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OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF LOCAL HISTORY RESEARCH IN NORTH MALUKU

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ABSTRACT

This study explains things related to the writing of Local History in North Maluku. This study aims to explain the opportunities and challenges of writing local history, several studies that have been carried out by researchers (senior historians) and young researchers (junior historians). This research is a qualitative research type of library research. The steps are as follows: (1). Topic selection; (2). Information exploration; (3). Determine the research focus; (4). Collection of data sources; (5). Preparation of data presentation; and (6). Preparation of reports. The conclusion is that the historiography of local history is a study that is always interesting to study and discuss. Local history has a very important meaning for communities living in certain geographic areas. Local history is rich in local wisdom values as part of local culture and the nation's cultural heritage. Local history is indeed not a written work as an exercise, therefore historians are required to work more seriously and be extra careful with the mastery of auxiliary sciences so as to give birth to a quality historiography.

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PRELIMINARY

Starting the conversation about local history, to quote Wineburg (2006: 17-18), "Thinking history requires us to bring together two opposing views; First, the way we think we use today is an inheritance that cannot be removed, and second, if we don't try to get rid of that heritage, inevitably we have to resort to "presentism", which is looking at the past through the lens of the present." Thus we must understand that there is a continuity of the past that shapes the present, and changes in the elements, values and challenges of society as a form of reinterpretation of changing times (Susanto, 2014: 59).

Speaking of local history, the position of local history always has a very important meaning for people living in certain geographical areas. How relative the scope of local history (microhistory) and national history (macro history) is, the difference essentially lies in the difference in pressure exerted by historians or researchers themselves (Widja, 1991: 39). Local history is very important for people's lives, especially modern society. Why is that?, because basically studying local history is very useful as a source of creativity and optimistic views of local people. With the understanding that traditional societies may only act according to the immediate challenges they find, but modern societies cannot fixate on contemporary conditions alone (Kusnoto & Minandar 2017)

Nowadays, modern education which focuses more on rationality often ignores knowledge from local knowledge which is rich in cultural values. So it will be a problem if we cannot know the identity of our own nation. How can we have a national identity if we do not properly understand the cultural roots of our ancestors (Firdaus, 2017). Therefore, to anticipate this phenomenon, it would be better to use a cultural approach, namely an approach through the inheritance of historical values and local wisdom which of course can be understood through historical studies, especially local history.

According to Wales, local wisdom is also called *local genius*. Local genius means a number of cultural characteristics possessed by a society as a result of its experiences in the past. Thus, the word "local wisdom" means local ideas that are wise, full of wisdom and have good intentions. These ideas are embedded and adhered to by community members (Krisnawati).

The existence of local history in a community is related to the historical values found in the surrounding environment. Unfortunately, so far local history has received little attention from some people. Its existence is acknowledged but not revealed widely and clearly. People tend to be interested in history in a broader scope. This kind of phenomenon has decreased

between generations and among today's young generation (Setyawan, et al, 2021). This is of course very unfortunate because there are many local wisdom values that can be taken from the study of local history.

From a historical perspective, efforts to seek *local wisdom* are part of historical awareness. Because local wisdom is formed over a long period of time. Recognition of the existence of *local wisdom* is usually done through tracking the process of forming local wisdom (Mulyana, 2017). As is known, "local wisdom" is the cultural identity or personality of a nation that forms the identity of a nation. The following study will explain the importance, opportunities and challenges of writing local history as well as several works on North Maluku local history written by academics.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a qualitative type of library research. (*Library research*) or often also called library study, is a series of activities related to methods of collecting library data, reading and taking notes and processing research materials. Meanwhile, according to Mahmud (2011), in his book *Educational Research Methods*, he explains that library research is a type of research carried out by reading books or magazines and other data sources to collect data from various literature, both libraries and other places (Zed, 2008).

