

## The social space in the making of identity(case : Pekan Labuhan, Medan, Indonesia)

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**Abstract.** Social space is relation space manifested by the existence of communities, so it become the identity of the area. The district of Pekan Labuhan has a long history of relations between ethnic. Ethnic Malays as the indigenous hereditary have been running daily life at this place. The appeal of the Deli River as a harbour area made ethnic Chinese came later then occupied and then run business activities at this place. The aim of this research is to explain the process the intermingling of ethnic Malay and Chinese in the old city to making social spaces. These social space become the reason the community survive and run his life here. Through qualitative research methods, social space can be articulated and described from explained relationship by ethnic Malays as indigenous and Chinese as newcomers. The space becomes a power to struggle and defend the identity between the two ethnicities in the area.

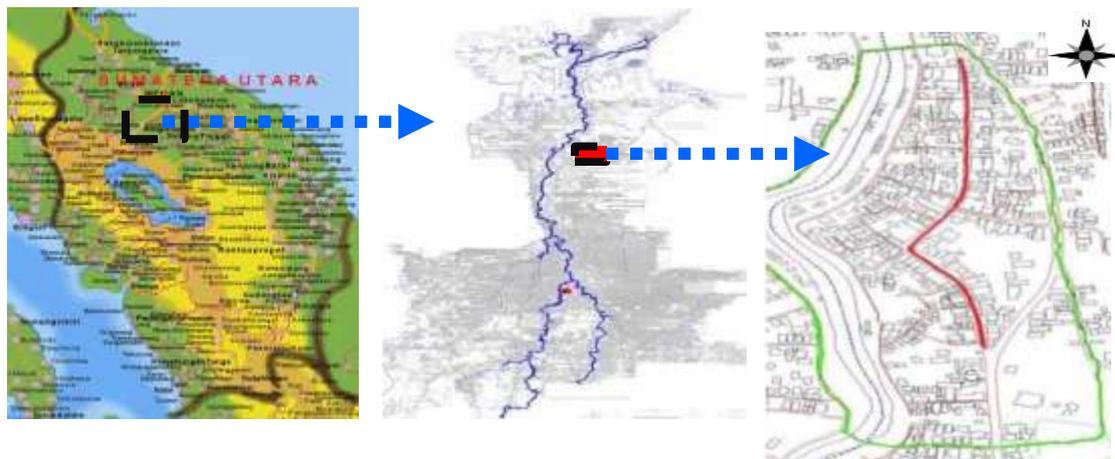
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### 1. Introduction

The existence of cultural differences between local communities with immigrants in urban areas allows the realization of cultural fusion between the two. Cultural differences of local people with the entrants appear from the distribution of housing, buildings, their religious and social activities. Therefore the study of culture and society of the early entrants in the same space in urban areas has always been interesting to do further studies. Fenomenoli which occur in one area gives an overview about the uniqueness of the cultural mix that is not necessarily occur on other areas.

The area of Pekan Labuhan, Medan Labuhan has a long history about cultural fusion between locals and newcomers. Malay people as early and the Chinese as newcomers have been able to establish harmonious relationships in a very long time. From the history of civilization of Pekan Labuhan can be drawn in the understanding that the existence of the Malay society equally strong with China.





a. Fig. North Sumatera

b. Fig. Medan

c. Fig. Pekan Labuhan

**Figure. 1** Map of Pekan Labuhan

Malay people use this area as a space to use-value of living have been able to form a strong kinship and civilization. Then the existence of the Chinese community who use the region as a space of exchange-value has been able to make them become the holder of the economic sector. Later still exist the Mosque Osmani, Pekong Lim Sim Kong and Pekong Siu San Keng standing close together shows how attracted good relations between the two groups to both buildings is still maintained and is able to become a landmark as the oldest house of worship in the city of Medan.

How to process a social relationship communities Malay and Chinese that occurs in this area. How to form social relationships between the two groups can form identities and give an attraction for the public to pay a visit to the region. This paper examines two such problem-focused.

## 2. Literature Review

Social space produced by the social relationship and the cultural processes. This space cannot be separated from the social life (*lived social existence*). Therefore, space and the social beings are a sustainable relation, adjust to each other and advantageous to each other (Lefebvre, 2004).

