

# Chapter I Political Strategy for Coexistence in Multi-Ethnic Societies: The Concept of *Orang Melayu* in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Johor-Riau Sultanate

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## Introduction

There is no doubt that colonial rule exerted tremendous influence on local society in Southeast Asia, since most indigenous local people in the region today seem to consider the colonial period as a starting point for their own contemporary societies. However, such a perception often hides from them the fact that certain features of those same societies can actually be traced back to pre-colonial times, when their ancestors were taking a more active part in the world. Therefore, one of the most important duties of the historian may just well be to be heedful of “missing links” connecting people of today with ancestors of the remote past.

In British Malaya, modern nationalist movements developed based on ethnic concepts, like *Melayu* (Malay), the formation of which was closely related to British colonial policy. A. C. Milner notes that two locally based authors of the colonial period, Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir<sup>1</sup> and Mohd. Eunus Abdullah,<sup>2</sup> contributed much to the modern usage of the term “*bangsa*” (ethnic group), although he is open to the possibility that such usage dates back to pre-colonial times [Milner 1995:12, 51, chap. 4]. In fact, the Malay court histories (*hikayats*) edited during the 18<sup>th</sup> century contain several examples of the usage of *bangsa* to designate ethnic group.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, recent research suggests that “Malayness,” or the idea of *orang Melayu* (the Malay people), grew into an early modern period concept that included various ethnic groups (see, for example, Barnard [2004a]). A. Reid [2004:3–8], in particular, claims that by the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the concept of *orang Melayu* had grown to include the following three groups:

<sup>1</sup> Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir (1797–1854) was a Hadhrami of Tamil descent. He was born and grew up in British Malacca. While working as a Malay interpreter and scribe, he wrote such Malay works as the *Hikayat Abdullah* and the *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah*, which became popular in the British colony of Singapore [Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir 1997:7–12; Hill 1985:4–20].

<sup>2</sup> Mohd. Eunus Abdullah was an editor at the *Utusan Melayu*, a Malay newspaper founded in 1907. For his background, see Milner [1995:90].

<sup>3</sup> Evidence for this can be seen in such Malay court histories as the Shellabear version of *Sejarah Melayu*, *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa*, and *Misa Melayu* [SMs:2, 3, 21, 72; HMM:13, 67; MM:34].

- (1) The Malay court circle whose rulers claimed descent from Srivijaya, Melaka, or Pagarruyung
- (2) Various traders who scattered from Melaka to other ports in maritime Southeast Asia and their descendants
- (3) The Malay-speaking Muslims who took part in spreading Islamic civilization

H. Sutherland [2004:78] states that in 17<sup>th</sup> century Makassar, anyone from the west (including the Javanese) was known as Malay. She goes on to say that even the stricter definition of Malay-speaking Muslims included the Minangkabau and people from Patani, the Straits of Malacca, coastal Sumatra, and Kalimantan (Borneo). On the other hand, L. Y. Andaya [2001, 2004] points out that Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula states competed to become the center of Malay culture, arguing that the 17<sup>th</sup> century Aceh Sultanate presented a new model of Malay culture based heavily on Islamic culture. It is quite probable that the shift from the Melaka model to the Aceh model encouraged the spread of Malayness in the Malay-speaking Muslim community, which included a considerable number of immigrants from other regions. Moreover, T. P. Barnard and Jan van der Putten also discuss a shift in ethnic identity by taking up the case of immigrants within maritime Southeast Asia, the former taking up with the case of the Minangkabau in Siak during the 18<sup>th</sup> century [Barnard 2004b], the latter focusing attention on the Bugis in Riau during the 19<sup>th</sup> century [Putten 2004].

Despite the above discussion and clarification of the development of Malayness in the early modern period, some important questions still remain to be answered. For example, in Reid's grouping of *orang Melayu*, (1) is characterized by politics and an indigenous group, (2) by commerce and foreignness, and (3) by religion (or culture) and foreignness. In other words, while (1) consisted of indigenous Malay people, groups (2) and (3) included a considerable number of "foreign Malay" people from places within or without maritime Southeast Asia. After the fall of the Melaka Sultanate, members of groups (2) and (3) could be found in various ports throughout maritime Southeast Asia, and there were port-polities in which members of all three groups coexisted.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, it is not unreasonable to surmise that most port-polities in the region were based on relations between the indigenous ruling class and foreign Malays. Moreover, such relations can be even more clearly seen in some Malay port-polities in the Straits of Malacca. That being said, it does not follow that foreign people were excluded from becoming part of the local ruling class, as A. Reid mentions [1993a:123]. (See Section 1 of this paper.)

One more question that arises from Reid's typology is how the concept of *orang Melayu* claimed by the indigenous ruling class functioned in the port-polities

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of the port-polity, see Kathirithamby-Wells and Villiers [1990].

they governed, since much attention had to be paid to facilitating peaceful coexistence between the various ethnic groups residing there. Hence, its claim of *orang Melayu* was by no means unrelated to efforts at statecraft or effective policymaking. Despite the importance of such a question, very little research has been done to understand *orang Melayu* from such a perspective. For example, in his study of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Riau-Lingga (or Lingga-Riau) Sultanate (the successor of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Johor-Riau Sultanate), V. Matheson [1986] points out that the Malay ruling class there asserted its Malayness and the political legitimacy of the sultan of Lingga by compiling a royal genealogy (*silsilah*) and court histories (*hikayats, sejarahs*). However, because she chose to focus her attention on Malay-Bugis disputes within the sultanate, she fails to clarify the reason why the Bugis ruling class there assimilated Malay culture in spite of its conflict with the Malay elements. In contrast, Jan van der Putten briefly mentions that the “playing relatives” function in Malayness [Maier 1997] influenced the Bugis ruling class to accept Malay identity, while retaining Bugis ancestry [Putten 2004]. Although his argument is interesting, Putten fails to explicate the reason why this elite maintained its Bugis identity, while at the same time assimilating Malay culture. While Hirose [1999] does mention the aspect of statecraft in Malay port-polities as connecting various ethnic groups with reference to Islamization, he does not go into the concept of *orang Melayu*.

This paper will approach the subject of *orang Melayu* in the context of political strategy in Malay port-polities in four sections. The first section will discuss statecraft there in terms of foreign human resources, while section two will deal with the *Sejarah Melayu* in order to discuss ideal Malay ruler-subject relations. The third section will turn to a major issue in Malay politics, the introduction of foreign immigrants as a key to success of Malay states, on the one hand, but as a move that often increased the likelihood of inter-ethnic conflict, on the other. The final section presents an analysis of the Johor-Riau (or Riau-Johor) Sultanate in order to show how the concept of *orang Melayu* was employed to settle major political issues.

## **1. Human Resources and Statecraft in Malay Port-Polities**

In pre-colonial times, Southeast Asia had a very limited population due to its geographical environment. Under such circumstances, human resources occupied an important issue in most of the port-polities of the region. Human resources were needed for not only military purposes, but also in commercial, religious, and political affairs, where people of mixed blood (*peranakan*) and foreigners were often appointed to important offices. Having been involved in the international exchange of commodities and culture from ancient times, the rulers of Southeast Asia knew

well that such people were of great advantage in linking different societies and introducing new cultural aspects to local society. They regarded foreign people as assets rather than threats [Reid 1993a:124].

