

# Article 1

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# The Kinship Commodification of Local Ethnic in Lampung in Multicultural Relations

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**ABSTRACT.** The complexity of inter-ethnic relations in multicultural societies requires controlling models for the relations that have the conflict potential. The purpose of this study is to reveal the meaning of kinship commodification in local ethnic groups in Lampung. As a qualitative study, interviews were the main instrument for obtaining a native perspective (the giver and recipient of a title), as well as observation of the custom ritual of awarding the title holistically and supported by several relevant documents. The results showed that the positioning of Lampung ethnicity at the minority level in a multicultural society increased their ability to cultivate a title culture in their community structure as a tool of resistance by adopting the way of kinship. Cultural actions with kinship patterns and symbols that make other people like relatives or family.

**KEYWORDS:** custom title-identity-kinship-commodification-multicultural

## INTRODUCTION

One of common problems in a society that originates from multiculturalism is the emergence of a dichotomy in the community resulting in differences between ethnic groups. This distinction is often measured by domination, marginalization, majority or minority, and even stereotypes attached to each group or ethnicity. Not infrequently also formed a pattern that labels what is called a local community and migrants. As a result, various problems vary because the understanding of multiculturalism depends on the underlying conditions such as politics, religion, race, ethnicity, and other things. Various

conditions due to the inability to overcome problems originating from multiculturalism have the potential to increase the complexity of the relationship between local and migrants which triggers disharmony due to the imbalance of interactions between them (Hoon, 2013).

In many cases, the potential for conflicts that occur in multicultural societies is because each ethnic/group needs identity recognition. From a multicultural perspective, group representation can also be known from the collective ties of society in the form of moral, legal, religious, political, and other regulations (Rapport & Overing, 2003: 217-219). Thus, identity is needed to distinguish (self) from (others), although adaptation is still needed. Meanwhile, on the one hand, that <sup>3</sup> diversity is a set of conscious practices that involve understanding, the interdependence between humans, culture, and nature; practice mutual respect for any differences in experience, defend rights, and build differences across alliances to eradicate all forms of discrimination (Patrick and Kumar; 2012). Commitment and compliance are needed for harmony in other communities such as sanctions so that the community remains in control. Therefore, diversity includes acceptance and appreciation, meaning that it needs an understanding that each individual is unique, and must recognize the existence of differences.

Of course, the strengthening of identity in multicultural relationships enables each group or ethnicity, reproduce or modify their identity, even choosing

another identity to determine their classification category (Barth, 1969: 13-15). That is, the formation of an identity other than because of its membership is also obtained from the experience interpreted (Peri in Haddock & Peter Sutch, 2003: 142-144). Indeed, today the formation of identity is part of trends, various strategies, techniques, or manipulations carried out on material symbols to form new affiliations. What ethnic groups do as a strategy by reconstructing their cultural material patterns is a form of resistance to the groups that dominate them (Ranger in Hobsbawm, 1992).

Being aware of the crucial potential arising from multicultural relationships, a review of the structure of society and patterns of interaction are important. This awareness cannot be separated from the adoption of knowledge gained from relationships with others (Rutherford, 2000). Moreover, social problems arising from multicultural relations are very complex, such as ethnicity, nationalism, race, religion, and other matters relating to integration, nationality, and primordial sentiments (Liang, Yuchen, 2014).

One of the strongest elements in the cultural structure of a society that is able to support multicultural relationships that are equilibrium and harmony is kinship because there is a mechanism in maintaining wholeness. The kinship pattern prevailing in the community group has the opportunity to create identity. At this level, the role of the family becomes very important in the formation of identity and even becomes a source of imbalance among its

members. Why is kinship treated as a special system? The mechanism of kinship is in the form of group division or positioning which functions as a social force and maintains rules because, in fact, kinship exists and is defined as a relationship that arises from the process of human sexual reproduction. Human sexuality is essentially a biological process, a natural part of humans, and is valued as cultural aspects related to one another. Kinship will not be meaningful without a cultural construction, because kinship is the root, the basis that underlies basic human needs, tendencies, encouragement, which is the natural side of humans. That is, kinship is interpreted as personal ties based on the results of social interpretation, as a complex system and unilateral reinterpretation (Schneider, 1984: 165-171).

