

Maritime Tradition and the Culture of Urbanism in the Indonesian-Malay Archipelago: Evolution of Banda Aceh and Demak of Indonesia

Bagoes Wiryomartono

Independent Scholar

bagoes.wiryomartono@gmail.com

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Abstract

Since the prehistoric times, maritime trade has characterized economic activities in the Southeast Asian archipelago. However, the emergence of urbanism and state polity of 'negara' in this region was not earlier than the fourth century. It came into being under the influence of Sanskrit culture from India. During the period between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, the state polity had transformed and adjusted the maritime contacts and interactions with the Persian, Arab, Indian, and Chinese merchants. The outcome of this assimilation and enculturation between the locality and the foreign influence is the hybrid concept behind 'negara' and 'bandar'. In this context, this paper examines how this syncretism works and is possible.

The research employs a case study approach involving observations, a literature study and interviews with local experts as qualitative research tools.

It concludes that maritime culture and traditions contribute to urbanism to uphold and sustain the livability of towns and cities at the coastal area of Indonesia. The evolutions of Banda Aceh and Demak Since 1500 – 1700 have been founded on these traditions and culture. Moreover, its livability has been made possible by the synergy of ecological and economic sustainability of the coastal region. The paper divulges and unfolds the local concepts and historical traces that underpin and conserve the practice of maritime urbanism in Indonesia since the 15th century, with reference to pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial city of Demak, Java and the city of Banda Aceh, Sumatra Indonesia.

Keywords: Maritime urbanism; patrimonial culture; theatre-state; Banda Aceh, Demak

Introduction

Cities are considered historically important for understanding the relationship between Islam and urbanism in Southeast Asia, as well as the syncretism between foreign cultures and the localities. Maritime activities play a major role in these amalgamations and fusions. For example, rituals and ceremonies related to the maritime value systems do exist in many maritime cities, which have arrived there through trade.

Geertz (1980) observes the presence of the polity of *negara* in the nineteenth century Bali as a triadic system of themes: status, spectacles, and governance; pomp becomes an essential experience for the existence and presence of polity. The maritime urbanism of *Bandar-negara* must have been developed within the Geertzian theatre state because of its historical roots in the Southeast Asian animism of center, under the indigenous concepts of *pusat* and *semangat*; this means ‘every being possesses power’.

The necessity for theatrical exhibition of splendid power is considered to invoke the magical sense and experience of domination in terms of *terkesima*. In doing so, the presence of polity in terms of *Bandar-negara* as city and state is sensually experienced by its people. From this spectacle, the role and function of the king/queen comes into play as the conductor of the whole event and destiny of the *Bandar-negara*. Accordingly, urbanism in Southeast Asia is not simply a physical embodiment of the center of polity, but also the symbolic manifestation of power with a splendid spectacle. According to O'Connor (1983), the inherently urban King and court were regarded as the epitome of refinement; everyone else was ranked by their nearness to this ideal.

In the maritime region of Southeast Asia, waterfront urbanism is characterized by the establishment of city as the center without the geographical boundary of physical nation-state: *negara*; the stronger the state is the farther-reaching its urban center radiates its spiritual and political influence. Thus, maritime urbanism in Southeast Asia is not about the concentration of populous settlements but the consolidation of center for the performance of patrimonial power. This consolidation is represented and expressed in the rituals and ceremonies of the state that connect the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, land and the sea as well as the earth and the sky. These practices have been deeply rooted in society as the way of life based on the patron-client relationship as well as the lord-servant/*Gusti-kawula* dualism of society. Nevertheless, the political process of democratization and civil liberty has been transforming the Indonesian society since the end of the New Order in 1999. Indeed, the resilience of patrimonial culture remains strong for urbanism.

In this context, this study examines maritime urbanism and its historical roots and settings in the Indonesian Malay Archipelago. Its aim is to explore the historical formation and evolution of urbanism. Its objectives are as follows.

1. To identify the aspects, concepts, and elements of locality in dealing with foreign influences that have built, developed, and sustained unique features and characteristics of urbanism in Indonesia.
2. To establish that in this geographical and cultural context, urbanism is an indispensable, theatrical festivity for public aesthetics.

Research Methods

This study employs qualitative case study research methods. It uses historical sources and fieldworks in gathering data. The cases are focused on the geopolitical and historical context, urban form, landscape characteristics, and cultural geography of the cities of Banda Aceh and Demak. The study used observations, and interviews with local experts as qualitative research tools to gather data, which were corroborated with the findings from the literature. These tasks were accomplished as follows.

1. Literature: This involved the survey of literature that have been published on the evolution of the cities. They included historical writings, books published and anecdotes written by those who had experience the city first hand in the past.
2. Observations: the author walked around the city in a route to be identified as the Grand Tour: this is a phenomenological definition of a route that has been mapped and followed by a phenomenologist making first hand observations. Thus there were two grand Tours: one in Banda Aceh and the other in Demak. The route covered the essential nodal points the cities. These tours were accomplished From January to April 2024.

3. Interviews: Interviews were conducted with the elders and statemen of the cities who had extensive knowledge about the cities. The informants were chosen based on the criteria of maturity, education or the possession of wealth of knowledge as recognized by the residents of the cities.

Findings

Maritime Tradition and Culture of Indonesia

This study employs the notion of maritime tradition and culture as a system of ways of people's lives associated with the sea as their resources for livestock and trade. It has thus been discovered that in the Indonesian and Malay Archipelago, maritime and land-based way of life have been in coalition since the prehistoric times. Rivers have played an important role in maintaining the relationship between the hinterlands and the coastal areas in Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, and a number of other islands. Rice, vegetables, fruits and spices are the ancient export commodities of the hinterlands of Java and Sumatra, while the coastal areas are the markets for dried fishes, ceramics, beads, silk and salt.

By 200 BCE, the spread of bronze kettle drums in various parts of the Southeast Asian archipelago has showed how the maritime network of trade and exchange worked within the region prior to any significant trade with India and China (Bronson, 1992). According to Hall (2010), all this was made possible by the prehistoric native populations in Southeast Asia because of their expertise in sailing and astronomical navigation during the monsoons.

In Indonesia, the traces of maritime traditions and culture are apparent on the reliefs of the Borobudur Buddhist temple from the 9th century; the outrigger vessel crafted on the gallery is considered as one important means of the seafaring culture of the Indonesian Malay people since the prehistoric times. Archeologically, the maritime oriented tradition and culture of the indigenous people of the Southeast Asian archipelago have been known since 5000 BCE. In fact, the archeologist and historian Solheim calls these native people as '*nusantao*' who speak a linguistically related Austronesian language (Solheim, et al., 2006).

