

Social Changes Through the Encounter of Countries in Southeast Asia: A History- Hermeneutics Through the Contacts of Chinese and the People of Maluku in Spices Trading

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ABSTRACT: *Historical interpretation must look for what people did on their historical circle. On one hand, history hermeneutics is an effort to understand people's self-knowledge that what people know is a truth or a reality from their own worldview. On the other hand, history hermeneutics tries to make a new perspective that what happen now is unseparable from past. This is why hermeneutics of history might be used to make an interpretation about the truth itself. Based on history hermeneutics, I try to make an analysis about Chinese and Moluccans contact during spices trade period. This study based on social changes in Maluku on economic and social life. I want to study the mutual economic model by Asian, something different with economic model by European which so politically.*

KEY WORDS: *history hermeneutics, social changes, interpretation and understanding, and Chinese and Moluccans relations in Maluku.*

INTRODUCTION

I do not mean to say that hermeneutical history is a new approach because this approach has been developed for long time. At least, it has been well known since the appearance of history analysis paradigm which was introduced by Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre from *Annales School* and then it was followed by Anthony Reid for the case of Southeast Asian studies (Burke, 2003).

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I try to follow the history analysis structure to find out the reasons why society was change when the people started to leave a kind of individualistic (involving the religion community) and were in charge intensively with ohter communities from the outside of the social environment. This means that the social changes do not happen as a genetic development or genetic evolution as claimed by Charles Darwin, but it was also influenced by social dynamic as claimed by Emmile Durkheim in his sociology. Through this case, the social dynamic is comprehended as something occured in a meaningful history scope. So, the encountering between community, ethnics, languages communication, and even religion must be also viewed as a meaningful history event (Kartodirdjo, 1992). Whatever the reasons of viewing this case as a social fact or even as a history event, both of them focus on a set of acts between individual and group, such as in linguistic activities, communication, trading (selling and buying), art, war, etc.

SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF SOCIOLOGY AND HISTORY TOWARDS THE HERMENEUTICS HISTORY

Historically, the aspect for this act can be understood as a set of activities which were acted by historical actor in a particular place and time as a way to express an idea or exchanging culture. Furthermore, this action had left signs variety of social system, common ground morality and the most valuable thing is inheritance of Holy Book and so on.

In fact, there is a particular social system which was introduced to a particular community which had had a particular social system, so that both of the social system are adapted to become a social system in present time. Due to this case, there often happens a conflict point of views between community which results on a system or a view of this present time social system. This makes hermeneutica is viewed as something important to analyze society historical which should be viewed as something to be dealt by not ignoring this condition under unpredictable.

Methodologically, hermeneutica in hisory studies leads to the relation to sociological studies. Sartono Kartodirdjo says that history is not only about narativism of an event but also the explanation of the events (Kartodirdjo, 1992:1-6). This shows that hermeneutica is a set of methodologies which are needed in historical analysis. Furthermore, Kuntowijoyo says that the beneficial of social studies methodology in historical studies can be a bridge of an effort to overcome the weakness of historical studies methodologies (Kuntowijoyo, 2003:5). This means that sociology and history is "a close neighbors".

Gerald J. Schnepf views that the cross action between social theories and historian happened at the area of unresolved area. The unresolved

areas are: terminology, meaning clarification of “sociology theory”, and the relation between theory and research (Schnepp, 1953:371-372). Hence, Peter Burke explains this unresolved area in Model and Method and basic concepts (Burke, 2003:31-154).

In a long term period, these two disciplines are not connected each other. Each theory developed its basic concepts and methodologies and tended to be stand on the developed theory. Peter Burke helped to find out the solution in 18th to 20th century when the social theory and historical theory began to form “a close neighbors”. The experts developed contradictive concepts one another even when the area of theory and social history was decline (Burke, 2003).

The solution to this problem occurred when the concept of “evolution” in sociology was developed by cosmic such as August Comte and Herbert Spencer. Accordingly, Gerhard J. Schnepp (1953:369) and Gerhard Hauck (1984:16) explain the relationship between August Comte and Herbert Spencer evolution with historical approach through the society development as a *gessellschaft*. This becomes clear that since the era of August Comte and Herbert Spencer, social theory can not be separated from history. It is a reflective of *wissenschaftlichen rationalitat* (Hauck, 1984:13).

In other fields, especially in politics, social products such as: Shmuel N. Eisenstadt (*The Political Systems of Empires*, 1963); Seymour M. Lipset (*The First Nation*, 1963); Charles Tilly (*The Vendee*, 1964); Barrington Moore (*Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, 1966); Eric Wolf (*Peasant Wars*, 1969); and even in anthropology such as Clifford Geertz and Marshal Sahlins. Historian such as Leovold van Ranke and Francis Bacon began to leave social history and formed the political history as a result of finding out the main resource data and the processing of the clauses for each motion and each difference made in the society (Burke, 2003:2-16 and 25-27).