This also holds true for Malay port-polities, for both European records and the Malay court histories show that foreign residents played important roles in commercial and religious affairs, including, for example, *saudagar raja* (royal merchant), *syahbandar* (harbormaster), *juru tulis* (scribe), and *ulama* [B. W. Andaya 1978; Muhammad Yusoff Hashim 1983:115–20; Reid 1993a:116, 118, 120; BS:3, 4, 5, 6]. Dutch sources mention that a famous religious scholar from Gujarat, Nur al-Din al-Raniri (or Nuruddin al-Raniri), was a member of the diplomatic corps from Aceh [Dagh-Register 1641–42:166]. In the European colonies of the region, foreigners were given still more duties. The *Hikayat Abdullah* states that during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the author's father was appointed *syahbandar* in Dutch Malacca, and then later worked as a British and Dutch envoy to the neighboring Malay sultanates. He also worked as a Malay interpreter and scribe in Riau for the Dutch<sup>5</sup> [Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir 1997:3–5].

Another important point is that rulers offered foreign immigrants the chance to attend Malay courts. After pointing out the great dynamism of “the Age of Commerce,” A. Reid adds [1993a:123], “Foreign merchants frequently joined the local aristocracy.” It is not certain whether most of the new faces at Malay courts during the period were former merchants or not<sup>6</sup>; however, it is true that not a few offices in Melaka were shared by various ethnic groups<sup>7</sup> [Muhammad Yusoff Hashim 1983:115–20]. A similar tendency can also be seen, but to a lesser extent, in other port-polities. The need for men of talent, particularly for ministerial posts, there did not preclude the ruler's selection of persons from outside the court circle [Kathirithamby-Wells 1986:259]. In Johor, the *ulama* from Surat played an active role in religious affairs at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century [Hamilton 1930, 2:51]. During the heyday of Perak in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, an Arab assumed the ministerial office of *dato' menteri*,<sup>8</sup> and people of both Keling (Tamil from the Coromandel Coast) and Bugis descent were appointed *panglima* (military commander) [MM:123, 127, 139,

<sup>5</sup> Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir's father was also a Hadhrami of Tamil descent. For further details on the activities of the Hadhrami immigrants from the 18<sup>th</sup> century on, see Berg [1886] and Freitag and Clarence-Smith [1997].

<sup>6</sup> On the same page, Reid even states [1993a:123], “Nor is it easy to draw a line between a passive native aristocracy and a commercially active cosmopolitan *orang kaya* [noblemen] element.”

<sup>7</sup> Tome Pires suggests that the *orang kaya* class of Melaka included a considerable number of the *orang kaya of orang laut* (maritime people of the Straits of Malacca) descent. He also states that the families of *orang besar* (ministers), such as *Bendahara* (prime minister) and *Laksamana* (admiral), can be traced back to those of *orang laut* [Cortesao 1967:235]. If this is the case, it is quite likely that Melaka was a Malay port-polity founded and managed by the *orang kaya of orang laut* origin [Nishio 1995].

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It is certain that those foreigners who shared the local religion and/or language were able to cross ethnic boundaries into the local ruling class more quickly than others [Reid 1993a:124]. The above-mentioned Arab scholar, Nur al-Din al-Raniri, is a typical example of a foreigner who played a significant role in the cultural development of local society, by writing many Malay translations of Islamic works (*kitab Jawis*)<sup>9</sup> and editing the *Bustan us-Salatin*<sup>10</sup> during his short stay in 17<sup>th</sup> century Aceh. Another example is Tun Bambang, who attended the Johor court. This *orang kaya* (nobleman) of Patani descent took charge of composing the *Sejarah Melayu* during that same century [Abdul Rahman Haji Ismail 1998:10–15].<sup>11</sup> Both figures were foreigners deeply connected to the growth of the Malay world and the spread of the concept of *orang Melayu* itself. It seems reasonable to conclude that the social mobility involving foreign human resources was a significant key to the progress achieved by the Malay port-polities in all aspects of society and culture.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> According to Mohammad R. Othman [1997:84 87–88], all four high offices of Perak, except *Temenggung* (minister of police), were held by Arabs at least at once. These Arabs were accepted as part of the royal family of Perak and were addressed by the title of Tengku. Faqih Yusuf (Fakih Yusof) held the post of *Orang Kaya Menteri Sri Paduka Tuan* for some time during the reign of Sultan Muzaffar Syah (1728–54). Also during his reign, two more Arabs, Syarif Husayn and his brother Syarif Abu Bakar, were appointed to that office. Then, the latter was promoted to the post of *Bendahara*. Sayyid Abu Bakar was also appointed *Bendahara* during the reign of Sultan Iskandar (1752–63). The authority and respect secured by Arabs was partly derived from their prominent role in politics and administration of the Malay states, in particular, Kedah and Negeri Sembilan.

<sup>9</sup> Nur al-Din al-Raniri wrote about 30 *kitab Jawis* that deal with such themes as theology, law, Sufism, and history. Many local Muslims read his *Sirat al-Mustaqim*, which deals with *ibadat* [Azyumardi Azra 1992: 399–410]. *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa* states that the Muslims of Kedah understood *ibadat* and obeyed it faithfully afterwards; and another work of his was sent there from Aceh [HMM:115–16]. Concerning Nur al-Din al-Raniri, see, for example, Syed Muhammad Naguib al-Attas [1966], and for further details on *kitab Jawi*, see Mohd. Nor bin Ngah [1983].

<sup>10</sup> It is said that this bulky historical tome was based on *Taj us-Salatin*, which was edited by Bukhari al-Jauhari in Aceh in 1603. Based on quotations from no less than nine Persian texts, this work discusses the ideal ruler of an Islamic state. Its most important section attempts to show that *adil* (just, fair) is the most important attribute of any Islamic ruler. This is probably the first among the classical Malay works that discuss Islamic rulers. *Taj us-Salatin* was not only popular but also influential in Malay society and Java [TAJ:xvii–xxiv; Teuku Iskandar 1995:420; Taufik Abdullah 1993:40–47]. Concerning the influence of this work on Malay society and Java, see Hooykaas [1947:167–73].

<sup>11</sup> Abdul Rahman Haji Ismail [1998:14–15] points out that Raffles MS. No.18 version of *Sejarah Melayu* was written in the Malay dialect spoken on the east coast of the Malay Peninsula.

<sup>12</sup> With regard to this kind of the social mobility, A. Reid [1993a:124] suggests that Southeast Asia forms a striking contrast to India and Japan.

## 2. Harmony between Ruler-Subject Relations as the Main Theme of the *Sejarah Melayu*

While the *Sejarah Melayu* describes various aspects of traditional Malay culture, it is very likely one of the work's main purposes is to demonstrate ideal relations between rulers and their subjects for generations to come [Nishio 1999:211–15; 2003:79–84]. Here we will focus attention on the subject of contract as described in the work.