The maritime trade network between India and Southeast Asia has possibly begun in 700 BCE, based on the archaeological evidences of beads and metal fanning tools while the contact between the '*nusantao*' and the people of Ainu in Okinawa, of Ryukyus, Kyushu and Chinese populations of Taiwan could have begun around 4000 years ago; the evidences for this are the spread of javanica rice--beras bulu--from Java (Solheim, et al., 2006).



Fig. 01: Bronze kettle drum from circa 500 BCE,

Source: Collection of Museum Nasional Indonesia, Jakarta, Photo by Author

Prior to the Sanskrit cultural influence from India, the maritime trace of the indigenous Southeast Asian inhabitants is known from their settlement organization. According to Hall, (2010), the concepts such as '*batin*' for the village chief in the Malay populations has something to do with boat. In fact, as Reid (2000) points out, the Austronesian junk and the Chinese vessel have inspired the Southeast Asian boat makers to develop a hybrid form. Based on archaeological excavations, the Austronesian junk had wooden construction of its hull with a 3.00 meter width and 15.00 meter length, while the Chinese ship of the Ming Emperor was a vessel with a hull of about 6-8 meters in width and 25-30 meters in length (Bacus, 2004). During

the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, Semarang, Tuban, and Gresik had been port cities of Java with a high concentration of Chinese migrants from the main land. In Semarang, they set up and established their ship-making workshop and overhaul (Muljana, 2005).



Fig. 02: The Javanese Junk carved on the Borobudur's gallery from the 9th century.

Source: Author

During the influence of the Sanskrit civilization, the maritime-oriented culture was socio-politically organized as the state: *negara*. Southeast Asia embraced the Sivaite conception of royalty based upon the Brahman-Kshatriya hybrid and articulated in the cult of the royal *lingga* (Coedes, 1944;1968). Historically speaking, the maritime landscape of Indonesian Malay world under the Sanskrit influence can be seen as two regional and imperial powers: the Sumatra-based Srivijaya from the 7th to 13th centuries and the Java-based Majapahit from the 13th to the 15th centuries, as well as the other local vassal kingdoms (Tan, 2009).

Maritime traditions in the Southeast Asian archipelago is apparent in various coastal areas with the rituals and customs of communal bathing at the estuary areas. In Sumatra's shoreline areas, from Aceh, Riau, Jambi, Palembang, and Lampung, this tradition has been practiced since the ancient times and is known as 'mandi shafar' of bathing in the Islamic month of shafar. In other coastal parts of Java, Sulawesi, Bali, Nusantara, and Molucca, people are used to the rituals and ceremonies of offering to the sea food and domesticated animal sacrifices; all this is to validate their relationship with the sea and their seafaring tradition.

Maritime Urbanism in the Southeast Asian Archipelago

Indonesian archipelago is geographically strategic between the maritime prowess of India and China. Prior to the 15th century, the trade connectivity between these two preeminent powers has been characterized by the sea silk route. The vibrant maritime trade in the archipelago has been beginning since the 15th century; the West part of the Southeast Asia became the focal point of trade for gold, tin resin, spices, and precious wood (Maguin, 2000). The establishment of urban settlements in this region were not earlier than 358 AD (Vogel, 1925). The new evidence of the terracotta brick Buddhist temple in Batujaya West Java still has not determined the exact date of its construction, but it was for sure between the fifth and eighth centuries (Manguin & Indradjaja, 2011).

Early state polity in the Indonesian Malay world was the Hindu kingdom of Tarumanegara located in the hinterland of West Java or nowadays the city of Bogor. The inscription of Ciaruteun says in Pallawa script, the name of Purnawarman with his footprint on the stone from circa the fifth century (Casparis, 1986). Tarumanegara was not a maritime-oriented kingdom, but a land-based agricultural polity at the riverbank of the Ciliwung River, in the hinterland of West Java. The kingdom was given its name from 'tarum', a name for a plant of which the seed is used for coloring the fabrics or clothes made of cotton or silk with the indigo color; this was indeed an important commodity for the maritime trade network from Southeast Asia to China and India during the fifth century (Devare, 2009).

The emergence of maritime urbanism in the Malay-speaking region was signified and characterized with the concept of *Bandar*; this is a Persian word for marketplace or the place of trade and crowd (Clifford & Athelstane, 1894); the first and well-known maritime vicinity in

the archipelago was Bandar Bukit Siguntang. Historically, the name of this place was associated with the capital city of the maritime kingdom of Sriwijaya in South Sumatra. In fact, according to Reid (2004), the existence of this city is known from the local narrative, *Sejarah Melayu*.

The advent and establishment of Bandar as a port and an urban settlement constitutes a crucial event in the history of Indonesian urbanism. However, the establishment of Bandar was indispensable from the Chinese presence as the main trading partner over most harbors of the archipelago between the 14th and 15th centuries; their presence was well-known with the existence of Chinese persons as the harbor master or chiefs of port authority: *shahbandar*. In fact, this institution was an important body for the urban waterfront. The origin of this institution is from Persian urbanism, the same root of the waterfront vicinity of Bandar. The installment of Chinese *shahbandar* in most Southeast Asian ports must have had to do with Chinese interest in spice trade and interactions with the traders from Persia, Arabian Peninsula, and India.

Shahbandar was economically an independent institution with its autonomous authority for taxation and custom matters in relation to indigenous rulers. This relationship was a common practice as a result of the mutual interest between the local indigenous rulers and the Chinese fleet under the Ming Emperor in South East Asia. The Admiral Zeng-He was the high ranking Chinese Emperor who played an important role in the spread of Islamic teaching in most ports in Malay-Indonesian archipelago during the fifteenth century (Suryadinata, 2005); Zeng-He and his fleet protected the Chinese interests for the spice trade and the silk trade.

The presence of the Chinese influence and their Islamic heritage in Malacca and Semarang were obvious (Suryadinata, 2005). In his 28 years of voyages and visits to more than 30 countries, Admiral Zheng He or Cheng Ho is considered one of the most important explorers of the world. Although Zheng According to Hum (2012), He was originally a Muslim, and was a tolerant man with a good knowledge of the Buddhist faith; his Buddhist name was Sanbao, a great man who had done good things for the establishments and restorations of several Buddhist temples.