This cross concepts is introduced by Peter Burke as a characteristic of tipology difference between social theory and historical theory in particular eras. Peter Burke argues some sociologist. For him, these two approaches have taken society as the objects (Burke, 2003:7-10).

Peter Burke is also considering the questions about “what’s the benefit of social theory for historian and vice versa, and what’s the benefit of history social theory?”. It has made us worry. It is not because the answer “because of this or because of that”, but the essential is the need of observing the basic of plausibility of these two approaches (Burke, 2003:7-10).

Some products that can be categorized the representatives to describe interrelation between social theory and history is the classical product from Montesquieu (*Spirits of the Law*, 1748) which has influenced Moser (*History*

of *Osnabruck*), a local history which is based on original document. This also once becomes classical example of theory contribution to the historical studies (Burke, 2003:7). Gibbon (*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 1776) which then formed the basics of political history epistemology; a product which a century later become the basics in considering analysis of Leopold van Ranke, a historian at the end of 19th century. He introduced the uses of legal documents as the historical resource and rebuilt the political history in a specific case which has left the social history (Burke, 2003:8-10).

Social experts and historians deal with the resources which they relied on as the data gives that serves and describes their study object-society. However, there still are different methodologies. Therefore, the effort to history hermeneutics of Emilio Betti's note became very important. By criticizing Hans-Georg Gadamer hermeneutics orientation, which focuses on ontology not methodology, Emilio Betti supports the necessary of history objectivity in making a valid interpretation. According to him, comprehending is a history act and related to the present time so that the discussion of a valid objective interpretation is half because the assumption that the possibility to predict from the other pronto of views outside history which also out of border of this present time, historian predict from the other words (Palmer, 2003:53). Emilio Betti also said that the objectivity relates to the comprehending of the society as the history actor; so we, the people of this present era, have only continued this comprehension while developing the classification due to the history existing data. On the other side, historical analysis will still be framed in diachronic history with a more quantitative approach.

In contrast, Hans-Georg Gadamer promotes the term of "history critical awareness" as a model for historical hermeneutics. He analyzed a strict philosophy and the history toward the development of this term since Hegel until the uses of this term technically by Dilthey.¹

Hans-Georg Gadamer asked about the position of "me" in the historical explanation as a whole of what we call "truth" for him, the presence of "me" is something happens in historical process. Through the historical awareness, "me" is universally and the other historical data can be manifested in what we call "life" because here "life can only be understood as life" (Gadamer, 1995:229).

¹Hans-Georg Gadamer acknowledge that the theme of "historical consciousness" is in the outline of German science. He appears in the context of *Geisteswissenschaften* in an outline towards the influence of *Natural Science* which has been independently stood as an individual science. He grows in borjuois in German which then formed another scientific hermeneutics through Schleiermacher dan Dilthey. See Hans-Georg Gadamer (1979:103-105).

For Hans-Georg Gadamer, being in a history means being in a worldview and self-knowledge which are formed in a whole historical process. Historical critical awareness, as an online of hermeneutical critic, is not a derivation from aesthetics' awareness but from the part of human knowledge which have basics coherently and plausibility. The correlation to the past time, as proposed by Dilthey, must be prevented to avoid (the fusion of horizons or *horizontsverschmelzung*), because the relation between past time, present time, and future time always become the circle of meaning movement (Wachterhauser, 1986:223). For Hans-Georg Gadamer, history does not belong to only ours but we belong to history. Long before we comprehend self by trial process which we made own, we comprehend ourselves in a proof that we are part of the family, society and country where we are (Wachterhauser, 1986:225; and Gadamer, 1995:245).

Hans-Georg Gadamer's assumption is significant "tradition" as a totality as ontologically with the human (Palmer, 1969:163; and Sumaryono, 1999:69). Tradition, as a part of culture, has more wide meaning of what comprehend as "formation" or "culture". Culture is not result of technical construction, but developing by a formed process and finding or searching, for that have continuous character (Gadamer, 1995:10-11).

CHINA AND SOCIAL CHANGES IN MALUKU PEOPLE HISTORY

Spices trading in Maluku can be said as the promoter in developing socio-cultural in Indonesia (Nusantara) and even in Southeast Asia. The intense encounter between people in Southeast Asia and the people from Europe occurred through this spices trading (Reid, 2004; and Ricklefs, 2005).

