

CULTURAL EGO OF MALAYU COMMUNITY IN DEALING WITH GLOBAL CULTURE DYNAMIC

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ABSTRACT

Research attempts to convince the community that cultural ego enthusiasm in local culture can influence every form of objects that have idiomatic nature. A genuine local enthusiasm is only identifiable in social life. The objective of this research, therefore, is to explain idiomatic aspect of a local culture enthusiasm. Such enthusiasm is growing only after local community is successfully maintaining their life existence and developing life necessities. Research target is how to actualize Malay culture progressing. Enthusiasm to Malay culture is explored and understood by observing cultural heritages exhibited in Sang Nila Utama Museum in Pekanbaru. This museum is selected because objects exhibited in there are considered representing Malay culture characteristics. Data analysis is done through interpretation, historical study, and ethnography. Malay cultural ego enthusiasm has produced a description about how strong is the character of Malay culture conserver community. This strong character is marked by sense of belonging to cultural heritages at a place (museum) that functions as the representation of original place where the culture belongs to. The heritages strengthen the identity and progressiveness of Malay community in dealing with global culture advancement. Result of research indicates that cultural ego of individuals and community where individuals belong to is the precedent of collective senses of belonging, which without being awared, it is stimulating efforts into establishing collective struggle. This struggle is institutionalized as government responsibility to protect culture by making policies concerning culture conservation. There are three elements in cultural ego, namely, (1) spiritual ego, (2) social ego, and (3) functional ego.

KEYWORDS: Local Enthusiasm, Cultural Emotion, Malay, Java

INTRODUCTION

This research convinces the community that local cultural ego can urge individuals and communities into giving judgment on their own senses of belonging (pakarkomunikasi.com/makna-ego-dalam-praktek-komunikasi), especially concerning with representation of their existence through objects that have idiomatic nature. Idiomatic aspect is not only merely one of communication aspects, but it is also a genuine local intelligence or enthusiasm that has been comprehended through social life (Sew, 2015). Given this background, research is aimed to explain idiomatic aspect of a local culture enthusiasm when this enthusiasm is grown after local community successfully maintains their life existence and develops their life necessities. Research target is the progressing of Malay culture characteristics.

Sang Nila Utama Museum in Pekanbaru is the place where collections of Malay culture replicas are exhibited. As culture legacies, the replicas shall represent local cultural ego enthusiasm, and this enthusiasm can be observable in custom fashion replicas. General manifestation of these legacies is represented by objects that used to be functioned in household activities and custom ceremonies. Other representation may take form as work tools and metal-based products made by blacksmiths. Traditional tools for farming are always the part of culture system of agrarian community, which in this context, it characterizes Malay community.



Figure 1. Replica of metal artisans (Photograph by Robby Hidajat)

METHODS

Data were analyzed with interpretation, historical study, and ethnography. Malay cultural ego enthusiasm is an enthusiasm of individuals and communities to reveal their functional senses of belonging to any cultural objects that represent Malay community. This enthusiasm is a proof that Malay people are a community that conserves Malay identity. This enthusiasm is then explored and understood in this research by observing cultural heritages exhibited in Sang Nila Utama Museum in Pekanbaru. This museum is selected because objects exhibited in there are considered representing authentic historical characteristics of Malay culture. Interview was conducted with key informants such as Duni Sri Wani (54 years old), a cultural conservationist in Pekanbaru Culture Park, and Henrisal (52 years old), an expert staff in Sang Nila Utama Museum in Pekanbaru. Data were analyzed using visual verbal interpretation on artifacts that have been understood in paradigmatic and syntactic ways.