The *Sejarah Melayu* states that Seri Teri Buana and Demang Lebar Daun made a political contract in Palembang by taking a mutual oath (*bersumpah-sumpah*). Seri Teri Buana was a descendant of the legendary Islamic hero, Raja Iskandar D'zulkarnain (Alexander of the Two Horns, or Alexander the Great), and a member of the genealogy the Melaka Sultanate derives from him. On the other hand, Demang Lebar Daun was the former ruler of Palembang, and after abdicating the throne in favor of Buana, Daun became his follower.<sup>13</sup> The terms of this contract are found in a conversation [SMr:57; Brown 1970:16], which can be interpreted as consisting of four conditions:

### [1] Conditions regarding Rulers

Malay rulers should treat their subjects well. No matter how grave their subjects' offenses, they shall not be bound or hanged or disgraced with evil words. They shall be sentenced to death only when they have committed certain offenses deemed so in accordance with Islamic law.

### [2] Conditions regarding Subjects

Malay subjects shall never be disloyal or treacherous to their rulers (*derhaka*), even if those rulers have behaved badly or inflicted injustice (*aniaya*)<sup>14</sup> upon them.

### [3] Conditions of Nullification

If any ruler fails to uphold the conditions of this contract regarding him, then his subjects will not have to uphold the conditions regarding them.

### [4] Conditions of Punishment

Allah will punish those who depart from the conditions of the contract. In particular, any ruler failing to uphold the conditions regarding him shall be a sign that Allah will destroy his kingdom.

<sup>13</sup> One day Seri Teri Buana asked Demang Lebar Daun for his daughter's hand in marriage. Fearing that his daughter would contract a skin disease like other girls, Daun requested that Buana make a contract with him prior to the marriage. Buana agreed [SMr:57; Brown 1970:13–17].

<sup>14</sup> The Shellabear version of the *Sejarah Melayu* uses the Arabic-derived term *zalim* [SMs:20].

This contract included both traditional and Islamic values. The *derhaka* demanded of subjects is a traditional concept closely connected to another traditional concept, *daulat*, which means the supernatural power possessed by Malay rulers and their divine right of kingship [Wilkinson 1932, 1:261]. It is said that Malay rulers received this supernatural power during the enthronement ceremony. The Shellabear version of the *Sejarah Melayu* suggests that *daulat* is the supernatural power that Allah gives to the Malay rulers because they are descendants of Raja Iskandar D'zulkarnain [SMs:25]. Malays believed that those who committed *derhaka* would suffer retribution from *daulat* [Gullick 1958:44–45; Skeat 1965:24], which enabled Malay rulers to act as they wished.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, the conditions regarding rulers and punishment clearly contain Islamic concepts. The terms of punishment, in particular, suggest that Allah is the guarantor of the contract, and it is stated that Allah grants this contract is witness to it [SMr:57]. It should be noted that the power of rulers is limited by the condition that requires them to respect Islamic law. Therefore, the content of the contract indicates the predominance of Islamic law over the traditional concept of *daulat*.<sup>16</sup> Recent research has pointed out that such a predominance developed in the Malay-Indonesian world from the 17<sup>th</sup> century on [Reid 1993b:83–107; Azyumardi Azra 1992:346–483].

Evidence for this political contract being a main theme of the *Sejarah Melayu* is contained in the following sections of the work.

- [a] Testaments of Rulers
- [b] Author's Comments on the Reign of Rulers
- [c] Author's Views on Supernatural Powers
- [d] Story of *Penghulu Bendahari* (finance minister) Sang Rajuna
- [e] Account of the Execution of *Bendahara Seri Maharaja* Family
- [f] Account of the Murder of Tun Besar
- [g] Balanced Treatment of the Content

<sup>15</sup> The concept of *daulat* originated in pre-Hindu Malay society. Yet, it contains Hindu and Islamic concepts concerning the immutable power of the ruler. This concept, expressed in the Sanskrit-derived word *sakti* (a supernatural power associated with the Hindu gods) during the Hindu period, was later replaced by the Arabic derivative *daulat* [Winstedt 1947:129–39; Gullick 1958:45; B. W. Andaya 1975:25–26; L. Y. Andaya 1975b:8]. We may safely say that the concept of *daulat* was reconstructed to fit an Islamic mold. It is interesting to note that *Sejarah Melayu* uses the Arabic derivative *tulah* (a calamity consequent upon a curse or sacrilege) [Wilkinson 1985:203] only when it mentions the calamity caused by the supernatural power of Melaka rulers and their ancestors [SMr:122–23; SMs:19, 97–98; SMD:136–37]. On the other hand, *Adat Raja-Raja Melayu*, which was edited sometime during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, classifies *tuah* (good fortune) [Wilkinson 1985:205] into three categories: *untung*, *tuah*, and *daulat*. It also states that *daulat* is the most powerful *tuah* that is conferred on Malay rulers by Allah [ARRM:133]. Taking these points into consideration, we can conclude that *daulat* consists of two sub-concepts, *tuah* and *tulah*.

Both [a] and [b] coincide with the conditions regarding rulers. In [a], the rulers of Melaka advise their successors that the most important duty for an Islamic ruler is to treat his subjects well [SMr:137, 149–50; SMs:142, 219; SMd:171–72, 186–87, 287–88]. In [b], the author of the *Sejarah Melayu* praises rulers like Sultan Muhammad, Sultan Muzaffar, Sultan Mansur, and Sultan Alauddin with the adjectives *adil* (just, fair), *murah* (generous), and *saksama* (fair), emphasizing that the Melaka Sultanate developed and enjoyed prosperity during their reigns in those ways [SMr:88, 92, 100, 139–40; SMs:54, 60]. On the other hand, criticism is meted out to Sultan Iskandar of Singapura, Sultan Abu Syahid, Sultan Mahmud, and Sultan Ahmad, during whose reigns those kingdoms suffered decline or downfall because of the ill treatment of their subjects [SMr:81, 90–92, 150–51, 190; SMs:52–53, 62–65, 139, 167–77, 193–95, 201; SMd:70, 82–86, 187, 193, 271]. It seems that these comments by the author reflect the conditions of the contract.