Based on reference of spices trading in Maluku to introduce some historical fact aspects which have influenced the forming of some social system of people in Maluku. I will not talk about the history diachronically or chronologically or telling the history in detail. In case of historical hermeneutics, some data are included to find out the relationship of historical meaning in it. The data involving in this study, I try to categorize the form and model of community encounter, culture and language between the people in Maluku and the people from other countries in Asia such as Arabic, China and India and also from Europe, especially Portuguese and Netherland.

This part is focused on China based on some reasons. *First*, the history of Maluku is being developed on the paradigm of *Netherlandology*, always related to Europe, VOC (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*) and Netherland-Hindy. Furthermore, the social structure of people in Maluku has changed significantly because of Netherland politics domination.

Therefore, many anthropologist, sociologist, theologian, and historian tend to view the expansion of Netherland, VOC and Zending Missionary.

Second, this paradigm has overthrown the encounter of Chinese who previously came in Maluku and did a set of economic activities in this area. This means that the existence of Asian between communities which is “cool” and “agility” is an ignoring situation by the historian, sociologist, anthropologist and theologian in their reflection. History prophecy in Maluku and other areas in Indonesia, or even in Southeast Asia, has been much by the politics domain and just a little of them which explains about the economic or trading domain. Therefore, trading is also comprehended as a project of politics in the concept of 3G (*Gold, Gospel, and Glory*). However, a cool trading expansion practiced by the people in Asia has produced an adaptation of culture which happens directly mutually and agility, even in religious context.

People used to predict that clove became famous in Europe market because of Portuguese and VOC. This assumption is incorrect. Since the third century, cloves had been recognized by Terqa in Mesopotamia and Syria. In fact, Chinese were the people who brought cloves to these areas. In Mesopotamia, cloves were consumed by the middle to the up class society, especially as mouth fresher when they came to meet the king. Cloves became the symbol of social status (Andaya, 1993:1-2).

Gavin Menzies even talked about the trading expansion and China naval base which travelled across the sea and made a map. For a very long time, they hid the presence of Maluku as spices island, so that for centuries later European could find it (Menzies, 2006:52-68).

By having Malaka as harbor city, China stamped on Maluku to look for high profit through spices trading. However, until 1421 the domination of trading was handled by the people in Asia (Chinese, Arabic, Egyptians and Bay countries) through Hindia Ocean. According to Gavin Menzies, the relationship between them was good. As other countries, Arabic needed porcelains and silk from China, therefore the Chinese ships were welcomed by the Arabian (Menzies, 2006:62-63).

The process of Chinese and people in Maluku occurred in a set of simple negotiation activities. In a document from Ma Huan, as quoted by Gavin Menzies, there was a story of how the goods in naval base were sold and contract pattern that was used:

[...] when the prices were negotiated, then they noted the agreement. The head and Chei Ti were together with his master, Kasim, and the buyer said: “In this particular month and day, we have shaken hands together and we have agreed formally by

shaking hands. Even though the prices are expensive or cheap, we will never cancel or change it" (Menzies, 2006:75).

The act of "shaking hands" was seen as "contract approval" or "bill" in selling and buying practice. As usual, Chinese would take the spices from Maluku people, then they would leave some porcelains other goods from China involving the China silk. Accordingly, Fernand Braudel – as quoted also by Gavin Menzies – writes as follows:

[...] (Chinese) went around the country, bringing a scale in hands, they bought all spices that they found. After scaling a little and when they had defined the amount, they proposed the payment in coins and the amount depended on the needs of money by the seller. In this way, they could collect the needed amount of goods due to the capacity of the ships from China and then they sold for about fifty thousands *caixas* (the Portuguese currency), even though they only bought it for about twelve thousands (Braudel, 1985:130; and Menzies, 2006:66).

In this way, China had dominated the trading level praxis in society. They controlled the price of spices. Therefore, they controlled the distribution and the supply of the spices.

Through this mode of the development of history hermeneutics, the most important thing is the history data that the contact between the communities through the spices trading in Maluku has produced a kind of modern economic system, by using the exchanging things of money and valuable articles.

Local commodity such as cloves is not only the economic commodity but also the symbol of economic civilization in Maluku and other areas in Southeast Asia or in the world in general. The presence of China as a model and trading system becomes an interesting phenomenon in social exchanging map in Maluku. For a long time, the studies of Maluku focus too much on *Netherlandslogy* or colonialism paradigm: in these cases of Portuguese and Netherland. Regarding to this situation is the description of Maluku describes the presence of colonialism and the arising of heroics of people in Maluku (*Kabaresi* like Kapitan Pattimura, Christina Martha Tiahahu, etc).