In the discussion on space, the Lefebvre's theory (2004); Soja (1996); Ruppert (2003); Gottdiener (1985) explains that in a city, there are three spaces that related continuously, namely:

Spatial Practice. It is spatial patterns of everyday life. This space produces activities, behavior pattern, and everyday life experiences. It is named *perceived space*

Representations of Space. It is conceptual models used to direct social practice and land use planning. This imaginative, creative space is created by scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic, subdividers and social engineers. It is named *conceived space*

Spaces of Representation. This space is called *social space*. It connects perceived space and conceived space. It is created by the social relations

Lefebvre and Soja showed that the structure of space is a concrete manifestation of structure and social relationship. Urban people face those three spaces in their daily life. The three spaces are intended for the purpose of how they can be fitted sustains their life in the city. Modern cities, to pursue the popularity and to get revenue, the government and stakeholders compete to design their city with new thoughts and ideas, which is a modern concept that later by the architects and planners being transformed into the blueprint. The urban space is equipped with the latest technology for lighting, circulation, visual information and activities favoured by the youth and old generation.

## 3. Methodology

This research mainly focused on the social space located in Pekan Labuhan, Medan. Since the type of this research is qualitative, hence the most effective method to collect data was by interview and direct

observation. With interview, the researcher can get the thoughts and ideas that are stored in the minds of respondents who are the people from the community who live in the area. The process of interview was conducted in a relaxed way with the snowball system. Furthermore, researcher directed observing the space and interpreted as the qualitative method analysis. In this method, the social phenomenon and space phenomenon that occurred is concluded as a result of in-depth interpretation and clearly described

**4. Case Study, Analysis and Discussion**

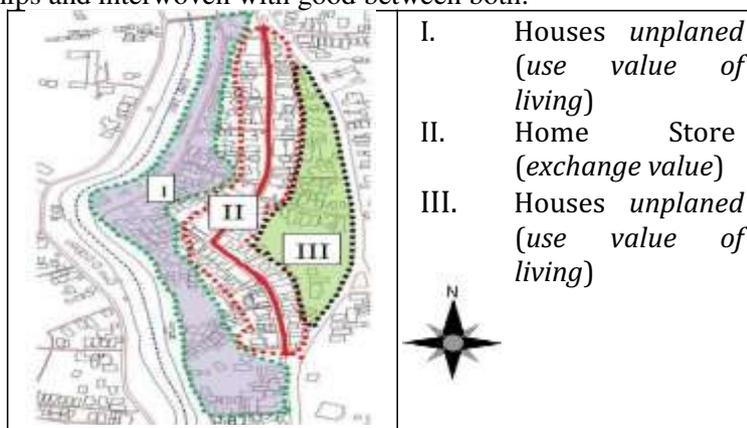
The emergence of the early Sultanate of Deli is when this kingdom was released from captivity of the Kingdom of Aceh. Commander Tengku Panglima Perungkit which was later declared independence the Sultanate of Deli Sultanate from the Kingdom of Aceh in the 1669. Under the newly independent Sultanate of Deli, Pekan Labuhan is strategic area for being the center of government. The availability of the Deli River cruise through access make the sailors who come from various places and landing ships on the area.

In the year 1863, Nienhuys, Netherlands entrepreneurs come to the Tanah Deli and interested to developed business in here. In the same year Sultan Deli gave Nienhuys, Vander Falk and Elliot of the firm Van Keeuwen en Mainz & Co 4,000 a shoulder (1 shoulder = 0.74 ha) system with a 20-year lease on the Tanjung Sepassi, not far from the Pekan Labuhan areas. In March 1864 example harvest tobacco of Deli shipped to Rotterdam, Netherlands for tested quality. The result was show that the tobacco leaves very good and high quality cigar wrappers.

In the year 1866, Jansen, P.W. Clemen, Cremer and Nienhuys founded the company named De Deli Maatscapij whose offices centred in the Pekan Labuhan, to make Malay village increasingly crowded. The Chinese are purposely brought in by Colonial Netherlands to this area as workers at company De Deli Maatscapij is slowly formed a kinship with the native communities. In addition to the activity as workers, they also traded in the region of Pekan Labuhan. This has resulted in the emergence of architectural style buildings China, Chinese-owned shops like home as their place of settlement and trade. The row of buildings that is old remains found exist until today.

One interesting thing when ever-growing Pekan Labuhan as the heritage old town i.e. behaviours in society. The development of the community's behavior at the Pekan Labuhan in the past have an impact on the development of the communities in Medan at present the multi ethnic. Dyalegtical social relations between Malay and Chinese in this area is the reasoning. The interconnectedness of these relationships occurred due to the influence of man against space or vice versa.