The relationship between the indigenous state and the port authority was a patrimonial patron-client bond. Prior to the arrival of the Europeans, ports and waterfront vicinities in the archipelago were characterized with free and vibrant international markets for the Arabs, Persians, Indians, and the Chinese merchants. The language they spoke was mostly Malay, while the currency they used for their trades was Chinese copper cash or gold (Tarling, 1999). The integration of port, marketplace and state has sustained the relationship between agriculturally based states and the waterfront cities. Intensive interactions with the Middle Eastern traders and Zeng-He's expeditions have brought about Islamization of the coastal areas of Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Molucca.

Bandar Samudra Pasai and Banda Aceh

In the thirteenth century, Islamization has been intensified with the formation and establishment of the Islamic sultanate of Samudra Pasai in the North part of Sumatra. Existence of this kingdom is known from the tombstones with Arabic inscriptions and local narrative *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai* (Soekmono, 2006). From this local source, it is learnt that Samudra Pasai was not the first polity of port centered royal court under Islamic influence, but the kingdom of Peurlak in East Aceh. The first ruler of Syiah Islamic state of Peurlak was Sultan Alaidin Syed Maulana Abdul Aziz Syah. The polity was established by the group of Persian merchants under the leadership of the shipmaster, *--nakhuda--Khalifah* who married the daughter of the local ruler: Salman. His son, Meurah Peurlak Syahir Nuwi or Maharaja Pho He La became the first Sultan of Peurelak (Hasymy, 1990). The center of this state is in Bandar Peurelak, later known also as Bandar Khalifah. The conversion of the state in Peurelak from the indigenous beliefs system to Syiah Islamic state brought forth a rich cultural hybrid towards a strong sense of communal responsibility (Hall, 2010). The Persian concept of Bandar or port-city was firstly established at the center of polity in Peurlak region at the end of the nineteenth century.

Regarding its geographical location, Bandar Peurelak was possibly at the estuary of the river nearby today Peureulak (Feener, et al., 2014). The port town was described by the Persians, Arabs, and Gujarati merchants as one important source of pepper. The seed of the spice was believed to have originally come from Malagasy circa 7th and 8th century (Muljana, 2005:132); Aceh Peureulak region was the first site for the growing of pepper in the Southeast Asian archipelago. Later, Banda, Bantam, and Lampung became the next important locations for pepper planting. Persian traders played an important role in the development of Islamic polity and port-city as well as the maritime power of the indigenous kingdoms in Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula between the 8th and 10th century.

Many naval terms in widespread usage in Indian Ocean were Persian, such as *nakhuda*, *bandar*, *bazar*, and *shahbandar* (Potter, 2009). In 1292, Marco Polo observed that the Islamic state of Peureulak (Perlac) was a well-established community; he stumbled to witness a well-organized cemetery complex of Muslims nearby this port-city (Andaya, 2008). From Persian, Arab, Gujarati, and Egyptian sources, the port-city of Peureulak was described as a vibrant international hub between the Chinese wholesalers and the Middle Eastern merchants for the silk trade (Muljana, 2005). In fact, pepper of Aceh became the magnets of both sides for coming to Peureulak. The other important commodities of Aceh they needed were rice, palm sugar, cloves, and coffee.

The Peurlak Sultanate enjoyed the participation of international trade with Middle Eastern Muslims from 840 to 1292. At the end of the 13th century, its neighboring Sunni Islamic state of Samudra Pasai was able to consolidate its political and economic dominance for the trade of pepper in the region of Aceh. This consolidation can be seen as the unification of upstream and downstream polity for the pepper trade with the Turks, Arabs, and the Gujaratis. In other words, the Persian influence in the trade of pepper became milder than before. According to Tarling (1992), the Venetian traveler, Marco Polo reported in 1297 about the Islamic kingdom of Samudra Pasai and the King with Sunni Muslim title: Sultan Malik al Saleh.

In the local narratives of *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai*, *Chronicle of the Kings of Pasai*, and *Sulalatus Salatin* by Tun Sri Lanang, the establishment of Samudra Pasai was not impartial from the mission of Egyptian Admiral Nazimuddin Al-Kamil to secure the supply of pepper and other spices from Southeast Asia to Middle East. He conquered the port of Kambayat in Gujarat and then moved further East. Al-Kamil established a trading post in North Aceh between 1267 and 1297. Later, this post was entrusted to Marah Silu who became the first ruler of this city-state known later as Samudra Pasai with the title name: Sultan Malik Al-Shaleh. This polity is considered as the first Islamic polity in the Indonesian and Malay world.

At the center of this maritime polity is the king or the queen. The second layer of power is the prime minister, *perdana menteri* and the state treasurer, *bendahara*. The third layer of the state is occupied by the port authority, *-shahbandar*-, *admiral*-, *-laksamana*-, *army chief*-, *uelubalang*-, and several ministers-*menteri*. The royal family members are recognized with the title of *tengku* for the men and *pocut* for the women before his/her name, while other state dignitaries are given the title of *teuku* or *tuanku* for men, and *cut* for women. Sociologically speaking, the main structure of pre-Islamic Aceh was constructed by two main groups: *Orang Kaya* or landowner or merchant, *-saudagar*-, and *Orang Biasa* or peasant farmers, fishers, and laborers. Both groups worked together in patrimonial ties for agricultural production and commercial trading. This patron-client relationship underlies the socio-economic and cultural life-world of Aceh and most people in the Southeast Asian archipelago. Since this patron-client relationship works to build a social bond in terms of extended family, patrimonial tradition in Southeast Asia does not go to establish a Master-slave system, but a big family business.

The location of Bandar Pasai of Samudra Pasai has not been archaeologically revealed until today, but based on local sources, it was in the Lhokseumawe area; this is the area where the gravestone of Sultan Malik Al-Shaleh is found. Malik Al Shaleh was the first king of Samudra Pasai who reigned from 1267 to 1297. His successor was his son, Sultan Al-Malik Az-Zahir who was in power between 1297 and 1326. The Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta (1304-1377) in his report *Rihlah ila l-Mashriq* confirmed the existence of the kingdom; he visited the

city of Bandar Aceh in around 1345 on the way to China between 1345 and 1346 (Laffan, 2011). Battuta was escorted by the deputy of shahbandar to the wooden walled city which was a few kilometers away from the harbor; he was introduced to several Syiah scholars: Al Qadl al-Sharif Amir al-Shirazi and Taj al-Din al-Isfahani, as well as met with the Mughal diplomat Amir al-Dawlasah (Azra, 2006). In his visits Battuta observed and participated in Friday prayers in the state mosque; he also found the similarities of the state rituals and ceremonies between Samudra Pasai and the Ottoman Empire.