The kinship plays an important role as a social force and is the basis in maintaining rules so that kinship creates social solidarity relationships, raises rules about kinship, marriage, territory, or residence of people according to their social role and identity. Schneider (1968); (1984: 165-171) argues that the division of groups and one's position has been arranged in a kinship called basic group kinship and there is a group called derivative kinship (modified kinship). The "brother" kinship metaphor is the glue element in the dynamics of multicultural relations. The word "brother" is often used to describe the level of closeness of a relationship, so the mention of siblings, distant relatives or close relatives becomes a measure of kinship. Reconstruction of identity

through the term "brother" becomes prestige, especially if those who claim you have a higher social status. At this level, the term "brother" becomes a new value in the construction of identity because of the recognition. As a result, the construction of "brother" becomes a necessity even legalized by various cultural rituals for the sake of existence. In fact, being a "brother" is usually due to (a) marriage, and (b) genealogical (family/blood) relationships. Even sibling ties that are built based on marital or genealogical factors also have consequences such as one's position or level in a circle of kinship in social relations.

In the sociocultural structure of the Lampung community, the kinship mechanism functions to maintain the integrity of people's lives consisting of the values, norms, identity, and self-esteem components of each community group. The "title" ritual <sup>4</sup> carried out by the Lampung ethnic group is one component of identity that shows kinship relations and normatively only applies to groups that are truly relatives. It takes a variety of efforts including material sacrifice in order to get recognition among the internal community of Lampung itself. It takes a variety of efforts including material sacrifice to get recognition among the internal community of Lampung itself.

In fact, at present, the title is easily given to migrants as a "brother" bond, as the study about an honor conducted by (Bourdieu, 1979; Corr, Rachell & Harriet L. Wilkes, 2003). Traditionally the title is only imposed and given to

certain circles in ethnic Lampung internally. They use the familial way of working that is commodified, with the culture of giving customary title to migrant ethnic groups as adoption media called "brother". Referring to the Castells' opinion (2010: xxvi), Lampung's ethnic action implies that the title is the most rational construction of identity material because the title is not just an identity or attribute attached but as a reality of change, experiencing commodification which is used as a strategy to reshape its identity (Schneider, 1968; Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009).

Fictitious relatives or pseudo relatives, or relatives who are manipulated and defined as family relationships even though not based on blood or marriage relationships, this model tends to religious and friendship rituals (Ebaugh et al. 2000). It even became one of the capitals used by the two groups (local-migrants) that facilitated their incorporation into the local community. Fictitious kinship in migrant populations everywhere has the same function of expanding social networks, including problem-solving solutions.

The ability of ethnic Lampung to redefine kinship through the customary title ritual in the internal scope is indeed related to the concept of a dynamic culture, and the formation of identity is always ongoing and never steady (Goodenough, 2003; Hall, 1991: 29-41; Ortner, 2006). The ethnic capacity of Lampung utilizing opportunities with kinship engineering to determine its position in multicultural relations is one of the interesting points in this paper.

The use of the analogy of kinship with the customary title ritual to others shows that cultural material can be manipulated according to group needs at some level as the purpose of this paper (Eriksen, 2001); (Woodward, 1999: 1-2). Based on the description above, by observing the position of Lampung ethnicity in multicultural societies, this research was focused on the commodification of kinship "CUSTOMARY TITLE" and the research questions were (1) discussing the commodification of kinship strategies and mechanisms legalized by local ethnic culture in Lampung; (2) reveal the implicit meaning of the commodification of kinship.

### **Research Methods**

The nature of this research was qualitative, by setting the Lampung community (*papadun* and *saibatin*) as subjects so that the perspectives of the two local ethnic groups were obtained from the commodification of kinship. All subjects (informants) had the same opportunity wherever they were. Data was collected by rolling out information on a number of (original) informants to get their perspective on the culture of lifting titles for migrants who used a kinship perspective (Borofsky, 1994: 335). This study also used participatory observation to get a complete picture of the commodification of kinship in



multicultural relationships. The research location included the Lampung society dominated by *Papadun* and *Saibatin* communities.