However, when we looked at the very first time, the era of the beginning of trading spices or in Chinese era, the changing constellation in Maluku and Southeast Asia occurred because of economic politics, in this case the desire to lead the spices and silk trading line.

The phenomenon of China in Maluku is a kind of economical phenomenon which the history of economic in Maluku can be rearranged and restudied. The presence of Chinese in Maluku had influenced the social society structure until this present time.

POPULATION AND ECONOMIC ASPECT IN VILLAGES IN MALUKU

Richard Chauvel (1990:3), made a population data in Ambon city in 1930 in these following compositions:

	Ambonese	Butonese	Other people (Java, etc.)	European	Oriental
Ambon City	7,593		5,994	1,878	1,869
	6,436 (Christian)				
	2,106 (Moslem)				
Ambon Island	38,715	9,164	1,051	247	310
	20,961 (Christian)				
	17,923 (Moslem)				
Saparua	38,458	1,015	273	290	359
	29,933 (Christian)				
	8,462 (Moslem)				
Total	84,766	10,179	7,318	2,415	2,538

The population data shows that Chinese (in Oriental category), until 1930 had grown and became a unified community with the people in Ambon/Maluku. In three different locations i.e. in Ambon city, Ambon island and Saparua island with the total population of 2,538. Their presence in Ambon could not be separated from the long history between the encounter of Chinese and the people in Maluku/Ambon since the cloves trading had been led by them. Even in VOC era, Chinese helped the people in Saparua to sell their cloves to North Seram.

If we look deeply, their presence was only in case of trading. After the cloves trading was led by VOC/Netherland, the Chinese naval base expansion got out from Maluku. However, the Chinese as individual or as a family preferred to live in Ambon and Saparua to do a cloves trading with the local people. They began to do another trading economic activities, involving trading sea resources and land resources. This supported the occurrence of Chinese community distribution in Ambon island and Saparua to the other islands, such as Seram, Southeast Maluku, and Aru.

Therefore, there always be *Toko China*, a special term in Maluku to call for a shop building owned by a Chinese. Sociologically, there are some terms of China Saparua, China Taniwel, China Gorom, China Geser, China Dobo, etc. the mode of Chinese identification with the local people.

These terminologies were actually from the high expansion of China in international spices trading which then dominated by VOC. This portrait is a result of the encounter of interpersonal between Ambonese and Chinese which also brought the changes of local economic system, especially in using money as main exchange tool. Chinese who lived in the village promoted the local people there to trade to another area.

TRADITION SYMBOL/CULTURE

Molucas people is famous as unite society and practicing on life culture dimension. There are many culture symbols in the practice, as manifestation of material culture.

In some tradition rites, such as wedding, pay fine ceremony tradition, king induction, etc. always enclose a set of material culture symbol and then become completeness a tradition ceremony. The elements of material culture are what called "old plate", that is porcelain plate as relics trace of cheneese. Elephant tusk, that is relic trace of the India merchantmen (especially in Southeast Molucas), white cloth (bedsheet) and also guessable chinese relic, and the other ornaments.

Called "porcelain plate" as "old plate" post this material be a sacred and can't unattend in a ceremony. If this thing is nothing, the ceremony considered illegal. Besides if "the old plate" be the material of pay tradition fine. The emptiness make a scofflaw will feel in pscology depression, because this material can't changed with another element/component, include the money.

By slow degree when these things rarely, in some groups sub-ethnic such as in Southeast Moluccas, instead became fortunate thing own's group. In the ceremony is used communicatively from one family to another family in close communion. Whereas elephant tusk, and then is materialed in amounts of money, as ability and or deal in sub-etnic certain of tradition law.

Its mean there are some contacts with Chinese and India had formed a new culture system in Moluccas. Adaptation two of these culture elements are the same. Nothing expansive or invasive in assembly process two of these diferrent cultures. East people concept rather choose looking for the peace that encourage formed a new social and economic by meeting between the countries. Different with expansive Europe politic that success form new concept of the world.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper aims to study and to reanalyze the economic history in Maluku which focuses on Asian countries economic activities, in this case China in Maluku, a long time activity before Europe period.

The purpose is to develop the studies that have been done in a more mature context in Maluku people social changes and the people in Southeast Asia who at the very first time involved in international trading route. In other words, the changes in Southeast Asia previously happened because of the encounter of communities in Southeast Asia.

This is important because the European historical structure has ignored the facts of communities encounter in this area. We seem to be loyal in Europe perspective in many cases, so that the dynamics of local people or local history almost lose and if there is no mature process academically, these stories will only become myths behind the cover of irrationality.

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