The research steps are as follows: (1). Selection of topics to be studied; (2). Information exploration; (3). Determine the research focus; (4). Collection of data sources; (5). Preparation of data presentation; and (6). Preparation of reports. Some of the sources used include; books (textbooks), scientific journals, papers, research results in the form of scientific works and other sources relevant to what is being studied.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Local history: Source of local wisdom

According to Mulyana (2017), local wisdom can be sourced from the culture of the people in a particular locality. From a historiography perspective, local wisdom can form a local history. Because the study of local history is the study of people's lives or especially communities from a particular neighborhood in the dynamics of its development in various aspects of life (Wijda, 1991: 15). The surrounding environment (*neighborhood*) is a spatial boundary in a broader context, starting from the smallest spatial area, for example a family, a particular community to the wider society.

Each region has its own history, the history in question revolves around a particular locality. Each local history has local wisdom values which can be used as a basis for forming the character of the younger generation (Touwe, 2019). The local wisdom contained can be in the form of the values of the fighting spirit of heroic figures who fought for the area around where the students lived, exemplary values, the value of unity and oneness in preventing national integration and various other virtues.

History is a compulsory subject at all types and levels of education. In relation to the integration of local wisdom, history learning is a very relevant subject, especially in terms of study material and learning objectives. Local wisdom, as part of local culture and the nation's cultural heritage, is close to the study of history (Syaputra, 2019). As explained by many historians, the study of history includes many things such as social history, economic history, political history, intellectual history, history of mentality, history of farmers, cultural history, etc. (Kartodirdjo, 1992; Kuntowijoyo, 2003; Sjamsuddin, 2007). Apart from that, local wisdom as part of local culture can also be categorized into local history studies (Abdullah, 2006).

According to Priyadi (2012: 121), historically, villages are one level of political administration that has quite diverse historical and cultural roots throughout Indonesia, but since New Order reformed villages into sub-districts, the chaos has only increased. Villages have their own unique and interesting history because they have community characteristics based on their respective historical backgrounds.

Challenges For Local History Researches In North Maluku

Historical research that has been carried out by amateur historical researchers (read: young historians) when choosing local history studies is often hampered by historical sources, the lack of archives and written local history sources that can be easily accessed online or in libraries and archives. Located in the area makes written work produced dry from supporting data sources. Limited research funds and research sponsors are also reasons for the weak research results produced. Lack of mastery of historical theory and methodology is also a factor causing the writing to not appear meaningful and interesting to read. Seeing this, it is time for the academic world to conduct an in-depth evaluation and look for solutions to encourage novice history writers to write the local history of their region better and more professionally.

In historical research, the closeness between researchers and historical objects demands high technical skills and analytical power for local historians. Local history cannot just be a place for practice. This means historians have to work more seriously and be extra careful. The

demands will mastery of other scientific disciplines, for example anthropology, archaeology, epigraphy, philology, sociology, linguistics (ethnolinguistics and sociolinguistics), philosophy, politics, geography, social, economics, psychology, and others. Local historians need help from surrounding sciences, especially to provide historical explanations based on certain approaches (Priyadi, 2012: 45).

There is so much that can be studied in the vast sea of historical research in North Maluku that has not received sufficient attention from historical researchers. The historical studies that have been raised a lot so far have only been around the issue of the spice trade and the silk route, as well as the issue of the sultanate. However, there is so much that can be studied and raised as interesting themes in research. Rural history, which has not been explored by many researchers, is quite an interesting theme. Apart from that, the history of agriculture and transmigrants in Halmahera and the Tidore Islands. Likewise, the history of sea transportation, the history of island fishing communities and many more that have not been studied. If it could be compared to the study of local history in North Maluku, it would be like: "the snow princess who is fast asleep", waiting to be "awakened" by "the prince" (read: young historical researchers).

Talking about the availability of sources for writing local history in Indonesia, it is generally still in the form of oral sources, as well as material sources (buildings, monuments, artifacts, etc.), while written sources can be said to be limited. It is hoped that this condition will not dampen enthusiasm for conducting research or writing local history in various places in Indonesia. Through the most widely available sources, namely oral sources, research and writing of local history can be started. Many people's experiences in certain (local) environments are still stored in their collective memory, because the majority of (Indonesian) people do not yet have a high level of awareness to write down their experiences in the past (Winarti, 2017).