## **RESULTS**

### **Title/Degree: Identity in the Structure of Kinship**

In the kinship structure of the Lampung community, the terms of designation and vocation were important elements, because in their life cycle the name change would be made by all people especially those who were *Papadun*. Changes in vocations from first names (*juluk-adok*) according to the level and position in the family based on the position of birth would experience a change in vocations. Change the name as customary law was to give and receive the title, it usually did at the time of marriage, as the concept of (Ember & Ember's, 2007: 388-389), that many communities give power and roles to boys, especially the successors of the clan, and also a successor to the economic survival of the extended family.

There were several vocations in the kinship of Lampung ethnic according to their titles and status (*dalom, kanjeng, stan, minak, ratu*), which functioned as identifiers between individuals that caused titles to be important. Transitioning a small name to become a title should not be given carelessly, even through the process of traditional ceremonies that were expensive and

witnessed by traditional leaders. Not surprisingly, the customary title was still the dream of most ethnic Lampung. The title as a symbol of identity resulted in them competing to get it despite the risk. Even the extreme ways were also done such as selling property, borrowing money, or other ways to win a title/degree.<sup>1</sup>

The complexity and implications of the title gained to the extreme caused the potential for increasing family disputes, structural poverty, and even psychiatric disorders. According to (Groen et al. 2018), there is a <sup>2</sup>relationship between cultural identity and mental health, including the relationship of stress <sup>2</sup>with changes in cultural identity. The title/degree became an inherent identity, but the procedure for obtaining it differed between the two local sub-ethnic variants of Lampung, namely *Saibatin* and *Papadun*.

According to the *Saibatin* tradition, the titles were arranged according to kinship, genealogy, are internal, decisive, could not be transferred or given to others outside the direct kinship line. On the other hand, in *Papadun* society, a title besides being inherited genealogically, it could also be purchased as long as it was economically capable. Those who bought title were usually not the oldest boys. This condition refers to (Sutterluty, 2006) thought, that power over blood relations as biological inheritance is still maintained and highly trusted by a group of people as practiced by the *Saibatin* indigenous people,

so it is very clear that kinship does have to take into account many things including differences due to *consanguinis* or *afinal* (Bonvillain, 2010: 201).

### **The commodification of Kinship: A Formulation in Multicultural Relations**

Awarding the title was a local identity that was displayed to the public to get recognition. The commodification of kinship by being "brothers" was a formulation in multicultural relations. Based on cultural diversity, actually each ethnic group has its own kinship formulation (Feuchtwang, 2013). Interestingly, the title which was a form of ethnic Lampung's identity was also in demand by immigrants. The interest of migrants in the "titles" became a moment for ethnic Lampung to emerge from immigrant domination, and to take a subtle position. A title was commodified because there was a bargain, and there was a price to pay for a title. The title became a cultural commodity for those who were interested, the formulation of the title changed from sacred to profane because it was more easily given to migrants who were willing provided the conditions could be met.

In addition to the ceremonial material requirements of awarding such as the amount of economic value paid, there were still other conditions such as requirements for men and women, space limits that could be crossed by participants and ceremonial event invitations, even body positions were

arranged in such a way and all of them must be obeyed by those who would be given a title and would be attracted to the ritual. Violation of the requirements at the awards ceremony in addition to being reprimanded in front of the general public was also subject to custom fines in the form of money.

Lampung's local ethnic ability to manage kinship by providing space for outsiders (migrants) to enter with the label "brothers" indicated open contestation in symbolic form, the fulfillment of the needs of existence, recognition, representation of ethnic identity among the multicultural cultural heterogeneity of the multicultural society, and competition between groups marginal with cultural, political and economic dominance. From the ethnic side of immigrants, the new title was the process of migrants becoming local and the implication of this title was that it was no longer only owned by local ethnic groups whose status was equal (the first male in the family), but the commodification of kinship.

The implementation of a customary title for migrants by turning others into relatives/brothers/guests was seen as a symbol of openness in the ethnic Lampung as a historical journey. Receiving/giving a title with the requirements in multicultural relations was seen as (a) for the ethnic Lampung recognition and appreciation of local culture, (b) for newcomers to the form of thanks for having been given space/place to settle/live together.