Both [c] and [e] relate to the conditions regarding subjects. Concerning [c], it should be emphasized that only two kinds of people possess supernatural powers in the *Sejarah Melayu*. They are the rulers of Melaka and the descendants of Muhammad, who bear the titles *sayyid* or *syarif*. As mentioned above, the former possessed *daulat* as descendants of Raja Iskandar D'zulkarnain. The author is clearly of the opinion that Islam is only one source of supernatural power, which he calls *sumpah* [SMr:98, 166], and also means “oath” [Wilkinson 1932, 2:500–501]. This Malay word suggests a close connection between oral contracts and supernatural powers in Malay society [B. W. Andaya 2001:23; Nishio 2003:89–90]. In [e], attention should be paid to the phrase “*Adat Melayu tiada pernah derhaka*” (It is the custom of Malay subjects that they shall never be disloyal to their rulers) [SMr:187]. Similar phrases are found elsewhere in the work [SMr: 125, 138, 154], and the term

<sup>16</sup> We may assume that the earlier work *Taj us-Salatin* influenced the author of *Sejarah Melayu* [Cheah 1998:112]. The *Taj us-Salatin* states that subjects do not have to follow an *zalim* (unjust) ruler:

Since we do not want disorder in our state, we follow his [the unjust ruler's] words. Yet, we do not have to follow his words and actions if it is not difficult to do so. We do not even have to look at his face, because he turned it from Allah's law. Those who depart from Allah's law and reject the *Shari'a* are both enemies of Allah and enemies of Allah's Prophet. We should treat enemies of Allah as our enemies. [TAJ:48]

At the same time, *Taj us-Salatin* warns rulers that tyrannical behavior will result in the loss of *daulat* and their states [TAJ:70]. These views of *Taj us-Salatin* are similar to our conditions of cancellation and punishment. Yet, the contract in the *Sejarah Melayu* never urges subjects to oppose unjust rulers. As its terms of cancellation suggest, it simply allows them to offer passive resistance to him. Therefore, *Sejarah Melayu* differs from *Taj us-Salatin* in that respect [Nishio 2003:81]. For further discussion on *Taj us-Salatin*, see Taufik Abdullah [1993].

usually appears in the negative context of denying having committed *derhaka* [SMr:112–14, 138, 163–64, 193; SMs:98–101, 138, 139–40, 180–81, 207–8, 214–15; SMd:138–42, 187, 187–88, 216–18, 240–41, 274–75].

Story [d], which tells of a *derhaka*-related incident that resulted in the downfall of Singapura, also states that the incident occurred due to the ruler's ill treatment of his subjects [SMr:81; SMs:52–53; SMd:70], and thus relates to conditions regarding rulers, those regarding subjects, and the conditions of punishment. Account [f] deals with the conditions of cancellation, whereby a ball kicked by Tun Besar (son of Bendahara Tun Perak) accidentally knocked off the head cloth of Raja Muhammad (son of Sultan Mansur), who happened to be passing by. A retainer of Raja Muhammad then immediately dashed out and killed Tun Besar, unrestrained by Raja Muhammad and without a chance for an apology. Upon hearing news of the incident, Bendahara Tun Perak announced, "*Istiadat hamba Melayu tiada pernah derhaka*" (It is the custom of Malay subjects that they shall never be disloyal to their rulers) and prohibited his followers from seeking revenge. However, he did add, "*Tetapi akan kita berbuat tuan anak raja seorang ini janganlah*" (Yet, this prince shall never be our ruler). Upon hearing the proclamation, Sultan Mansur abandoned the hope of enthroning Raja Muhammad as ruler of Melaka [SMr:124–25; SMs:110–11; SMd:153]. Tun Perak's proclamation relates to *derhaka*, for it rejects Sultan Mansur's wish to install Raja Muhammad as his successor. Since the author of the *Sejarah Melayu* makes no criticism of Tun Perak, he must have been of the opinion that Raja Muhammad departed from the conditions of the contract, for no other reason could legitimize Tun Perak's proclamation.

Finally, [g] is related to the political contract itself. It is this writer's understanding that the *Sejarah Melayu* is divided into three parts. The first consists of stories about pre-Melaka times, including those great ancestors of the Melaka rulers, such as Raja Iskandar D'zulkarnain and the story of how the political contract came into being. The second part tells of the prosperous period enjoyed under the Melaka Sultanate, corresponding to the reigns of the above-mentioned four praiseworthy rulers. The third part describes the sultanate's decline and downfall, including the reigns of its last two sultans, Mahmud and Ahmad. An important point here is that all three parts have almost an equal number of pages devoted to them.<sup>17</sup> In light of

<sup>17</sup> The following table shows the number of pages making up each part of the *Sejarah Melayu*.

Table 1. The *Sejarah Melayu* and the Balance of its Three Parts

	First Part	Second Part	Third Part	Total Pages	1/3 of Total
SMr	53	66	65	184	61
SMs	75	83	81	239	79
SMd	98	112	102	312	104

such a balance, *Sejarah Melayu* was quite likely composed as follows. The first part, which describes the founding of the Melaka Sultanate based on the political contract between Seri Teri Buana and Demang Lebar Daun, also contains stories of its great ancestors in order to explain why they deserved to possess *daulat*. The purpose of the second and third parts is to show that the rise and fall of any state depends greatly on how well the political contract is observed: the second part describing the period in which both the rulers and subjects of Melaka respected the contract, in which harmonious relationships between them were established, resulting in the growth and prosperity of the sultanate; the third part describing the period in which the rulers failed to uphold the contract, thus destroying the harmony that existed between rulers and subjects, leading to inevitable decline and fall. In other words, one of the author's main purposes seem to be placing emphasis on the significance of the political contract by contrasting the three parts.<sup>18</sup> And if so, it follows that the main theme of the *Sejarah Melayu* is to stress the importance of the harmonious relations between rulers and subjects based on the political contract originally concluded between Buana and Daun, and emphasize that the Malay people should realize the value of this relationship after witnessing the process of decline and fall of the Johor Sultanate from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century to the early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### 3. Ethnic Conflict: A Major Issue in Malay Politics

Whereas the *Sejarah Melayu* relates cases in which rulers' ill treatment of their subjects resulted in their downfall, other Malay *hikayats* suggest that promotions and appointments often led to disputes at court. Here are two related examples of the latter.

The *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, which is a history of the Melaka Sultanate focusing on the hero, Hang Tuah, describes him as a man of ability who was highly adept in language, protocol and the martial arts, and a typically loyal subject. Yet, the ruler of Melaka twice accused him of *derhaka* [HHT:205–8, 347–51]. After being accused a second time, Hang Tuah narrowly escaped execution with the help of the *Bendahara*. As to the reason behind such difficulties, the work points to the existence of malicious rumor (*fitnah*) spread by members of the Melaka court, whose atmosphere is described as follows:

<sup>18</sup> Other research argues that Malay historical writings often cite *takdir* (Allah's will) to explain the cause of some event. See, for example, Andaya and Matheson [1979:117]. We should note, however, that *Sejarah Melayu* seldom makes such references. Clearly, its author is of the conviction that the downfall of Singapura and Melaka resulted from the unjust behavior of its rulers.

Melaka was peaceful at the time when Hang Tuah was a commander. However, when he was promoted to the rank of *laksamana*, the ruler of Melaka greatly favored him and did not object to what he said. Consequently, other court officials became jealous (*dengki*) of him. Only the *Bendahara* and the *Temenggung* continued to love him. The officials and noblemen met together and spread *fitnah* about Hang Tuah. [HHT:347]

The *hikayat* goes on in detail about how Hang Tuah's successful career and unprecedented promotion frustrated other members of the court, warning that rulers should be very careful in the treatment of their subjects. This is why fairness (*adil*) was considered to be one of the most important attributes of the ideal ruler.