DATA RESULT

Local enthusiasm to Malay-Java culture was strongly rooted on the glory day of Sriwijaya Kingdom in 671 AD. Official religion of the Kingdom is Buddhism (torio.com/kerajaan-sriwijaya/). In a paper titled as “Riau Malay Diaspora as the Power for Malay Culture Development”, Samin (2019:7-8) has said that Buddhism is not only a spiritual base of Sriwijaya people but it is also an intellectual base of Malay community. The progressing of civilization and the succession of ruler dynasties in various regions in Sumatera, especially in Pekanbaru, cannot escape from Buddhism. Malay enthusiasm in recent days is identifiable in a program called Master Plan for The Progressing of Riau Malay Culture, and the in-charge over this master plan is Team LAM Riau. It was found by the Team that Malay enthusiasm was centered on Riau, and therefore, it was suggested that historical sites in Riau should be explored in order to understand its socio-cultural potentials. For instance, Malay culture was once known for its maritime legacies, and one of them was symbolized by Lancing Kuning, which takes a form as a boat to signify glory, power, and magnificency. Malay people admit that their ancestor has enthusiasm to the sea, and therefore, they describe this enthusiasm in a form of a boat depicted like a roofed mansion with three layers, which resembles a Javanese custom house called meru, which is an archaic term for mountain. Boat depiction is assumed as reflecting an enthusiasm to achieving transcendental quality, and that is possibly why Riau takes this depiction as a provincial symbol (riaudailyphoto.com/2011/12/lancang-kuning).

Religion leaders have once gathered in a public forum, precisely at the Seminar on the Progressing of Riau Malay Culture that was held in Pekanbaru 2019. This event was presented to commemorate the 49th birthday of Riau Malay Custom Organization and celebrated with inauguration of “the Exhibition of Riau Malay Custom and Culture”. Both seminar and exhibition were organized by an optimism that Malay culture is a cultural enthusiasm power that can help Malay community to find their own potentials in the future (although still, of course, with the assistance of Team LAM Riau). In her article titled as “Looking At Palembang Through Its Manuscripts”, Pujiastuti has said that Islam intellectuality arises with the subside of Sriwijaya imperial age (Pujiastuti, 2006). Her finding is strongly supporting Malay culture position because artifacts exhibited in Sang Nila Utama Museum are dominantly those with Arabian scripts. Moreover, Malay artifacts in this museum are also proofs that Malay culture enthusiasm power has been manifested into local culture characteristics, such as skills of producing gold crafts and skills of weaving and sewing songket cloths. Malay people have variety of custom fashions starting from daily fashion to ceremonial wedding suits.

Artifacts kept in Sang Nila Utama Museum in Pekanbaru constitute the most part of the data. After deep scrutiny on the data, it is found that the artifacts are derived from spiritual qualities (Buddhism and Islam) that produce local intellectualism that creates Malay culture literacies. Most of the exhibited artifacts are those typically functional, which include household appliances, custom and wedding fashions, working tools, sea transportation devices, ritual equipments and art instruments. Besides being identified on function, the artifacts also contain Malay characteristics that possibly corroborate the existence of Pekanbaru community because they still conserve Malay identity.

People in Pekanbaru Regency are agrarian community, and this agrarian identity is noticeable in livelihood works that the people do, tools that they use at works, and type of their house. People who live in downtown usually show less enthusiasm to traditional culture, but Pekanbaru possibly becomes an exception. One of observation spots in regency capital is Dupa Market. The mostly sold commodity in this market is farm products such as fruits and vegetables, which therefore, it can be said that the identity as agrarian community is still strongly influencing. Their way of wearing fashions and making conversation truly characterizes a dynamic life of agrarian community. Therefore, a paradigmatic line can then be drawn to this point where it can be said that a community with agrarian culture is one with more established dwelling, or in other words, that agrarian community is typically settled or non-migratory. This statement is consistent with Suwardi Mohammad Samin who has remarked that Malay community can be identified from many attributes. One is that they have more settled dwelling called house, which has a wide space inside, called balay, used for the gathering of core families. They do also have skills of plaiting, stitching with needles, and making tattoos in various techniques. Most importantly, they consume betel (Samin, 2019:24). House-related artifact exhibited in Sang Nila Utama Museum in Pekanbaru is a traditional house replica. There is also a carved betel box made of brass. The carved part indicates a shape of triangle with foliage stylation. Orientation to nature seems always becoming the source of ornamental creations. This orientation is quite evident to be seen in house ornamenting where the front is always decorated with two carving sheets crossed one to another. The carving sheet is called lembayung or selembayung, which is representing the identity of Malay community. The sheet is also the incarnate of Malay community's cultural ego, which despite many modifications made on modern dwelling, the occupants are still using lembayung as one of mandatory ornaments.

