

Melayu Deli as the Identity of Medan City

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Abstract— Changes in the society spread rapidly to all parts of the world, due to a modern communication. The city can be recognized through its own landmarks, such as historical buildings, cultures, and native people including heroes' names shown in city streets. Currently, the people of Melayu Deli who live in Medan City realize that they have a triumphant past that can be seen from their various historical relics as evidence. Based on the title, the people of Melayu Deli have several titles, namely Tengku, Wan, Datuk, Adja, and Orang Kaya (OK). This study analyzes the current usage of Melayu Deli titles by applying a normative empirical analysis. The results show that the Tengku title was only given to people from the descendants of the Sultan (King). In ancient times, a Sultan had his own power and autonomous region and was called by Tuanku. Tengku (Tuanku) is originally meant leader/teacher in terms of morals, religion, and customs. It can be concluded that although Sultan provided the title to those people, there is not any regulation on it. As a recommendation, the people of Melayu Deli should have a regulation concerning the Melayu Deli titles granting to people in Medan City.

Keywords— Identity of Medan City, Title Melayu Deli.

I. INTRODUCTION

Medan, a place of business and tourism, is one of the oldest cities in Indonesia. The city consists of various ethnicities such as Chinese, Indian, Arabian, Bataknese, Karonese, and Melayu Deli. In the 17th century, Medan was once the center of the administration of the Deli Sultanate. In the 19th century, Medan was established by the Dutch East Indies government as the center of the residency of East Sumatra. A distinctive feature of Medan City is the culture of Melayu Deli. According to the Melayu Deli language, Medan means the gathering place for the people of Hamparan Perak and Sukapiring. The city has many distinct landmarks such as Maimun Palace, Great Mosque of Medan, Lapangan Merdeka (Merdeka Square), and others. A number of areas in the city have a rich history behind them, for example Kesawan, Selat Panjang, and Kampung Keling (Little India). The names of the regions illustrate their identities, based on the name of a hero, a city, a tribe, a history or a public figure.

Considering the strong relationship and history between the Melayu Deli and the city of Medan, there are an unusual small number of names of Melayu Deli public figures that were perpetuated. At present, there are several names of Melayu Deli figures that have become street names in Medan City such as Tengku Amir Hamzah, Sultan Mamoen Al-Rasyid and Tengku Perdana. Within these names, titles are attached such as Tengku, Datuk, Wan, OK, and Adja. These titles can be owned and used by people with a specific status background. First, the nobility title. This title is only inherited and used by the descendants of the king. Second, the customary title. This title can be owned and used by someone after being given by Pemangku Adat Melayu Deli (Melayu Deli Customary Leaders). The current condition has shown a social change where the younger generation might not know the titles of the Melayu Deli.

Naturally, a culture is changing. This is also happened to the Melayu Deli culture. Although their younger generation is following the current development, their traditional values have not changed. The progress and deterioration of a society cannot be separated from the influences of its economic and religion ruler (in this case the Deli Sultan as a political, social, and cultural leader) (Katimin, 2010).

Privileges were given to certain groups such as officials and community leaders. In the history of Melayu Deli culture, habits that became customs underwent changes. The people of Melayu Deli prioritize negotiation and consensus as the pillar of their social life. These values are also applied to immigrants which made the Melayu Deli famous for their openness. As a result, it is common for migrants to control and have power thus become the ethnic majority. Perceived as being reluctant to compete, the Melayu Deli people are expected to have an increasingly widespread impact in the coming decades. For this reason, there is a need for a protective political policy towards the Melayu Deli ethnicity.

Comparing the past and the present time, one thing to consider is the lack of regulation regarding title ownership in the Melayu Deli. This condition requires a legal regulation considering the Melayu Deli as the main ethnic in Medan. The description above shows that the granting of a Melayu Deli title as in the name of Tengku Amir Hamzah which currently becomes a road name from Medan to Binjai, does not yet have a written rule. This paper discusses how the criteria of granting Melayu Deli titles as customary and nobility titles must be made in the Indonesian regulations.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

The method used in this study is an empirical normative study (Mukti, 2010) by analyzing the development of the use of noble and customary of Melayu Deli titles in the Melayu Deli society in Medan. In particular, the analysis is carried out on the awarding of titles to someone who was not a Melayu Deli noble.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. History of Melayu Deli Title Appointment