Our second example comes from the *Hikayat Abdullah*, which is a story of a newcomer who gained favor with a Malay ruler in the British colony. Sultan Husain Syah of Singapore came to favor a Tamil *peranakan* from Malacca named Abdul Kadir bin Ahmad Sahib, to the extent that the ruler ignored his followers and chose to consult only with Abdul Kadir in every matter. Abdul Kadir soon came to conduct himself as if he were the sultan. Under these circumstances, the sultan's followers assembled and plotted to attack him. Abdul Kadir then escaped to Malacca, where he was stabbed in the shoulder by a young Malay<sup>19</sup> [Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir 1997:298–300; Hill 1985:264–68].

This second case suggests several interesting points. The first concerns the reason why the sultan's followers came to hate Abdul Kadir. According to the *hikayat*, they said, “[Abdul Kadir's behavior] has brought shame (*malu*) upon us all” [Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir 1997:297; Hill 1985:265]. As to why, various factors should be considered before drawing any conclusion, but one possibility may be that Abdul Kadir's behavior infringed on their duties. If this assumption is correct, the incident reveals that the sultan's followers not only wanted aristocratic titles, but also that official duties be attached to them. In other words, it shows us that although “fame for rulers and titles for subjects” (*nama*) has been said to be an important concept in Malay politics [Milner 1982], it actually worked only in certain situations.<sup>20</sup>

The second point is related to the issue of ethnic groups. The *hikayat* draws our attention to differences that existed between ethnic groups. For example, as to the reasons why Abdul Kadir gained favor with the sultan, the author points to Abdul Kadir's knowledge of how to respect other people (*memberi hormat akan orang*), how to humble himself (*menundahkan diri*), and how to gain the confidence (*mengambil hati*) of others, adding, “Such modesty and charm would never be found among Malays, so far as I have noticed, only among Tamils; and indeed

<sup>19</sup> He did not die of the wound; and after his recovery, he was granted the title of *Tengku Muda* by the sultan [Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir 1997:301; Hill 1985:268].

Abdul Kadir was Tamil-born”[Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir 1997:310; Hill 1985:276]. Even more interesting for this paper are the comments made about Abdul Kadir by the Malacca people after the attempt on his life. According to the *hikayat*, they were perplexed why Abdul Kadir sometimes dressed in Tamil costume and other times in Malay fashion, saying “*Melayu masuk Keling dan Keling masuk Melayu*” (The Malay becomes the Tamil and the Tamil becomes the Malay)<sup>21</sup> [Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir 1997:309]. It is noteworthy that even the inhabitants of such a cosmopolitan urban port as Malacca criticized someone for how he dressed. An important point to stress here is that people living in a multi-ethnic society were no doubt very sensitive about their ethnicity and that of others, making them seemingly hesitant about crossing ethnic boundaries.<sup>22</sup> This fact suggests that although rulers were active in appointing foreigners to important offices, such actions remained as a sensitive issue among the local populace.

In the case of Malay port-polities, while social mobility was an important key to their success, it also increased the likelihood of conflict and dispute at court. In other words, whether a port-polity developed or not was closely related to the political skill of its rulers (or ruling class) to cope with such a problem. This is one reason why the *Sejarah Melayu* stresses the significance of harmonious relations between rulers and their subjects.

<sup>20</sup> *Nama* is often mentioned in those *hikayats* compiled from the 18<sup>th</sup> century on. While titles were usually expressed by the word *gelaran* in the pre-18<sup>th</sup> century *hikayats*, they were referred to as *nama* in the *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, which was probably edited in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century [HHT:248–49, 252, 253, 352, 355, 410]. In addition, *nama* often means fame in this *hikayat* [HHT:3, 7, 18, 45, 86, 87, 101, 108, 114, 248–49, 252, 253, 351, 352, 355, 363, 367, 387, 410, 452, 529]. Moreover, it stresses that this world is not eternal and only the ruler’s *nama* remains after his death [HHT:504]. It is clear that this usage of *nama* reflected the Islamic worldview. This is why the concept of *nama* grew more influential from the 18<sup>th</sup> century on. In the opinion of this writer, within the transformation of Malay political culture, which occurred from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, both *perjanjian* (contract, agreement) and *nama* grew into the more significant concepts for describing the ruler-subject relationship. See Nishio [2001a].

<sup>21</sup> A. H. Hill’s English translation [1985:275] reads: “The Malay looks like the Tamil and the Tamil looks like the Malay.”

<sup>22</sup> The 17<sup>th</sup> century maps of Ayutthaya and Banten show that the inhabitants of their multi-ethnic urban societies were organized along ethnic lines and segregated into ethnic settlements (*kampung*) [Reid 1993a:81, 84]. After describing the *kampungs* of Banten at the end of 16<sup>th</sup> century, Cornelis de Houtman states that he and his fellows were required to stay in the quarter that neighbored on the Portuguese and the Chinese *kampungs* [Rouffaer and Izerman 1915, 1:108]. The 19<sup>th</sup> century maps of Malacca and Singapore reconfirm this feature for European ports in Southeast Asia at that time [Hill 1985:333, 337, 338]. Therefore, it seems that people living in such multi-ethnic ports had little opportunity to form acquaintances with the members of other ethnic groups. This is probably why they were not very active in crossing ethnic boundaries.

#### 4. The Johor-Riau Sultanate: Reconstruction of a Malay Port-Polity

As to the strategy employed by Malay rulers of multi-ethnic societies to deal with political problems arising from social mobility, let us examine the case of the Johor-Riau Sultanate. During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Straits of Malacca underwent various changes, including the infiltration of Islamic ideas, the growing immigration of the Bugis and other ethnic groups, and the murder of the sultan of Johor in 1699, which put an end to the direct royal line of Melaka. These changes caused the fall of Johor and the founding of the Johor-Riau Sultanate in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century [L. Y. Andaya 1975a:183–314]. This new Malay port-polity grew into an emporium and a center of both Islamic learning and Malay culture, like Melaka and Johor had in previous centuries. At the same time, however, Johor-Riau differed much from its predecessors in that its founding and success depended much on Bugis immigrants from South Sulawesi, who took an active part in politics, commerce, and military affairs under the sultanate<sup>23</sup> [B. W. Andaya and L. Y. Andaya 2001:86–88, 100–102, 104]. Hence, it would be fair to say that without Bugis support and effort, Johor-Riau would never have been reconstructed or survived as a Malay port-polity.

It was in 1721 that Daeng Marewa of Linggi and his Bugis followers drove back Raja Kecil of Siak and his Minangkabau followers, chasing them as far as Riau. This action resulted in the installation of a Malay prince of Johor, Raja Sulaiman independent of Siak influence. With the support of the Bugis, Raja Sulaiman founded the Johor-Riau Sultanate, at which time both parties made a political contract, or rather a Malay-Bugis oath of loyalty (*perjanjian sumpah setia* or *sumpah setia*), which laid down the following principles [SMB:67].

[1] Conditions concerning Malay Succession to the Post of Sultan

Raja Sulaiman shall be installed as sultan. The successors to the position of sultan shall be his descendants.