In globalization era, scholars shall be able to recognize community progressing paths, and it can done by capturing comprehensively community's previous memories and its predisposition to progressiveness. It must be noted that local community is continually challenged by global culture, which as a consequence, the community is stimulated to have pragmatism economic orientation. Progressive construction for Malay local culture has been propped up by some constitutional bases, such as the Unitary State of Republic of Indonesia, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, National Constitution of 1945, and Pancasila, and also substantiated by few national pillars including infrastructures, policies and strong concept that underlie community empowerment strategies (Nuryanti, 2019;11).

DISCUSSION

Cultural ego has been growing and streaming into the soul of every individual in Malay community. This cultural ego is like a logistic used by each individual in confronting global culture. Sense of belonging to this cultural ego is deserved to be proud of and struggled for. Malay community entrusts both their pride and struggle to the government, which later takes responsibility to protect these interests. One of protective measures is culture conservation policy that emphasizes on uniformity and practicality of future life. Under government protection, cultural ego of Malay

community shall successfully follow the paths aimed toward millennial community. Three elements are constituting cultural ego, namely (1) spiritual ego, (2) social ego, and (3) functional ego.

1. Spiritual Ego

Cultural ego is growing after religious attitude is used in seeing individuals and communities. All humans are considered equal before the God. This religiosity is rooted from spiritual teaching of either Buddhism or Islam. Therefore, the Organization for Malay Custom & Culture was established as a formal organization with responsibility to handle Malay culture progressing. The Organization's work plan is to collect any essences and comprehensions concerning spirituality and intellectuality that shape up Malay community. The finding shows that Malay characteristic is exposed through verbal and non-verbal communication media, such as functional tools, clothes, carvings and literatures. The presence of individual and community and their relationship to God are represented through script, language, and drawing that arouse the sense of divinity. Artifacts bequeathed by ancestors are the perfect instrument to develop a collective attitude among beneficiaries to conserve their self-existence in order to achieve the comprehension of divinity values. Cultural ego expression related with divinity values is shown by putting carving elements called *selembayung* or *tayuk langit* on house ridge. The carvings symbolize the hope for family happiness.



Figure 2. Selembayung (photograph by Pujiyanto)

2. Social Ego

Social potentials are clearly a collective expression. There are many kinds of *lembayung* or *selembayung*. One may be suitable to be put on private house, while other can be the main element of certain office or building owned by either private organization or government. In the beginning, carving sheets (*lembayung*) are only used to mark the house of Riau nobilities. After conservation effort, then in current days, the carvings are used as the part of other craft creation or as the ornament of house exterior. Instead, its usage as house ornament has been the marker of Malay culture

existence and even put Malay community in global communication realm. Moreover, after deeply exploring the glorious day of Malay community, it is found that their ancestor is maritime community with sea voyage as life orientation. This orientation is then expressed through a symbol of Lancing Kuning. Such symbolization is the expression of social ego, or in other words, it is an outcome of a deep reflection on the related consciences and sentiments, which then culminate at an egocentric confession that the ancestor has maritime orientation. In this context, boat depiction is the expression of struggle and glory.



Figure 3. Lencang Kuning Momument (Photograph by Pujiyanto)

3. Functional Ego

In general, community life cannot be separated from its functional attribute because anything without function will only suffer extinction. This understanding has been realized by the team that composes the 2019 Master Plan for the Progressing of Riau Malay Culture, and then enforced by General Directorate for Culture Affair through a concept called “Policy making for Riau Malay culture to substantiate national culture”. Malay community in Pekanbaru Regency has taken one strategic step, which is to actualize culture progressing by making functional various elements of Malay culture. This step surely will impact on strengthening of cultural ego in Malay culture.



Figure 4. Betel Box (Photograph by Pujiyanto)

CONCLUSION

Cultural ego is the sense of belonging but without being aware but it then becomes the driving factor to the struggle for the progressing of self-existence through attitude, object or mentality for the favor of community. Malay culture is receiving such unaware sense of belonging. Despite this unawareness, Malay people are still motivated to create uniformity by not only looking for geographic regions that share similarity to them in history and spirituality, but also by functioning various attitudes, objects and mental quality to attain proper perception about social life in nationality context.

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