### **The Meaning of Commodification of Kinship in Multicultural Relations**

Constructing identity using mechanisms and ways of working for kinship was the most basic strategy in multicultural relations. The term "brother" had a magical element in bringing a relationship closer. The title recipient was culturally bound to the title giver, became part of their culture and accepted the consequences of the title given along with the rights and obligations as a member of a relative. Recognizing others as "brothers" legalized through the award ceremony of giving the title, could be classified as kinship type fictive kinship, it was a kinship that was not based on blood or marriage but was bound by ethics of mutual respect and courtesy, even though it was not a true form of kinship.

Embracing others through the symbol of the title into the environment of Lampung's local ethnic traditions was also resistance and reaction in order to create parallels between the recipient group and the minority group (title suppliers). Carrying out the rapture of the appointment of "brothers" was contestation and negotiation using local ethnic cultural capital which in the perspective of symbolic power, the position of the giver is higher than the recipient (Jenkins, 2010). Distributing internal titles through kinship was beneficial for both parties, namely the need to be accepted by local ethnic groups and valued by ethnic migrants for the creation of our-you/self-

others/self-other relationships that were in accordance with the principle of cultural reciprocity.

The kinship was the strongest line for achieving integration and harmonization in multicultural relationships.<sup>2</sup> Formally, the kinship was often defined by blood relations, so that blood became a symbol of interrelated family relationships. In the tradition of giving titles that were bound through the idea of kinship, this illustrated family affiliation between Lampung's local ethnic groups and migrant ethnic groups, as well as forms of local ethnic responses to the dynamics of change.

### **Discussion and Analysis**

The commodification of kinship in the granting of customary titles meant equality and balance between local ethnic groups and other groups. Giving the customary title through the kinship mechanism was the exchange and competition for cultural capital. Identity was related to positioning themselves among various groups so that in the formation of identity the ability to take advantage of opportunities was also crucial. This was what was done by ethnic Lampung when carrying out the commodification of kinship by holding ceremonies to give customary title as commodities.

The kinship played <sup>5</sup> an important role in the structure of Lampung society, because family relationships were formed based on marriage and blood

relations, and even the reason men became family heads. Men are considered important so marriage and kinship are an honor that must be at stake (Schultheis et al. 2009). The kinship was the collective property of the local community and the identity of the community was used as the basis for relations in the social system. The kinship is inherited from generation to the next generation through cultural values contained in it (Sungkharat et al. 2010). Once the importance of kinship, especially in maintaining the sustainability of the social structure of society because it could decide who was a relative, which was taboo, and also determined the obligations of members in all religious practices from birth to death in family life.

Pursuing identity with various cultural rituals in Lampung's local ethnic tradition was considered as historical awareness to fight in symbolic form with the aim of meeting the needs of existence. Behind the splendor of cultural symbols built by local Lampung ethnicities for a traditional ritual "making a brother and family" was a reflection of the identity of equality in the multicultural world. The commodification of kinship "being a family member" was resistance that ran naturally so that conflict could be avoided. On the other hand (migrants) through the "family" metaphor was also a process of exchanging needs between local ethnic groups as producers who gave the titles to migrants as consumers.

Through exchanges, local ethnic groups regain their identity because in the process of granting titles to ethnic migrants the dignity of being "Lampung people" increases with the inclusion of migrants into local ethnic cultural symbols called cultural incorporation (Sinaga, 2014). When the kinship was engineered for the public, the Lampung ethnic group got a representation of its identity by strengthening its ethnic collectivity so as to create a cultural identity and identity strength.

## **CONCLUSION**

Kinship with all its elements cannot be separated from social structure, undergoes a long process until finally found space to reconstruct contextually according to the perspective of local ethnicity. The title in the kinship structure is not only owned by local Lampung ethnic groups, but it is owned by the public because it is implemented into a broader domain as a means of competition. Although the title begins with social inequality and unbalanced position in the local culture, but for the sake of self-esteem becomes a trigger to rise from the domination of immigrants, even the title becomes an instrument of cultural harmony in multicultural relations. In the context of multiculturalism, the title of Lampung's local ethnic kinship becomes the identity at stake, because in the title found a compromise of identity that is always modified.



## AUTHOR

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## NOTES

1. The title made someone had the right to speak in custom at any traditional ceremony on a local scale, national or even international, the right to provide support, had the right to sit in a customary court (in the *Papadun* chair), without a title someone was only a spectator.
2. The kinship was the strongest line for achieving integration and harmonization in multicultural relationships

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