The Host of Battuta was Sultan Al-Malik Az-Zahir II or Ahmad Laikudzahi; his wife spoke to Battuta in Turkish (Goeksoy, 2011). The city was described by Battuta as a wooden walled territory with the mosque and the square at its center.

Several decades later, after the fall of the Samudra Pasai Sultanate, the bilateral relationship between Aceh and the Turkish Ottoman continued for economic, military, and cultural exchanges between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries (Goeksoy, 2011). The other special relation to other Islamic states includes Saudi Arabia and South India. Samudra Pasai had been known by the Sharif of Mecca who sent a Royal regalia and a group of Islamic scholars to this state (Andaya, 2008). The contacts and interactions between South India Keling, - especially Chola-, and Southeast Asian archipelago had been a long-standing trade and cultural connection since before the thirteenth century (Kulke, 2009).

As a matter of fact, the growing maritime power of Samudra Pasai in the western archipelago was not impartial from the decline of Srivijaya at the end of the 13th century; throughout the fourteenth century, the port-kingdom of Samudra Pasai remained the most important center of Islamic learning in the Indonesian and Malay Archipelago (Kratoska, 2001:95). Meanwhile, Majapahit was still to consolidate its power until the beginning of the 14th century and conquered Samudra Pasai between 1340 and 1345. The kingdom was in vacuum from outside reports until 1406, when several Persian and Arab merchants were back in their trading with Samudra Pasai under the rule of a queen. The pepper supply of Samudra Pasai to Ottoman Empire and other Middle Eastern countries underpinned the establishment of this port-kingdom as a center of trade for Muslims in the archipelago.

During the period between the fourteenth century and fifteenth century, the Chinese traders built their connections with the Javanese Majapahit for spice trade with their ports in Gresik, Tuban, and Surabaya (Reid, 2010). The Portuguese geographer and traveler Tome' Pires assumed the total inhabitants of Banda Aceh in the 16th century were about 20.000 people; he visited the port-cities in the Indonesian archipelago between 1512 and 1515 (Pires & Armando Cortesao, 2005).

Under the sultanate of Samudra Pasai of the fifth century, the role and function of Bandar Aceh was not the only trade center in the Straits of Malacca; the Queen Nahrasiyah reigned this Islamic kingdom between 1406 and 1428. Indeed, Samudra Pasai survived and recovered for its independence from the Majapahit's attack at the end of the thirteenth century, as noted in the Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai between 1383 and 1390 (Andaya, 2008:113). The relationship between Malacca and Samudra Pasai was also mentioned in Sejarah Melayu in a unique position; both royal courts were actually in rivalry in spice trade with the Persians, Arabs, and the Chinese merchants, but they shared something in common in Islamic learning. In many ways, Samudra Pasai was more advantageous than the pre-Islamic Malacca because of its direct stock of pepper, nutmeg, cardamom, and rice in its own hinterland while Malacca depended on its spice supply from Jambi, Palembang, Bantam, and Molucca. However, both kingdoms have something in common for their geopolitical security from the threat of the Siamese Ayutthaya expansion.

Since Malacca was in economic pact with the Chinese state trade agreement under Yongle or Yong-Lo Emperor of the Ming Dynasty in 1405 (Andaya & Andaya, 2001), Samudra Pasai stayed away from any attempt to control Malacca. Unlike his father, Yongle or Yung-lo Emperor forbade private trade of Chinese merchants in foreign countries and fostered a special relationship with Malacca for the expansion of Chinese official trade overseas. It was a Persian powerful merchant, Haji Ma-Ha-Mo Chini, who persuaded the Ming Emperor for giving Malacca a diplomatic status under the protection of the Chinese power (Kratoska, 2001).

As a matter of fact, Samudra Pasai enjoyed its special relationship with the Ottoman Emperor. The advantage from this relationship for Samudra Pasai included technological transfer of Ottoman nautical knowledge and skills for shipbuilding, armory system, and its navy arsenal. The Chinese official trade mission had visited Pasai with a good response and reception; the expedition of the Admiral Zeng-He took place in 1407. However, the Chinese commercial activities in Southeast Asia was not much impressed and preferred to choose their own trading representative in Malacca. The vibrant maritime trades in Samudra Pasai gradually faded away in the mid of the fifteenth century. To certain extent, as an entrepot, Malacca was successful for several reasons, such as the successor of Srivijaya with its traditional support of Orang Laut, the special trade relationship with the Ming Dynasty, and the legal protection and conducive port regulations for international trade (Andaya & Andaya, 2001).

As a maritime vicinity with direct access to the Indian Ocean, Samudra Pasai had been gradually taken over by Malacca after the Chinese Emperor sent the trade mission and established the diplomatic status of Malacca as the extension of their permanent market in Southeast Asia. Such a diplomatic relationship was like what had been experienced and established during the eleventh century between Srivijaya and the Song court (Heng, 2009). In doing so, Middle Eastern and Indian wholesalers did not need to go to Shanghai and Guangzhou. From this point, Malacca became the meeting point between the Indian, Persian, Arab, and Gujarati products and the Chinese commodities and Southeast Asian spices. The absence of a Chinese trading representative in Samudra Pasai was considered as one important reason for the decline of its economic performance at the end of the fifteenth century.

After the fall of Malacca into Portuguese control in 1511, Samudra Pasai became a growing center again as Muslim spice trade center from the Indian Ocean. This did not last long because of the increasing power of Aceh Sultanate with its polity in Banda Aceh circa 1520. During the reign of Sultan Firman Syah of Aceh, the Ottoman Emperor built a diplomatic relationship, the outcome of which was the support of the Ottoman for Islamic statecraft and military assistance to Aceh against the Portuguese sea-power; Sultan Sulaiman Chan (1553 – 1566) of the Ottoman Empire sent a diplomatic mission to Aceh in 1545 (Madjid, 2014). In return, Aceh secured its supply for pepper and other spices to the Middle East market. The development of the capital city and the Islamic state of Bandar Aceh Darussalam since Iskandar Muda became the ruler of the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam.