[2] Conditions concerning Bugis Succession to the Post of *Yang Dipertuan Muda* (YDM; vice-ruler)<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Johor-Riau had grown into a center of trade by the 1740s, and its prosperity continued until the second Dutch-Bugis war (1782–84). D. K. Basset and D. Lewis state that the British country traders rushed to Riau from the 1760s on. The SMB points out that its economic success resulted from the commercial policies of the second YDM, Daeng Cellak (1728–45). It also describes the growth of the Arab population and the development of the Islamic learning there during the reign of Daeng Cellak. The description in the PSNJ affirms this [Harrison 1953:56–62; Basset 1964:122–23; Lewis 1970:114–18; SMB:176–78, 251, 253, 257–59; PSNJ:64, 65, 67, 72].

<sup>24</sup> In the Malay sultanates, the title of *Yang Dipertuan Muda* (or *Raja Muda*) was usually bestowed upon the heir to the throne [Gullick 1958:61].

One of Daeng Marewa's brothers shall be installed as YDM. The successors to the post of YDM shall be the descendants of Daeng Marewa's brothers.

[3] Conditions concerning the Sultan

The sultan shall behave passively, like a wife. He may eat only when food is given to him.

[4] Conditions concerning the YDM

The YDM shall behave like a husband. In all matters his opinion shall be respected above that of any other.

[5] Conditions concerning Upholding the Oath of Loyalty

The above-mentioned conditions shall not be altered from this time on.

This contract clearly delineates a political division of labor between its Malay and Bugis parties. While political authority belonged to the Malay sultan, political power was to be in the hands of the Bugis YDM. The TUHFAT expresses this political regime with the phrase "*satu negeri beraja dua*" (two rulers in one state) [TUHFAT:465]. The two parties also made use of marriage alliances to solidify their relationship, for after the enthronement of the sultan and his YDM, several marriages took place between the Malay royal family and Bugis leaders [PSNJ:47–48; HNJ:194; TUHFAT:216–17].<sup>25</sup>

The first question that arises here concerns the division of political functions in Malay port-polities. It is interesting to note that the Malay-Bugis oath of loyalty may have been the first time that such a division was created in writing (See footnote 28), although other Malay port-polities would also display a similar feature in the relationship between ruler and *bendahara*; however, there the relationship was laid down by either oral contracts or marriage alliances [Nishio 2003]. Indeed, marriage alliances are nothing new to Malay political culture. One example comes from the *Sejarah Melayu* itself, indicating that intermarriage between the sultans and *bendahara* families had been customary in Melaka [Bowen 1983:165–70; Nishio 1995:32, 39–40].<sup>26</sup> Since the *bendahara* family was most likely to be of *orang laut* descent (See footnote 7), marriage alliances were also considered to be a traditional means for establishing inter-ethnic ties in the Malay world.<sup>27</sup> In contrast, despite the Malay terminology, (*perjanjian*) *sumpah setia*, oaths of loyalty were character-

<sup>25</sup> According to the TUHFAT, Daeng Cellak (younger brother of the first Bugis YDM) was married to Tengku Mandak, Daeng Menampok to Tun Tipah, Daeng Massuro to Tun Kecil, and Daeng Mangngatuk to Tun Inah.

<sup>26</sup> Based on an analysis of the SMr, of the nine sultans of Melaka, at least five were the sons of women born into the Bendahara family. For further details on the relations between the sultans of Melaka and the Bendahara family, see Nishio [1995:39–40].

<sup>27</sup> B. W. Andaya [1993] points out that the local people essentially perceived political and economic relationships in terms of kinship. On the significant roles played by maritime peoples in Malay port-polities, see Nishio [2001b].

istic of political contracts in the traditional Bugis style. The TUHFAT states that the Bugis YDM swore his personal oath to the Malay sultan by performing the *aruk* (Bugis style sword dance). In the *aruk* ceremony, the performer expresses his feelings of loyalty in his own words [SMB:282; Cense 1966:424]. After the ceremony, the YDM's brothers performed it for the YDM, followed by other Bugis followers [TUHFAT:216].<sup>28</sup> We should note here that the Malay-Bugis oath of loyalty does not mention the Malay concept of *daulat*, and the phrase "*sumpah setia*" only appears in Malay court histories written from the 18<sup>th</sup> century on [Nishio 2003:86–87]. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the Bugis took the initiative in introducing written political contracts to Johor-Riau.<sup>29</sup> From the above discussion we may conclude that both the Malay and the Bugis parties adopted their own traditional means of confirming their positions.

The second question that arises concerns the concept of *orang Melayu* in Johor-Riau. The genealogies of the sultanate and the YDMs<sup>30</sup> show that it was customary for the Bugis YDM family to marry royal Malay women. Consequently, most of the descendants of sultans and the YDMs were kin.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, as the SMB and the TUHFAT show, the YDM family maintained its Bugis identity. It seems very strange that although the YDM family was also regarded as royalty, its members did not lay claim to any *orang Melayu* identity. The major reason for this is that the ruling class of Johor-Riau shared political benefits based on ethnic concepts. As the oath of loyalty states, only members of the Malay royal family had the right to succeed to the sultanate, while succession to the office of YDM belonged to the Bugis. Both parties also shared other high offices in the sultanate. While the Bugis held the office of *Raja Tua*, the Malays took the offices of *Bendahara*, *Temenggung*, and *Raja Indera Bongsu* [PSNJ:47, 52, 69, 72, 74, 76; A. Samad Ahmad 1985:30].<sup>32</sup> Such an ethnic division can also be seen in aristocratic

<sup>28</sup> The Malay-Bugis oath of loyalty was renewed at the time when the new YDM was installed. Provisions concerning the *sumpah setia* ceremony (*Aturan Istiadat Raja Bersetia* and *Aturan Istiadat Berikrar Setia*) state that the sultan put his hands on the Quran while a herald read a letter containing the oath of loyalty (*surat sumpah setia*) [A. Samad Ahmad 1985:38–40; Syed Alwi Sheikh al-Hadi 1986:82–85]. Furthermore, according to Malay royal customs (*Adat Istiadat Raja-Raja Melayu*) contained in *Mukhtasar Tawarikh al-Wusta*, the sultan and the YDM placed their signatures and seals on that letter [Cod. Or. 1999:9]. For further details on the Malay-Bugis oath of loyalty (*[perjanjian] sumpah setia*), see Cod. Or. 1724 [2], Wall 62 [4], Netscher [1854:187–89, 213], and Netscher [1870:Bijragen XXIV, XXX, XXXI, LX–LXI].

<sup>29</sup> For further details on the political contract in Bugis states, see L. Y. Andaya [1978, 1981:291–94] and Andi' Zainal Abidin [1983].

<sup>30</sup> On the genealogies of the sultans and the YDMs of Johor-Riau, see Raja Ali Haji ibn Ahmad [1982:xiii–xiv], TUHFAT:142–44, 150–75, and A. Samad Ahmad [1985:1–11].