The development of Malay village became a town in Pekan Labuhan occurs due to presence of Chinese migrants to trade and work in the Tanah Deli, the area is emerging as a new primadona because developed-the extent of the tobacco plantations. The spaces in the Pekan Labuhan have variation, the integrated space of use-value and exchange-value. Both these spaces form the encouragement of mutual need, both for the Chinese or Malay settlers. That spaces are also evolving toward activities, celebrating the social relationships and interwoven with good between both.



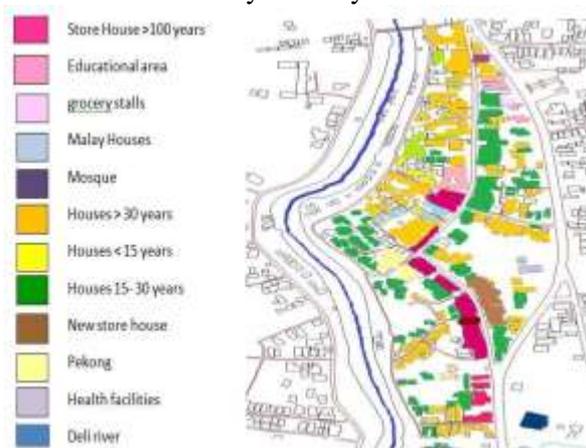
**Figure. 2** Using of Space

The circumstances proved in the period prior to independence of Indonesia, the colonial Government of Netherlands create a policy to move the port from the port of Labuhan to Belawan. Moving the location of the port economically give harm to the Chinese community as the region's economy. The influence of the policy towards the region post the transfer port makes a large part of Chinese society reacts to still survived. This situation is truly part of the community's strategy to remain able to satisfy their needs of space. The Chinese still regard the area as the "Home" so that not many of them choose another area but moved to survive their trade running a economic in this area is to develop the business, houses and their houses of worship.

Effected by a long history, since the era before independence until the crisis situation in the year 1998, the Malay and Chinese communities live side by side and in harmony in the Pekan Labuhan. The harmony of social relationships seem from the Pekong and and a mosque adjacent to each other, then the home pattern between the Malay and Chinese formed sporadically rather than in a group. In addition, good relations in the society have been intertwined throughout so the activity to know each other, mutual visit and give each other assistance aid between the two groups.

Economic benefits from the presence of the Chinese community in the region to make the Malay in Pekan Labuhan prosperous life and consumptive is impressed. It is recognized by the Malay people who worked as fishermen and seafood seller in the region. For them, China is its loyal customers that are not only good, but also gives a great advantage for them. The Chinese often buy the exhausted fishermen, seafood such as shrimp, squid and big shrimp the sea. A comparison when the Chinese community become their main customers, revenue from the sale of seafood a day would be sure to charge the three shopping days.

Economic development in the area controlled by the Chinese community. The main spaces in the business space filled area by Chinese community. Increasingly today houses a store, photo studio, hotel, shops, markets and restaurants belonging to the Chinese community growing and crowded. In addition, the Chinese community is not stingy gave the material to the Malay community, so that any activities that require huge funds, the Chinese community with loyal assistance funds.



**Figure. 3** Location of Housing

This makes the Pekan Labuhan seemed to be alive and thriving and there is good interaction between its citizens. The familiar entwined neighborly activities, Chinese and Malay communities gather together in stalls and mutual visit between neighbors discussing many things, like known each other between family relationships, learning the culture and just relax. Malay people consider the Chinese are friend and their companions, and vice versa.

Both Pekong temple as the Chinese community in the region was also instrumental in building a good relationship between the Chinese and the Malay in the Pekan Labuhan. The family and custodians of Pekong Siu San Keng and Pekong Liat Sim Kong often provide social assistance in the form of staple ingredients to the Malay communities at around of Pekan Labuhan. The family of both Pekong strained

relations both with communities around the areas, so religious activity which takes place in the fixed Pekong appreciated by Malay people in the vicinity.



Fig. a. Pekong Siu San Keng



Fig. b. Pekong Liat Sim Kong

**Figure. 4** Both Pekong at Pekan Labuhan

Starting from political events in May 1998 the region of Pekan Labuhan began to suffer from distortion. Flaming between indigenous and non indigenous communities occurs in many areas in Indonesia, including in the Pekan Labuhan. Indigenous communities do the looting of property, the expulsion of the Chinese communities and criminalization. The Chinese community feels very threatened indigenous group of action will be incorporated in community organizations and political organizations. The burning of houses, looting of shops the goods, the Act sacrilegious against Chinese women is an action that cannot be simply unavoidable. Due to the events of the flaming society of Chinnese suffered the fetters.