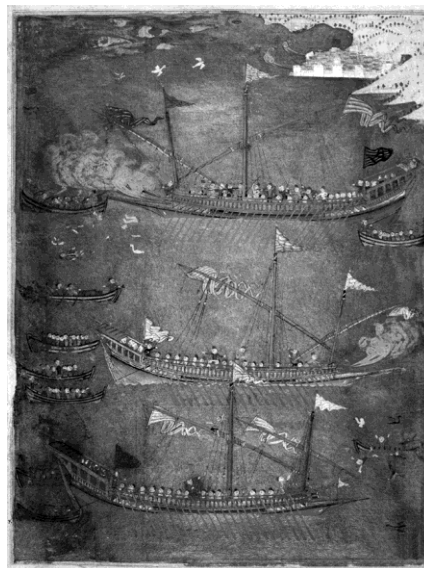


Fig. 03: Zaporozhian Cossacks in Chaika boats attacking Turkish galleys in the Black Sea. Original held in British Library, London. Original title: Sloane 3584 f.78v Turkish galleys in battle, c.1636.

Source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galley#/media/File:Sloane_3584_f.78v_Turkish_galleys_in_battle,_c.1636.PNG, artwork in public domain.

The sources of this study on pre-colonial Aceh under the reign of Iskandar Muda mainly rely on the work of Denys Lombard: *Le Sultanat d'Aceh au Temps d'Iskandar Muda 1607 – 1636* (Lombard, 1967) and Husen Djajadiningrat (1958/1987) and local narrative: *Sejarah Melayu* and *Bustan al-Sallatin* by Nuruddin ar-Ranieri. During the pre-colonial times, the state or Nangroe Aceh Darussalam sustained the trade of pepper to Muslim traders from the Middle East and India. The historical sources of Acehnese Darussalam sultanate under Iskandar Muda's rule were the travel reports from the Turkish Ottoman scholar Saikh Davud Ismail Mustafa ar-Rumi or Baba Davud between 1650 and 1750 (Ozay, 2011) and a French commodore, Augustin de Beaulieu in 1621 (Beaulieu, 1996). The relationship between Aceh Darussalam and Ottoman Empire continued with economic and cultural interactions. This included technological transfer for shipbuilding; the Ottoman introduced Acehnese shipbuilders the galley type of ships equipped with heavy on-board artillery (Manguin, 2012).

Beaulieu has observed and described in his report about the port-city of Banda Aceh about city, society, and its livability. The city was described by Beaulieu as a self-contained community inside the surrounding defensible wall made of stone and wooden construction; he was escorted to the city from his ship at the port by a small boat along the river Aceh, and Krueng Aceh. During his visit, Beaulieu witnessed state ceremonies after the Friday prayer with the parade of Sultanate guards, cavalry of 600 elephants and 200 horses passing the royal stage in front of the state mosque of Baiturahman. Based on Beaulieu's observation, the Acehnese armed forces were supported by 900 elephants and thousands of cannons in various sizes. On the sea, the Aceh fleet was stationed in three naval bases: Banda Aceh, Pedir, and Daya. The total naval forces of Aceh in the seventeenth century included 100 galleys and 600 junks; the largest Acehnese galley was described to have the capacity to upload more than 800 people (Beaulieu, 1996; Sufi, et al., 1996).

In the era of Sultan Iskandar Muda, the city was described by Beaulieu as a well-organized Islamic settlement with multi-ethnic populations from various parts of the archipelago; their existence was known from the names of their settlements such as gampong Jawa, gampong Keling, and gampong Kedah (Madjid, 2014). Chinese quarters were not obviously mentioned in the travel reports of the South Indians, Persians, Egyptians, Turks, and the Gujarati merchants. Banda Aceh was also well known for her high concentration of goldsmiths and the silversmiths, in gampong pande; most of the skilled workers were believed to be trained by the master goldsmiths from Ottoman Egypt. According to Beaulieu's account (Beaulieu, 1996), the populations of Banda Aceh were guarded by more than 40,000 fighting men. The reason why this city was massively secured was because of its goldsmith industry. According to Beaulieu's travel notes, there have been at least 300 goldsmith workers in Banda Aceh at the time of his visit (Lombard, 1966).

Concerning the layout of the city, Banda Aceh under Iskandar Muda was developed with indigenous concept of *kuta*. Accordingly, the center of the city was constituted by three main components: *dalam*, *medan*, and *peukeun*. *Dalam* is the core area for the royal palace. *Medan* is the public square in front of the mosque of Baiturahman. The specific purpose of this square is for royal processions and state ceremonies. Meanwhile, the *peukeun* is located near the palace at the river bank of Krueng Aceh. The sources of this layout are mainly from the maps of Manuel Godinho de Eridia (1563, 1617), Johannes Vingboons of Amsterdam, *Bibliotheca Medicea Laurenziana*, and the Dutch Military Expedition 1870 (Reid & Ito, 1999). The improvement of this indigenous structure was developed with the assistance of Ottoman designers and builders; this included the landscape design of the garden of *gunongan* and the extravagant water pool, *taman sari*.

Landscape architecture with water as an element has played an important role in Banda Aceh. Under Sultan Iskandar Muda, the River Deroy had been diverted from Taman Putreu Phang to the North flowing into Krueng Aceh that has defined the secure boundary of the court area at the western riverbank. This alignment was continued to establish a vast open space between the royal court area and the state mosque of Baiturahman. Indeed, the open space was an integrated part of the area for state processions and displays of warriors and hundreds of elephants and horses.

Bandar Aceh Darussalam or Banda Aceh was a compact settlement with fortified enclosure made of a stone and wooden wall. The main citadel of the fortified city was situated at the North area with direct access to the Krueng Aceh. Inside the city, units of settlement were organized with a two-tiered roof mosque at the center of each district called mukim. In the inner part of the city, dalam, there were two-tiered roof mosques while the three-tiered roof mosque stood as the landmark of the city center with a public square, -medan khayalli-, as its extension for Ieds Adha and Ieds Fitr collective pray. The livability of the city took place on regular every other five day period at the marketplace: peukeun. From the maps mentioned above, the location of the marketplace of Banda Aceh was at the riverbank nearby the front square of the royal compound, dalam keurajeuan. Nearby this marketplace, the Chinese quarters was located.

During the reign of Iskandar Muda, the spatial and building structure of the city was intensively developed with sets of regulations called qanun. Such state regulations and rules have been founded with the help of the Acehnese statesman Tun Sri Lanang since the reign of Sultan Mughayat Syah (1496-1528). Iskandar Muda reinforced and elaborated the state rules and regulations in various aspects of statecraft including taxation, urban laws, codes and public manners. All this has been compiled in various titles, such as: Mabaiyinas Salathin, Qanun Meukuta Alam, and Tazkirah Thabaqat Almajmu'us Sulthanis Salathin Al-'Alam. Dutch scholars Drewes and Voorhoeve organize and compile the state regulations and decrees under the title of Adat Atjeh (Drewes & Voorhoeve, 1958). For urbanism, one important contribution of Iskandar Muda's governance was to develop a settlement district of urban settlement with the concept of mukim. This territorially-based unit of settlement was to integrate and consolidate the unity of people and their defensible territoriality. The purpose of this integration and consolidation was to build a strong and self-contained community with their own terms and local customary laws.