Melayu Deli tribe has existed in East Sumatra since the Kingdom of *Aru (Haru)* in *Deli* (Sinar, 2017). *Melayu Deli* is one of the sub-groups of the East Sumatran *Melayu* ethnic group. The people came from a mixture of *Melayu Deli Muda* groups that had inhabited the area since around 1500 BC (Admansyah, 1989). *Deli* Sultanate is the *Melayu Deli* Sultanate which was founded in 1632 by *TuanKu Panglima Gocah Pahlawan*. In 1858, the land of *Deli* became the property of the Netherlands after the Sultan of *Siak* Sultan Al-Sayyid Sharif Ismail surrendered the land. In 1861, the *Deli* Sultanate was officially recognized as an independent kingdom from *Siak* and *Aceh*. This made the *Deli* Sultan be able to give the economic rights to the Netherlands and other foreign companies. A crucial event which started the problem analyzed in this research was that in 1861 when the Sultan *Mamoen Al-Rasyid* who led the *Deli* Sultanate implemented a policy of appointing titles to non-*Melayu Deli* nobles. This policy had never been carried out by preceding sultans; however there were not many parties who opposed this decision.

3.2. Regulation of the Appointment of Melayu Deli Noble Titles

Van Vollenhoven, the Father of Indonesian Customary Law, states that customary law is the overall regulation of positive behavior with legal sanctions. However, customary law is not codified (Mahadi, 2003). According to Luckman Sinar, there are various kinds of greetings within the Sultanate environment which consist of various groups of words. These consist of royal titles, customary titles (inheritance), and self-pronouns. This classification is a greeting that can be used to name someone associated with their role in the society. The use of nobility titles in the Sultanate environment have developed over time, along with changes in political and governmental issues. The title given by the *Deli* Sultanate is divided into two, namely: the title of the sultanate nobility given to relatives of the *Melayu Deli* Sultanate and the customary title of the Sultanate given to the common people. The title is given by *Pemangku Adat Melayu Deli (Melayu Deli Customary Institution)*. The title of the Sultanate and the nobility that is still valid today is *Tengku*. This title has been awarded to the sons and daughters of the Sultan and the descendants from his sons. In other words, if the father uses the title *Tengku*, his children are entitled to use the title. The title of *Tengku* is considered to be a title of nobility that takes derivative passages from the father.

The title of *Tengku* attached to the beginning of the name of every *Melayu Deli* man is a status symbol in their community. The child has no right to the title if only the mother bears it. Some areas that use this title are descendants of kings or sultans of the *Melayu Deli* Kingdom located on the Malacca Peninsula, namely in the eastern parts of North Sumatra which has a beach strip in the Malacca Strait such as *Langkat, Medan* or *Tanah Deli, Deli Serdang, Serdang Bedagai, Batubara, Asahan, and Labuhan Batu*.

The title of *Wan* or *Megat* is given to a child born of a marriage between an ordinary man and a woman of *Tengku* descent and will always be passed down by the father. *Datuk* is the title given to the heads of conquered regions. *Adja* is given to

grandchildren born to mothers bearing the *Wan* title. These are titles of nobility passed down through children from the descendants of the *Melayu Deli*. *Datuk* is given to people who are considered leaders and is passed down to their male descendants. *Kampung Melayu Deli* is led by a person named *Penghulu* or also called *Datuk Penghulu*. Individuals who occupy this position are selected among those that possess authority, knowledge, skill, fairness, wisdom, and obedience in carrying out the teachings of *Islam*. The title of *Orang Kaya*, commonly abbreviated as *OK*, is given by the King and the son of *Datuk*.

The people of *Melayu Deli* are obedient to their leader (government) as long as the leader is rightful, fair, and wise, which is in accordance with the Islamic principles. However, if the leader does not possess these virtues, then as *Hang Tuah* says: The Fair King is worshiped, The Unjust King is refuted.

Soepomo states that Customary Law is based on the unity of the mind and will continue to grow. It is dynamic and evolves to adapt to the times. To fully understand the system, one must explore the fundamentals of the minds that live within the Indonesian society. For this reason, we must examine the composition of legal alliances in the community (Abubakar, 2013). A sense of inferiority and dependence on others still confines the people of *Melayu Deli*. If this continues, the confidence, motivation, and creativity of the people will be destroyed. If they continue to be negative and passive, they cannot compete and simply be spectators that put their lives on other people.