The Chinese community in the Pekan Labuhan flocked leaving the home long they inhabit. They go abroad or to another area in the city of Medan that they consider to be a safe place. The Chinese consent sincere the home and struggling to start a new life outside the region Pekan Labuhan. This area like the "City of Death" after Chinese community was gone. Economic spaces of exchange-value rate initially ruled by the Chinese community is increasingly narrows. No more crowds of Chinese community in Wine Market, no more messing about activities at the stall of opium, shop-houses, photo studio, hotel, shops, markets and restaurants as Chinese business power has now used the new residents according to their appetite. The crowd of social and economic activity in the Pekan Labuhan is transformed into quiet.



a.) Eks houses of Candu



b.) Eks Hotel



c.) Eks shop houses



d.) Market place at the area.

become public space

**Figure. 5** Social Life at The Place

Space Chinese society increasingly narrows, the spaces remaining at this time only occurs on both pekong, Pekong Siu San Keng and Pekong Liat Sim Kong. Residents of Pekan Labuhan gave the initials Pekong Siu San Keng as male and Pekong Pekong Liat Sim Kong as female. Both of these Pekong not looting at the time of the unrest revormation in December 1998 because its existence is maintained by the local community. Currently the spaces in identity in the pekong became a marker of social space in this area. The private space who used by the Chinese community as a space of worship then can be freely accessed and enjoyed by the inhabitants of Melayu and its existence is maintained by them. Chinese and Malay communities alike keep the existence of these for the sake of keeping pekong their identity in the region and yearning will be past. Pekong and communities coexist in the region of Pekan Labuhan.

Good deeds of the Chinese community against Malays in the past remain in recalls and appreciated by the descendants of Malay at this moment. Therefore the Malay people keep giving resources to the Chinese community. Resources sacrificed Malay society was very apparent when a big ceremony at Pekong. Annual ceremony are held in Pekong always involves many communities. Malay people willing to give sacrifice to maintain security, offer help and manage parking when the existence of the festivals big day religious Pekong.

The source of the funds that are owned by the Chinese community and resources owned Malay society has produced a harmonious social relations between the two groups on the Pekan Labuhan. The harmonious relationship growing and interlaced mutual help and interdependence between both people in the same space. Pekong is media for merging source of funding and resources. A big event in the pekong to be successful when both groups unite in the spaces of collaborate with mutual help and mutual respect. Pekong become markers of social space between the two groups and has produced tolerance.

Good relationships has formed through pekong, then growing to the communities in this area. Both community groups always invite each other to visit when there is a custom event and annual events that occur in the region. When the Malay people held weddings, baby birth and grieving, the Chinese society come to visit, and vice versa. When in the area would do the party of independence Indonesia or other event that brought together many of the people, the Chinese community with loyal provide assistance funds while the Malay society provides the resources needed. Resources and the source of those funds into two groups become power to outstanding success every event that happens in the Pekan Labuhan, both in celebration in the pekong place and in the surrounding environment.

The spaces that form on the both Pekong, growing and developing, building renovation going on in here and there. Pekong became a together space and has advantages for both groups in the region. Malay people benefit from the help of staple goods blessing from pekong and get entertainment from each major event took place in this place, as well as additional resources from selling food and drink in Pekong.

For the Chinese community Pekong have becoming strong inner bond, those who have been staying outside this area often visit and pray in here. A large part of their save the ashes of a dead body of family and its relatives in pekong. The Chinese community when it comes to this region seemed to enjoyed come own villages, due regard had ever lived in this area and missing the atmosphere while still living here. Pekong became the Chinese indicator that they are praying in the historic area and has its own impression for them. This makes the presence of both aforementioned Pekong comes alive and survive, even more magnificent and thriving since the renovation in both building the pekong.

## **Conclusion**

Since the 19th century, Malay and Chinese in the Labuhan have lived side by side. Both of these community groups living harmoniously in a neighborly even intertwined social relations on the same space. Space the exchange-value that is owned by Chinese communities have managed to spoil the Malay community space for daily life even make them live consumptive.

Political distortion on revormasi year 1998 disrupt good social relations between the Chinese and the Malay at the Pekan Labuhan. Since that incident, the social relations Malay and Chinese had distorted. But the strength of the social relations between the two groups in the past can still be intertwined again.

The building Pekong is a medium weaves back good relations. Exchange-value and use-value of living at the time then has shifted into modal resources and human resources. Due to these developments, both pekong become media as social relations. Pekong at the times has been able to be a marker of identity and becomes a shared space between the two groups in the area of Pekan Labuhan, Medan.

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