The distinctive livability of Banda Aceh as the center of Acehnese urbanism in the sixteenth and seventeenth century was generated by the state rituals and ceremonies associated with indigenous and Islamic festivals, such as the crowning throne of new majesty, Friday pray, Ied Fitr and Ied Adha, and other important days for the rites of passage for the royal family members, the reception of foreign envoys, and other great days of Islam. Processions and parades of royal guards on elephants and horses belonged to the spectacle of the urban festivals that took place in the city square: medan, after congressional pray in the mosque (Reid, 2005). Splendid state rituals and ceremonies belonged to urban livability in Banda Aceh. The grand spectacle of state processions and festivals were sustained after the transition of Iskandar Muda.

In 1641, the Dutch traveler and surgeon by training, Nicolaus de Graaff witnessed the funeral ceremonies of Sultan Iskandar Thani. He experienced the grandeur of the procession of the royal family members on 260 elephants with royal regalia and colorful banners. The funeral was followed with endless gunfire all night long after the King's body was buried. Graaff's report on the occasion was published in 1930 in the Netherlands (Warnsinck, 1930; Reid, 2005).

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the indigenous days of celebration in Aceh Darussalam included hari raya junjung duli, -the day of pledging of loyalty to the royal court-, hari ueleubalang, -the day of warrior leaders-, and hari mandi safar, -the day of ritual bathing for the King or Queen-. However, the great state feasts and celebrations were not only for the Acehnese people but also for the foreign travelers and envoys visiting Banda Aceh. Anthony Reid describes various occasions of the state feasts and celebrations including the reception of diplomats, Friday Prayer, and animal fights (elephants, buffaloes, and rams); his description is based on the reports of English and Dutch travelers visiting Banda Aceh in the seventeenth century (Reid, 2005). From the observation of foreign travelers, state ceremonies and feasts in the urban center of Banda Aceh were to perform a theatric spectacle of power with the King as its chief conductor. For the reception of foreign envoys, the spectators and the actor of this state performance blended together in the course of processions, in the communal meal, and sometimes in the joyful frenetic of the gun fires.

James Lancaster was one of European envoy who was sent by the Queen Elizabeth I to deliver the Majesty's letter to the Sultan Ala'ad-din Ri'ayat Syah in 1602; he describes that the reception of his diplomatic mission was escorted by six great lavishly decorated elephants and

marching band to the royal court (Lancaster, 1940). In the royal court, his mission was ceremonially celebrated and entertained with abundant food and drinks; the food for the envoys were served on the dishes, which were covered by gold and other shining metal. Cockfight was one of the attractive entertainments of the reception feast for foreign envoys in the Acehnese royal court under the reigns of Sultan Ala'ad-din Ri'ayat Syah, Iskandar Muda, and Iskandar Muda Thani (Reid, 2005).

The other important event for Aceh Darussalam sultanate was the Wednesday of the end of Islamic month Saffa. This was the Saffa bathing ritual and ceremony. The event was acclaimed as the state celebration. Sultan led the bathing ceremony at the River Deroy followed by the royal family members and other state dignitaries. This bathing ritual and ceremony had been a longstanding tradition among the Acehnese people; the day of the bathing was known as *potemoreuhom* or *manoe rabu habeh*. Traditionally, they went to the downstream areas and believed as the ritual of purification towards well-being.

Demak and Islamic Negara 1475 - 1548

The main source of history of Demak Sultanate is the Chinese Chronicle from the Buddhist temple of Sam Po Kong in Semarang as compiled and presented by Slamet Muljana in his work: *The Fall of Hindu-Javanese states and the Emergence of Islamic states in Java* (1972; 2005; 2006). In the midst of 15th century Java, Demak was still a hamlet called Glagah Wangi, which is located deeply in the tropical forest of Bintara.

The Javanese word *glagah* means reed, and, *wangi* means fragrant. The site clearing of Demak town began in early 1470 and led by the prince of Majapahit from a Chinese wife. The prince is Raden Patah who grew up in Palembang and back to Java at the age of 18. Being supported by the Nine Saints-Wali Sanga-The King of Majapahit, Brawijaya, granted his son Raden Patah and he established the first Islamic state in Java in 1473. Patah consolidated his power with the help of the Nine Saints, Wali Sanga.

The core of urbanism in Demak was established with three components of Javanese *kuta negara* consisting of *dalem* or *keraton*, *masjid negara* or the great mosque, and *peken* or the marketplace. In pre-colonial Demak, these three structural components constitute the foundation of center or the Javanese urban settlement. The spiritual center of the state, -negara, was uniquely synergized by the royal court and the mosque; both these components were symbolically unified by the city square, *alun-alun*. Indeed, this public space thus became the interface between the spiritual power of the state palace and the religious authority of the mosque. The manifestations of the synergy between the spiritual and the religious powers have been articulated and demonstrated with state processions, rituals, and ceremonies for annual state and religious festivals, such as *grebegs*.

It is noted that the establishment of Demak as a polity was closer to the Majapahit concept of capital city rather than the concept of *bandar*. Patah and the Nine Saints developed Demak from the Majapahit's model. Even though Demak city is at the river bank of Kali Dero, the main port of Demak was Semarang which acted as the entrepot of this first Islamic kingdom of Java. Semarang was like Tuban and Gresik for Majapahit's Trowulan. Unlike the capital city of Majapahit, the geographical location of Demak is not well supported with access to water; Trowulan was well served by the River Brantas with direct access to the Java Sea from the Eastern direction. Demak as a capital city is more about *mandala kuta* based on the Javanese concept of center: the *mancapat* (Koentjaraningrat, 1985:449; Moedjanto, 1987:61; Ossenbruggen, 1919/1977; Headley, 2004). The center of settlement is defined by its economically and socially confederated bond with other four centers in a cardinal compass direction system. In other words, the maritime power of Demak was still in line with Srivijaya and Majapahit. The naval base of the state and the capital city were in coexistence with a significant distance.

In the Javanese tradition, the establishment of the urban core is considered the beginning of urban settlement that begins with the determination of the highest site for the seat of the ruler. This site is known as *siti hinggil*. From this area, the domain of *dalem* for the royal court area, -keraton-, and that of *jaba* for the public square-alun-alun-are determined. The royal

court area should be on the South and the main public square on the North. On the West of the public square is for the site of veneration; the West is the direction of spirituality and the life after death. On the North of the public square is the area for daily livability while the East for beginning, reserves a green open area. The development of settlement units is left to grow along the accesses to the public square: alun-alun.