<sup>31</sup> Such intermarriage was effective to some extent in maintaining state integration in Johor-Riau [Matheson 1975:18].

titles. The Malay royal family retained such titles as *Tun*, *Tengku*, and *Encik Wan*, while the Bugis royal family held on to such titles as *Raja*, *Engku*, and *Encik Engku* [A. Samad Ahmad 1985:81]. It is true that both the Malay rulers and the Bugis YDMs held the title of sultan. However, the latter were allowed to use only the title “Sultan Ala al-Din Syah ibn Opu”<sup>33</sup> [Wall 62 [4]:1, 11, 16, 19, 21, 24, 45].

There were also other aspects indicating ethnic division besides posts and titles. In Riau-Lingga, the sultan lived at Lingga, while the YDM lived in Riau at Penyengat, an island near Bentan; yet, all officially important ceremonies, including the installation of the Bugis YDMs and the Malay sultans, were held exclusively at the sultan’s court at Lingga [Wall 62 [4]:26]. Entitlements also fell along ethnic lines. For example, only the sultan of Lingga could enjoy a small *gamelan* and *ronggeng* dancers [Matheson 1986:30].<sup>34</sup> The principle of ethnic division can also be observed in the treatment of followers. The oath of loyalty states that Bugis followers were under the control of the YDM, while the Malay *Bendahara* was in charge of Malay followers. If a Malay follower committed a crime, he was put on trial (*bicara*) by the *Bendahara*, while it was duty of the YDM to try Bugis followers [Wall 62 [4]:8, 14–15, 20]. In short, each ethnic group was under the control of the leader of that group.

Political bargaining was also conducted along these same ethnic lines. In fact, there seems to have been two types of loyalty oath: the first being sworn in 1721 and called *Adat Marhum Mangkat di Sungai Baru* (the custom of the late Daeng Marewa), the second sworn in 1728 by Sultan Sulaiman and the second YDM, Daeng Cellak, and called *Adat Marhum Mangkat di Kota* (the custom of the late Daeng Cellak). This second type allowed the Malay royal family to take jurisdiction over the *orang laut* and some dependencies [Wall 62 [4]:3–4].<sup>35</sup> The second type was put into effect between 1728 and 1756 and again after 1804 [TUH-

<sup>32</sup> The office of *Raja Tua* (deputy of the YDM) was originally reserved for the Bugis, but was taken over by the Malays after the first Bugis *Raja Tua* died in 1150 A.H. (1737 AD) [PSNJ:47, 56, 72]. Cod. Or. 1724 [2] states that Tun Abdullah was appointed *Raja Tua* in 1147 A.H. (1734/35 AD) [Cod. Or. 1724 [2]:105]. On the other hand, the office of *Temenggung* was later taken over by the Bugis [PSNJ:69, 76; Cod. Or. 1999:5]. The post of *Raja Indera Bongsu* seems to have been established in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Johor. Since the *Raja Indera Bongsu* of Johor-Riau period succeeded to the post of *Bendahara* [Wall 62 [4]:7], it is probable that it served as a deputy to the *Bendahara*. We should note here that all of these offices were shared by members of the royal family of Johor-Riau, while the posts of *Bendahara* and *Temenggung* were shared by aristocrats in other Malay states.

<sup>33</sup> *Raja Tua* held the title of “Sultan Ibrahim” [PSNJ:12; TUHFAT:217].

<sup>34</sup> Before the Bugis came to Riau, the Malay crown prince (*Raja Muda*) used a yellow flag, but during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Bugis YDM Raja Jaafar chose a yellow flag edged in green, since he could not assume full status as Malay royalty [Matheson 1986:30–31].

<sup>35</sup> This means that only Riau, Selangor, and a few other areas were under the control of the second Bugis YDM.

FAT:304, 322, 468; HNJ:217]. While one cannot deny that tensions often arose between the Malay and Bugis factions in Johor-Riau, despite its prosperity [B. W. Andaya and L. Y. Andaya 2001:86, 100–102, 104], the existence of these two types of oath show that both parties had made a political compromise in order to avoid disintegration of the sultanate, as V. Matheson has argued [1975:18–19].

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the descendants of the YDM family assumed a very active role in both transmitting and developing Malay traditional culture. The best example of this is Raja Ali Haji, who wrote many treatises on Islamic thought and Malay culture<sup>36</sup> [Andaya and Matheson 1979]. Within A. Reid's typology of the "Malay" people, both Raja Ali Haji and his contemporary, Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir,<sup>37</sup> would fall into the third category. However, while Abdullah revealed this Malay identity in his autobiographical work, Raja Ali Haji seems to have restrained himself from doing so. In the latter part of the *Hikayat Abdullah*, Abdullah uses such expressions as "*antara kita orang Melayu ini*," "*anak-anak kita Melayu*," and "*adat orang-orang kita Melayu*" [Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir 1997:356, 358]. In contrast, Raja Ali Haji only once uses the phrase "*pihat kita Islam Melayu*" in a private letter to a *peranakan* Bugis, Haji Ibrahim<sup>38</sup> [Putten and Al Azhar 1995:128]. Another study argues that Raja Ali Haji never openly advocated the Bugis cause against the Malay faction and that when the Bugis came to be accepted, they considered themselves to be Malays of Bugis descent [Putten 2004:123].

At the same time, however, it behooves us to heed the following points. To begin with, Raja Ali Haji's historical works, the SMB and the TUHFAT, were written from a pro-Bugis viewpoint<sup>39</sup> [Matheson 1971:388–90]. Secondly, he composed them after writing the above-mentioned letter.<sup>40</sup> Thirdly, in the TUHFAT, he does not refer to the Bugis YDM family as *Melayu* (Malay), although he often calls them "*peranakan Bugis*" [TUHFAT:121, 122, 125, 143, *passim*].<sup>41</sup> Finally, the word *peranakan* seldom appears in the SMB, while the word "Bugis" is used only for

<sup>36</sup> Raja Ali Haji (ca. 1809–ca. 1870) was a grandson of the fourth Bugis YDM, Raja Haji. He was an adviser to the eighth Bugis YDM, Raja Ali. He composed such historical works as *Silsilah Melayu dan Bugis* and *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, in addition to poetry and treatises on Islamic thought and the Malay language. For further details about Raja Ali Haji and his literary works, see, for example, Andaya and Matheson [1979], TUHFAT: 18–119, Abu Hassan Sham [1993], Abu Hassan Sham [1995:203–41], and Teuku Iskandar [1995:539–73].

<sup>37</sup> See Footnote 1.

<sup>38</sup> This letter bears the date Zulhijah 27, without the year. Jan van der Putten and Al Azhar [1995:226] think that the year should be 1278 A.H., which concurs with the Christian date June 25, 1862. Haji Ibrahim was a son of *Syahbandar* Abdullah. He held the post of *Sulihatang* (deputy of the Bugis YDM) during the 1830s and served as private secretary to successive Bugis YDMs during the 1850s. Raja Ali Haji and Haji Ibrahim were H. von de Wall's two main informants for his preparation of a Malay dictionary [Raja Ali Haji ibn Ahmad 1982:397; Putten and Al Azhar 1995:ix]. For further details on Haji Ibrahim, see Putten [2004:124–32].

explaining the Bugis inhabitants of Riau who consisted of *jati* (pure) and *peranakan* Bugis [SMB:176–77]. These facts show that Raja Ali Haji's view on Bugis identity was fairly complicated, due to the fact that the concept of *orang Melayu* only functioned to maintain the ethnic division necessary in a political context to rule Johor-Riau and its successor, the Riau-Lingga Sultanate.

