutch people who created that character in the colonial period.

5 DISCUSSION

Medan was previously a traditional village which developed very rapidly since the opening of plantations by the colonial government and the arise of people diversity. The diversity exists in Medan, of course, can cause a shift in cultural values. The rapid development of Medan city by the Dutch colonial government and the influx of migrants from various regions, and the assembly with new cultures that exist in Medan, the Western culture by the Dutch government, certainly could cause a shift in cultural values. In the colonial era, the traditional culture flourished, in which each tribe lived separately and were still able to conduct its culture brought from its origin. After the Indonesian independence in 1945, every tribe in Medan had been integrated into a unity. Medan had been developed into a city that could not avoid the influence of Western culture which certainly had some impact on the people in Medan, especially for those who were actively involved in direct relationship with the colonial people, had been influenced by the western lifestyle. Mandailing people are considered as the early immigrants in Medan. They highly upheld their customs. These customs were constantly taught by parents to their children traditionally, especially by mothers who passed this heritage down to their children. However, the cultural heritage taught by parents to their children less likely to survive, besides there were many Mandailing people who worked for the colonial government which certainly had great impact on their lifestyle. Certainly, there were many influencing factors, such as environment, printed media, technological information, advancement of industry which tended to offer various mass cultural commodities and so on. It was acceptable, then a lot of Medan people who did not longer know their customs, including their own indigenous language. They just claimed to be Mandailing people but did not know the Mandailing customs. Furthermore, they also now claim as Medan people, since they were born in Medan. This is very unfortunate, if the urban people in Medan, with its ethnic diversity, do not longer know about their customs. Based on the history of Medan City, Medan was previously a village named 'Medan Putri' founded by a Karonese named Guru Patimpus. The development of "Medan Putri" could not be separated from the opening of tobacco plantation by the Dutch government that was Jacob Nienhuys in 1865. The development of "Medan Putri" as the trade center had been encouraged into the center of government in 1869, when the capital of East Sumatra Resident moved from Bengkalis to Medan. Deli Sultanate Palace which was originally located in Labuhan, was also moved when the Maimoon Palace established in 1891, thus the capital city of Labuhan Deli had moved to Medan. When the Dutch colonial

government made Medan as the capital of East Sumatra in the 19th century, Medan developed and evolved into an economic center. Furthermore, since the colonial government in Medan, the Dutch government made Medan as Gemente in 1909. After the Indonesian independence in 1945, Medan became the capital of North Sumatra Province, until now. Ethnic diversity in Medan cannot be separated from the opening of tobacco plantations by the Dutch colonial government. Before the opening of tobacco plantations by the Dutch, Medan City was composed of Malay, Karonese, Simalungun people. Since the opening of tobacco plantations by the colonial government, it required labors. The local people did not want to work for the Dutch, so that the colonial government looked for workers from outside Sumatra. The first labors brought were the Chinese, imported from Penang, Singapore, through brokers. Furthermore, they brought in more labors from Java Island. These labors lived in the plantations environment in accordance with their contract. The rapid development attracted immigrants from Sumatera to look for jobs in Medan, but the arrival of immigrants from Sumatra did not to work as coolies such as the Chinese and Javanese. The immigrants from Sumatra included Mandailing, Minangkabau, Aceh Sipirok, Banten Betawi and other tribes. After the independence, Batak Toba followed migrating in a large number of people. Since then, Medan which was initially only inhabited by Malay, Karonese and Simalungun people, developed into a plural city.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

The impact of Western culture against ethnic diversity in the field, is inseparable from various factors, including environment, printed media, technology, information which cannot be stopped now. Ethnic diversity in Medan at the beginning of the arrival, continues to conduct its own cultural practices brought from the origin. The cultures were continuously taught by parents to their children, especially for mothers who taught their children in order to pass down the cultures. The indigenous cultures were traditionally taught to their children. This traditional education proved unable to survive and now run over by a more powerful influence. Nowadays, many young people who do not longer know their indigenous cultures. It is worried that the younger generation will lose their identity as a particular tribe.

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