In the case of Demak, the pre-colonial structure of the city was mostly the same as what is seen today. The only missing component of this structure was the dalem or the royal court area. Traces of this area are recognizable from its toponyms. Based on the relics of the surrounding bricklayer wall system of the royal court area and the foundations of large buildings, the area of the palace is located on the South of the public square as it exists today. The mosque of Demak and the royal cemetery are situated on the West of the public square. The marketplace: the peken of Demak was located on the North of the public square. Nearby this commercial center was the Chinese quarters: pecinan, which played an important role in the trade between the upstream and the downstream of central Java.

Even though the sultanate of Patah was a maritime kingdom, the capital city of Demak in the fifteenth century played an important role that was more like the spiritual center than the center of the Javanese maritime power; its naval concentration was in Semarang. From its onset, the polity of Demak had been a maritime kingdom. The infrastructural support for this was provided by the Chinese shipbuilding industry and workshop in Semarang (Muljana, 2005); the concentration of Chinese experts and skilled workers in this port had been developed by the Admiral Zeng-He of the Ming Empire between 1405 and 1433 (Suryadinata, 2005).

During the formative decades of Demak sultanate, Semarang was still an important port for most Chinese traders who visited Java on the way from the mainland to Molucca; this port supported the Chinese ships with overhaul and repair facilities. The shipyard in Semarang employed Chinese technology of junk ship building of Zeng-He's expeditions between 1405 and 1445. During the expedition, Admiral Zeng-He developed a diplomatic relationship with several indigenous rulers of Java to establish Ming's official trading posts in various coastal vicinities of Java and Sumatra, such as Bantam, Cirebon, Semarang, Lasem, Tuban, and Gresik. The Demak fleet in Semarang was led by Patih Yunus, the prince of Demak. The nautical forces were supported by several ships based on Chinese Zeng-He's treasure vessel and the traditional Javanese junks. Several times, Demak fleet attacked Portuguese Malacca and Johor without victory.

Technologically speaking, the Demak battle ship was derived from the Chinese Ming junk design with length between 30 and 50 meters. The hull of the ship is constructed in V-shape with a long keel and a heavy counterweight. The heavy wooden keels were bound together with iron hoops that provide stability while sailing in various turbulences caused by waves; this stability is also improved with the floating anchors on both sides of the ship. However, as a battle ship, Demak Chinese junk was a less-effective destroyer because it lacked an appropriate platform for more canons and battery. Compared to Portuguese galleon of the 15th century, the Demak Chinese junk was inferior in terms of maneuverability and the arsenal system. By design, the Portuguese galleon and carrack were superior to the Ottoman galley because of its well-improved design for firepower for larger gun barrels and heavier projectile weights for the naval artillery (Kraska, 2011).

Most Acehnese ships in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were constructed with reference to the Ottoman galley. Technologically, Acehnese fleet and Demak naval power were not able to defeat the supremacy of the Portuguese armada in the Java sea, Malacca Straights, and the Indian Ocean.

In the fifteenth century, the daily livability of the city of Demak took place mostly in the marketplace. However, the existence of Demak as a polity in terms of negara was signified by the state feasts and rituals that took place in its three components: keraton, alun-alun, and masjid. The most important occasions for the Sultanate Demak were the state rituals and feasts of grebeg. Most of these celebrations had to do with the Islamic Holidays, such as Idul Fitri, Idul Adha, the Islamic New Year, and Maulud Nabi Muhammad S.A.W. The Islamic and Javanese New Year happens as the same occasion. This special day has been celebrated as a

sacred day by most of the Javanese people. The Demak's grebeg celebration was associated with the state ritual and the festival of ancient Javanese tribute ceremony and feast of sima; it was the time when all vassal rulers, regents, and other leaders came to the capital city to pay homage and brought with them tributes to the King (Soemardjan, 1982). The Wali Sanga, who acted as the advisers and religious experts of the Demak sultan Raden Patah, conceptualized and formulated the grebeg as the syncretic occasion of the Javanese Animistic, Hindu, Islamic elements towards wholeness and harmony.



Fig. 04: A full-size model of "Admiral Zeng He" treasure ship (63.25 m long) at the Treasure Ship Shipyard site in Nanjing.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_treasure_ship#/media/File:Nanjing_Treasure_Boat_-_P1070978.JPG, artwork in public domain.

The great rituals and ceremonies for grebeg besar were instigated with the preparation in the royal court. Prior to the day of celebration, all royal regalia, heirlooms, and treasures should be ritually cleaned up with water full of flowers and burning incense. The royal priest and his men were in charge of all these processions and ceremonies of cleaning and conservation. In the night before the day of grebeg besar, the young princess and the girls of the royal family performed the sacred dance of bedhaya in the royal court hall. This solemn performance was attended only by the inner circle members of the royal court, and considered as the meditative congregation. Early in the morning before the event of grebeg besar, all the food for the communal feasts should be prepared and presented in the form of extra big tumpeng or gunung; it is a mountain of rice with 2-3 meter in height and 2-3 meters in diameter, decorated with chicken meats, various side dishes, vegetables, and fruits.

On the day of grebeg besar, the group of 5 -10 gunungans of decorated rice were made ready in the front yard of the royal court. At 10.00 AM, the royal priest, penghulu, led the ritual and the ceremony for the procession from the royal court: keraton, to the mosque. Afterwards, the royal guards carried the rice mountains encircling the front royal court hall and moved to the front yard of the state mosque. The ritual of the grand feast was commenced with the arrival of the sultan in the mosque. Then, they performed their congressional pray. The climax of the feast was to grab the gunungans for a communal meal in the public square. In Surakarta and Yogyakarta, grebeg feast has been culturally enriched and more sophisticated. The gunungans were prepared and built as a couple with symbolic male and female representation.

During all the rituals, ceremonies, and the celebrations of grebeg, the sultan acted like the main conductor of this theatrical performance. The sultan enjoyed to watch their people as the performers of his story and the grandeur spectacle.