According to Winarti (2017), therefore, the solution is that various results of local history research and writing (thesis, theses, dissertations, etc.) which are still stored in the local university library must immediately receive attention so that they can be used and known more widely. One step is to publish it in book form, which of course has to go through certain editing or adjustments, so that it can be read and accessed more widely. For educational purposes at the school level (primary and secondary), the historical stories selected and presented can be used as material and study in school learning.

Dissecting Local History In North Maluku

1. Socio-cultural History

R.Z. Leirissa, et al, have conducted a study on *Ternate as a Silk Road port*. In his study, it was stated that after the VOC entered the Maluku region in general and Ternate Tidore in particular in the 17th century, Ternate's role as a Silk Road port declined. Trade began to be carried out by the Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese, followed by building defensive forts. Many of these forts still stand on Ternate Island as historical tourist destinations. This research focuses on the study of the emergence of Ternate as a Silk Road port, which of course has something to do with the interaction of spice trade routes in North Maluku.

The Spice Islands study is the result of research by history observer and academic Adnan Amal. The study explains various important information about the North Maluku region during the last seven (7) centuries, and covers a period of time starting from the early days of the founding of local kingdoms which became known as the *Moloku Kie Raha Kingdom* (1250) then the emergence of the sultanates until the five (5) year period after the Proclamation of Indonesian Independence (1950). This study, apart from being full of historical information throughout that time period, has also photographed North Maluku almost completely.

Jusuf Abdulrahman conducted *a study on the Sultanate of Ternate in Jou Ngon Ka Dada Madopo Fangare Ngom Ka Alam Madiki*. This article is a collection of articles consisting of several studies. There are several written articles that take up the social and cultural history related to bracelet gatherings. the first five articles, namely: (1). Moloku Kie Raha Culture in National Cultural Prospects; (2). Revealing Moloku Kie Raha Cultural Records; (3). The Relationship between the Kingdoms of Ternate and Tidore in the History of Moloku Kie Raha; (4). Women in Moloku Literature and History Kie Raha; and (5). Oral Traditions of the Ternate Kingdom and the Clove Trade.

The next study is *Ternate, the Birth and History of a City*. Study edited by Fachry Ammari and J.W. Siokona, in this study excerpt, explains that the history of Ternate must meet the historical criteria that were consciously carried out in the past by the people of Ternate themselves. It must be admitted that historians to this day have not succeeded in writing the history of Ternate comprehensively or completely. To write history, even a comprehensive history of North Maluku, there are actually many historical sources. Basically, historical sources can be divided into (a) handwritten manuscripts written in "jawi" script and Ternate language and, (b) reports and official letters from Westerners (documents, archives) written in Portuguese or Dutch.

2. History Of The Development Of Islam

An interesting research was studied by Djoko Surjo (UGM Professor of History), et al, which is contained in the book *Religion and Social Change, A Study of the Relationship Between Islam, Society and Indonesian Political Structure*. In his study, the forms of political structure change in the Kingdom of Ternate are shown. In this study, changes in the form of government structure are explained, starting from the *kulano* system to the sultanate form. This change in government structure had the impact of adding institutions to the government structure of the kingdom which had turned into a sultanate.

The next study, namely that written by Saleh A. Putuhena, entitled *Government Structure of the Ternate Sultanate and Islamic Religion*. This research provides an explanation of the traditional government system in the Kingdom of Ternate. This study also describes the long process of Islamization in Ternate. This study provides important information about the position and role of local elites in the spread of Islam in the North Maluku region, especially in Ternate. This study also shows that Islam is a determining factor in political legitimacy in the Sultanate of Ternate.