Since the colonial period, the people of *Melayu Deli* were more content to be called villagers. They are known to have a relaxed and simple life, to have just enough income thus have more time to take care of other people's business. Therefore, they are not inspired from the success of their predecessors. Their carefree habits caused the lack of written rules regarding the appointment of Customary and Noble Titles.

3.3. Regulation of the Appointment of Melayu Deli Customary Titles

Socio-cultural change is a sign of shifting social structures and cultural patterns in a society. It is a common symptom that occurs all the time in every society. The change occurs in accordance with the nature of man who always wants a change. The impact of these changes can either directly or indirectly bring negative and positive impacts. There are no concerns whatsoever if positive changes occur because they will provide a benefit. However, we must be careful about the negative impacts that arise. Positive results can occur if people can adjust to it. The ability of the society to adjust to the change is called the *adjustment*, while the adjustment of society to the change is called the *integration*. Negative consequences occur when people cannot adjust to change. Inability to adjust to change is called *maladjustment*. *Maladjustment* will cause disintegration.

According to Van Vollenhoven, the ability of the community groups to examine the roots of values, norms, and beliefs is considered as customs or customary law. However, the people of *Melayu Deli* cannot distinguish between important substances and elements that can differentiate them from other groups. Customary law can still be seen from values, norms, and knowledge due to the presence of indigenous members. The people of *Melayu Deli* focuses more on pride, heroism, and romanticism of the times that glorifies the struggle of their people rather than efforts to pursue, learn, understand, and apply more substantive customs and contexts (Iksan, 2015).

3.4 The Policy of Appointing Titles to Non-Melayu Deli Nobles

In the *Melayu Deli* Society, especially the *Deli* Sultanate, there were no clear policies and regulations in customary politics in granting the titles. Customary institutions do not make regulations regarding the granting of customary titles covering the type, name, designation, procedures for rights, obligations, and conditions to obtain the titles. However, *Surat Ceri* (Sultan decree of granting noble title) is given by the *Deli* Sultan stating the title appointment (Interview with Raja Muda, Pemangku Adat Melayu, on May 2, 2019).

It is believed that in 1861, Sultan *Mamoen Al-Rasyid* who led the *Deli* Sultanate implemented a policy of granting titles to non-*Melayu Deli* nobles. The policy was never carried out by previous sultans. Then, there comes an appointment of customary title where a person is deemed entitled even though he is not of a noble descent. Sultan *Mahmud Arya* explained that the title is given to someone who is seen of being capable of running a government program, building a country, and prospering the lives of the people, including paying attention to the continuity of the *Melayu Deli* Sultanate and its kingdoms that spread throughout Indonesia, amid the political and economic turmoil.

(http://rri.co.id/medan/post/berita/581177/daerah/jokowi_dapat_gelar_tertinggi_bangsawan_melayu_dari_sultan_deli_html, diakses tanggal 2 Mei 2019).

It can be observed that the *Deli* Sultanate appoints titles to non-*Melayu Deli* nobility that dedicate themselves to the development of *Melayu Deli* customs. An example of the noble title granting is for the *President Jokowi*, who was granted the customary title of *Tuanku Seri Indra Utama Junjungan Negeri* based on the *Surat Ceri* stamped by the Sultanate. *Surat Ceri* is a decree with the sultanate stamp made and given by the *Deli* Sultan to appoint customary titles of non-*Melayu Deli* noble.

In the future, if there is a constant social change in the *Melayu Deli* community of appointing titles without the existence of a written law, it will result in the absence of legal certainty in granting *Melayu Deli* titles. The younger generation will become unaware and would eventually impact the sustainability of the *Melayu Deli* customs.

IV. CONCLUSION

The *Melayu Deli* titles, both in the form of noble and customary titles, were given by the *Melayu Deli* Customary Institution for the descendants of nobility and the common people in accordance with the values, norms, and beliefs of the people. To date, there has been no written arrangement regarding the criteria for granting these titles. Local governments should use the names of *Melayu Deli* figures in the city of Medan, so that the public will know the history of these figures. The *Melayu Deli* Customary Institution must provide regulations for granting customary and noble titles to provide a certainty while preserving *Melayu Deli* culture in Indonesia.

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