The ritual of grebeg besar has been surviving until today in the city of Demak. The disappearance of the sultanate of Demak in 1548 led to the discontinuity of the city rituals and ceremonies. However, the absence of political center in the city of Demak did not shut down the spiritual and religious activities of the people. The mosque of Demak remains functional as the learning center of Islam for centuries after the dissolution of the sultanate. The revival of the ritual and the ceremony of grebeg besar took place in Demak when this city became the

regent administration known as kadipaten, under the Dutch colonial control in the mid of the 19th century; the regent: adipati, was Aryo Purbaningrat. His name and title was inscribed on the wooden carved wall with calligraphy: the maksurah, of the mosque of Demak. The ritual and ceremony of grebeg besar was conducted and celebrated as it was in the past. The difference is that the procession of grebeg begins from the front hall, pendapa, of Kadipaten, regency seat, and moves to the mosque.

Analysis and Discussion

The Persian bandar and the hybrid polity of indigenous and Sanskrit mandala of kuta negara must have brought forth the new idea of town-port with a unique form for the Islamic maritime cities of Peureulak, Samudra Pasai, Banda Aceh, Malacca, and Demak. In other words, Southeast Asian bandar is a polity of port authority and state capital in a well-established structure with two centers: entrepot or waterfront international market, known as the bazar, and state ceremonial royal capital: the kuta nanggroe or kuta rajeu. In the Indonesian archipelago and Malay Peninsula, the concept of bandar is characterized by the coexistence of economic international market hub and the spiritual and political center. Regarding the maps mentioned above, Banda Aceh was one of the port-cities in the sixteenth century with a well-documented structure and the form of bandar in Southeast Asia.

The distinctive waterfront polity of bandar in Southeast Asia, which was under the Persian and Islamic influence, lies in the integration of upstream and downstream at the estuary area (Maguin, 2000). Unlike the pre-Islamic capital cities, such as Bukit Siguntang of Srivijaya and Trowulan of Majapahit, the port-cities of bandar, such as Malacca, Samudra Pasai, Peureulak, and Banda Aceh, brought forth the connection between upstream and downstream closer together that demonstrated the maritime orientation and openness of the state to international trades (Maguin, 2000).

The city of Demak was conceptually established to transfer the spiritual power of Majapahit. Most royal regalia and heirlooms, known as pusaka, of Majapahit were carried out from Trowulan to Demak; according to the Javanese beliefs system, those precious things contain the divine power that enable the holder-in this case, the Demak sultanate-to be the center of the Javanese world. Unlike Samudra Pasai, Banda Aceh, and Malacca, the capital city of Demak was not derived from the concept of bandar, but this newly established polity was to take over the prestige and reputation of Majapahit. In doing so, the Demak sultanate was consolidating its power to control the maritime realm of Majapahit of the fourteenth century. The international commercial activities in Southeast Asian archipelago still under control of the Muslim traders in the Indian ocean and the Chinese Ming empire in South China Sea. During the fifteenth century, the seafaring situation in the Indonesian archipelago has been transformed to be more vibrant with the arrival of the European fleets for the silk and spice trades.

As urban centers in the fifteenth century, Banda Aceh and Demak shared something in common for the meaning of urbanism. Both centers represented the importance of rituals and ceremonies for the essence and existence of urbanism. Theatric festivals and grandeur spectacles belong to the necessity of urban settlement for the sense of community of urban inhabitants.

In this sense, the call is for wholeness and harmony of the world through collective participation. To certain extent, the urban festivals, rituals, and ceremonies are not only for joy and happiness for all, but also for building a sense of belonging and identity in the context of human condition for being urbane. Indeed, the excess of these festivals leads the urban inhabitants towards hedonistic indulgence with betting, gambling, and drinking. However, these excesses do not discourage Demak and Banda Aceh to hold back the sense of abundance for what the city and state are about. Grebeg celebration in Demak and Ieds celebrations in Banda Aceh remind people, the necessity of the city and the state for being inclusive.

In other words, the city and state as a polity is not simply to accumulate resources for the sake of power and control. Rather, the city and state are responsible to reward its citizens or its inhabitants for collective joy and happiness as communal experience in the public realm.

Urbanism in this sense is experienced as the phenomenon of gathering that conjoins people and place in the ecstatic event of rituals and ceremonies.

The purpose of formalities is nothing but to demonstrate the cosmological order in conspicuous manner and fashion. During the ceremony, the seat and position of person will be provided according to their title, status, rank, and privilege in relation to the center where the king/queen is. In other words, the structure, elements and the form of cosmological order is unveiled in order to confirm and establish the constellation of power in the state polity. The state rituals and ceremonies are performed by the king/queen to establish loyalty, hierarchy, and destiny of people for the cosmological ordering system. All this puts the necessity for unity, stability, and harmony as the state underlying principles. In doing so, there is no room for any action and motion against the authority of the state. The synergy between religious ideals and the state rituals is to justify and strengthen the domination and authority of the state-negara-as the source of orders and values in the life-world of people.

In most cases, the establishment of Javanese urban settlement is more about defining its center rather than a boundary. This implies that the urban center is symbolically represented by the emptiness of the public square. In other words, the Javanese city is a center without a definite periphery. This principle is drawn from the belief that center is the source of spiritual power that radiates in all directions without a physical limitation. This concept of power has been explored and understood by the Javanese as something concrete, homogenous, limited, and beyond morally legitimation (Anderson, 2006). The radiating and vibrating capacity of power depends on the leadership of the ruler of the city or state, negara. Power in this sense is not about inter human relationship, but about spirituality that does not need any political legitimacy. The ruler as the representation of divine power on earth.

From this beliefs system, the source of power is limited because it is not only the source but also the spiritual destination and personification of the divine of people under his/her influence. Unsurprisingly, the intensity of power is associated with strong personality or charisma of the ruler. Based on this personal quality of leadership, he/she is able to mobilize the resources for his/her glorious spectacle. The purpose of negara is to exemplify this festive glory and phenomenal spectacle of all resourceful accumulation. In many ways, the Acehnese concept of power has something in common with the way the Javanese people believe in what power is; they share the idea that everything contains the spiritual power, semangat. The ruler is the representation of the source of resourceful earth and sky that is able to unify people together as a spiritual nation in terms of negara.

Conclusion

This paper reveals that contribution of historical maritime culture and tradition to urbanism is to uphold and sustain the livability of towns and cities at the coastal area of Indonesia. This livability is made possible by the synergy of ecological and economic sustainability of the coastal region. Ecological sustainability needs to rely on the conservation of coastal biodiversity and the watershed area from upstream to downstream. Meanwhile economic sustainability entails the growth of maritime industry in alignment with the development program of the integrated coastal management. The problem is how to manage the synchronization between environmental conservation and economic development in public policy in terms of spatial land use planning, Nature and park protection, and energy and water conservation.

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