Next, two works written by the young historian Darmawijaya, touch on local history regarding the development of Islam in North Maluku, namely his research on the *History of the Development of Islam in Indonesia Before the Era of Independence (End of the 7th century to 1945)* and *The Legendary Sultan Sultan in the History of North Maluku*. In his study, it was stated that before Islam succeeded in building the *Robbani* civilization through the existing sultanates, at the beginning of the 16th century European colonial nations came. This has disrupted the ongoing process of Islamization. The European Colonials' desire to colonize Indonesia has met with resistance from Indonesian Muslims. The process of resistance continued until 1942.

The next study is about *Legendary Sultans in the History of North Maluku*, written by Darmawijaya, Irwan Abbas, and Jainul Yusuf. This study explains that Islam is a divine religion revealed by Allah to guide human reason as actors of history. The presence of Islam in a country is not intended to colonize and exploit society, but rather to develop and guide the population of that country into a progressive society. This study is a strong fact regarding the success of Islam as a religion in building a civilization based on the Islamic Sultanate in the North Maluku Region.

3. Socio-economic and Political History

The Study of Socio-Economic History has been written by several local academics in North Maluku, including studies conducted by Syahril Muhammad, Nani Jafar, and Umar Rajab. Syahril Muhammad researches *the Sultanate of Ternate: Socio-Economic & Political History*. In his study, the system of social, economic and political life of society in Ternate is described. Historical development shows how the social system, with its social, economic and political structures, has grown and changed and reached the level of development known today. Various approaches are taken from various points of view, starting from the understanding that local society is a unit in which interactions occur and networks are formed to produce a particular system or structure.

Nani Jafar examines *Clove Replanting and Its Influence on the Agricultural and Economic System on Tidore Island 1970s-1990s*. The main study in his study was the problem of clove production. Due to the large demand for cloves as a raw material by the kretek cigarette industry in the late 1960s to early 1970s, local clove production could not meet this demand. This has encouraged the Indonesian government to import cloves from abroad, especially from Zanzibar. However, this effort caused problems because of the imposition of high fiscal duties from the Zanzibar government which was felt to be very burdensome for the Indonesian government. This research concludes that the implementation of the experimental gardens and clove nurseries project by the government on Tidore Island in 1975, has opened a new chapter for the people of the island through the process of transforming economic knowledge of clove farming into a commercially oriented one.

If Nani Jafar was interested in the clove problem in Tidore, then Umar Rajab instead emphasized his studies on fisheries problems in the *Ternate Residency*. From *Global to Domestic: Fisheries and Fishing Economy in Ternate Province, 1860s-1920s*. In a study made by Umar Rajab, examining the factors that caused stagnant and static development in fisheries activities in Ternate Residency during the period 1860s to 1920s. Coastal communities adhere to a dualistic economic system. The community depends on the agricultural and fishing economy for its livelihood. The object of this study is to determine the response of fishermen to changes in fisheries technology and government involvement in the field of fisheries economics. This study concludes that fishing activities during this period were static and still traditional. The absence of serious efforts by the government to handle the fisheries economy has resulted in a change in the orientation of the fisheries economy from global to domestic markets. These are some of the results of research on local history in North Maluku from

several study points of view. Hopefully these studies can inspire young researchers to study local history more intensively in the North Maluku region.

CONCLUSION

Local history historiography is a study that is always interesting to study and discuss. Local history has a very important meaning for communities living in certain geographical areas. The existence of local history in a community is related to the historical values found in the surrounding environment. Each region has its own history, the history in question revolves around a particular locality. Each local history has local wisdom values that can be used as a basis for forming the character of the younger generation.

In historical research, the closeness between researchers and historical objects demands high technical skills and analytical power for local historians. Several senior local scientists from North Maluku, followed by young historians, have written historical works, even though they still need a lot of refinement here and there. It is true that local history cannot be said to be written only as a means of practice. This means that a historian must work more seriously and be extra careful and is required to have a better understanding of the use of historical theory and methodology so as not to create certain obstacles that cause local history historiography to be "barren"

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