We should also note that the concept was by no means fixed throughout the history of Johor-Riau. Before the port-polity was established, the concept had been related exclusively to royal genealogy and the ruling class until the disappearance of the direct royal line of Melaka with the murder of the Sultan Mahmud of Johor in 1699 weakened the connection of the concept to royal genealogy [L. Y. Andaya 1975a:186–91; B. W. Andaya and L. Y. Andaya 2001:80–83]. Consequently, rulers of the Malay states, with the exception of Perak, could no longer claim descent from Raja Iskandar D'zulkarnain, meaning that most of them could no longer claim their rights to *daulat*, which was considered to be that supernatural power granted by Allah to rulers descended from Raja Iskandar D'zulkarnain (See section 2). For example, although the founder of the Johor-Riau Sultanate was a prince of Johor, he was genealogically the son of the *Bendahara* who had ascended the throne after the 1699 regicide. Under such circumstances, in Johor-Riau both the families of this prince and his Bugis supporters came to be considered royalty, with the former claiming to be Malays,<sup>42</sup> which is equivalent to stating that they were not foreign but indigenous people, despite the fact that the *Sejarah Melayu* reveals that the rulers of Melaka were descendants of foreign immigrants and they were typically hybrid people [SMr:42–54].<sup>43</sup> This point goes to support again the hypothesis that in Johor-Riau (and Riau-Lingga) the concept of *orang Melayu* was instituted as an

<sup>39</sup> Jan van der Putten realizes the complexity of Raja Ali Haji's actions. However, as the following quotation shows, his view is quite similar to that of V. Matheson [1986:31] in considering that the Bugis needed to stress and follow Islamic norms because of the dispute with the Malays.

Politically, Raja Ali Haji had to explain and justify the presence of the Bugis Raja family in the power structure of the Malay kingdom, which he did in various historical writings. His two treatises on kingship from the late 1850s seem also to be politically motivated: by emphasizing the Islamic quality of kingship he reduced the "Malayness" associated with it. Indeed, the Bugis employed the strategy of establishing and enhancing their political role *vis-à-vis* the Malay sultan's family by presenting themselves as the devout *imam* through whom the legitimacy of the government of the sultan was established. [Putten 2004:123]

<sup>40</sup> According to V. Matheson [1971:381], the SMB was written between September 7, 1865, and January 15, 1866, while the TUHFAT was begun December 22, 1865.

<sup>41</sup> As I have already mentioned above, it became customary for the Bugis YDM family to marry royal Malay women beginning in 1721. Hence, it is highly probable that most of members of the Bugis YDM family during the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century were *peranakan*.

ethnic category for the purpose of differentiating native from the foreign people. As mentioned previously, rulers of Malay port-polities relied heavily on foreigners in the process of governance, but had to take special care in appointing them to public office. The case of Johor-Riau shows that the concept of *orang Melayu* was used as a political strategy for introducing foreigners to a new port-polity and that sharing political benefits with them while stressing ethnic differences was effective in avoiding or minimizing discontent on the part of the native population.

## Conclusion

Due to the involvement in international contact and a lack of human resources, rulers of the Malay port-polities were motivated to introduce foreign immigrants into the governance of those states. At the same time, however, they had to be vigilant about raising discontent among the native population in doing what would become the major factor behind internal disputes. Political skill was definitely called for in attaining their purposes.

In Johor-Riau, a Malay port-polity which during the 18<sup>th</sup> century flourished as a center of trade, Islamic learning, and Malay culture, such a strategy for introducing foreign immigrants into the polity for the sake of its prosperity was adopted based on a political division of labor along Malay and Bugis royal lines. There, ethnic boundaries were delineated according to the concept of “*orang Melayu*.” This is why we observe during the assimilation of the Bugis people into Malay culture, that some of the former played an active role in developing that culture, while at the same time keeping their distance in certain political matters.

The case of Johor-Riau shows that the leaders of multi-ethnic societies at the time needed to cultivate a sense of fairness, or *adil*, in order to mobilize the resources of both native and foreign people under their governance. Later, under colonial rule, the term Malay (*Melayu*) would be applied to all the Malay-speaking Muslims on the Malay Peninsula. Then, after the formation of Malaysia, this eth-

<sup>42</sup> While the Raffles MS. No. 18 version of *Sejarah Melayu* tells nothing about the origin of the first *Bendahara* of Melaka, the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> century versions of the work state that he descended from the royal family of Melaka [SMs:31; SMd:41]. Apparently, the purpose of editing new versions of the work was to legitimize the succession to the throne of the *Bendahara* after the regicide in Johor. It should be noted that his descendants assumed the throne in various Malay states, including Johor-Riau, Riau-Lingga, Trengganu, and Pahang. V. Matheson [1986] suggests that the Malay custom of composing *hikayats* and *silsilahs* in Riau-Lingga were closely linked to legitimizing Malay sultans.

<sup>43</sup> It is interesting to note that *Sejarah Melayu* stresses that the genealogy of Melaka rulers includes various ethnic groups such as Turks, Persians, and Tamils [SMr:42–54]. On this point, I agree with Hirose [1999:188–92; 2004:27–28] that rulers of port-polities made use of such genealogy in order to connect local with international society.

nic category was reviewed and replaced by a new concept, *bumiputera*, which included only Malay and other groups indigenous to the Malay Peninsula, Sabah, and Sarawak. However, in the final analysis, it seems to hold true throughout all three phases that local authorities continued to consider ethnic concepts and policies as effective measures in mobilizing human resources from among their multi-ethnic populations.

### Abbreviations

- ARRM: Panuti H. M. Sudjiman, ed. 1982. *Adat Raja-Raja Melayu* (The customary law of Malay rulers). Penerbit Universitas Indonesia.
- BKI: Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van het Nederlandsch-Indië.
- BS: Nuruddin al-Raniri. 1992. *Bustan al-Salatin* (The garden of rulers). Ed. Siti Hawa Haji Salleh. KL: DBP.
- Cod. Or. 1724 [2]: *Aturan Setia Bugis dengan Melayu* (The regulation of the oath of loyalty between the Bugis and the Malay). Leiden University Library.
- Cod. Or. 1999: *Mukhtasar Tawarikh al-Wusta* (The essential of al-Wusta). Leiden University Library.
- Dagh-Register: Dagh-Register gehouden in 't Casteel Batavia van 't passerende daer ter plaeste als over *geheel Nederlandsch Indië, 1624–1682*. 1887 etc. Batavia.
- DBP: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka
- HHT: Kashim Ahmad, ed. (1964) 1991. *Hikayat Hang Tuah* (The story of Hang Tuah). KL: DBP.
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