

Regional Development and impact of local culture Sociocultural Structure and Natural Resources in Kumelembuai Village

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Abstract

The usage and management of natural resources in a community is closely related to its cultural and social systems. The cultural system consists of belief system, cultural knowledge, value system, norm and rule that are in effect in the community. And the social system consists of position, function, and decision making. Some of the cultural values that influence the behavior of Kumelembuai village community are, among others, the concepts of “opo”, “foso”, “kalakeran”, an “kakelian”. The “opo” and “foso” concepts contain cultural values that support the conservation of natural resources and environment, i.e. the balance in personal environment, social environment, and physical environment that interrelate with and influence each other as a system; the natural resources conservation for the sake of the continuity of human life and the next generation as well as the life after death (or the world of spirits) that takes the natural environment as its residence; the appreciation and respect for elder people to manage the orderliness of collective life. Meanwhile, the concepts of “kalakeran”, “kakelian”, “maranoan”, and “maandoan” bear social aspects. “Kalakeran”/”kakelian” closely relates to the land ownership and management system and other natural resources, with collective using based on community agreement as its main principle.

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A. Introduction

Natural resources conservation is highly influenced by its pattern of using conducted by individual or community in fulfilling their life needs according to their local ecology condition. This pattern is highly contextual since it is influenced by the aspects of background, agents, and interaction among the agents. This matter is clearly seen in social activities such as the usage and the management of land, forest, water spring, farmland, and planting system.

B. General Description of Kumelembuai Village

Kumelembuai Village is located in the southern part of District Minahasa, North Sulawesi, Indonesia. Topographically, this is a mountainous, hilly place that also has many ravines. The climate is tropical with dry and rainy seasons. The land transportation as the basic means in this area is still poor.

The growth of population and the extension of settlement area require more land to be occupied. The houses of the residents are usually supported by tall poles, and nearly

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100 % of the houses are made of wood. The main livelihood of the community (95 %) is farming. Approximately, the farmland of every family is more than 2 Ha.

C. Opo and Foso with their Influence towards the Community's Environmental Behavior

1. Concept of Opo

Opo or apo means ancestor, grandfather or grandmother, master or owner of an object. Opo-opo means the ancestors. Mopo means calling the ancestors; maopo means devoting or serving someone (Graafland, 1869). Besides the meaning of opo as ancestor, there are also terms of Opo Wailan Wangko, Empung Wailan Wangko, Kasuruan Wangko, Empung Rengarengan. He is the Highest Power which is known as the creator, the source of life (long life, health, luck, happiness, richness), the rich and generous, the keeper, the preserver, the protector. On the other hand, he also can punish or express his anger to those who live in disobedience (Saruan, 1991).

In Minahasa the traditional belief in spirits, good or evil, is still maintained. There is a belief in what is good, great and powerful, which is called empung. Opo-opo or ancestors are considered as spirits which are still alive. The ancestors who in their lives showed power, greatness and kindness are considered necessary to be honored (paempungan). Thus, the dead people are honored as gods. Their godly teaching, finally, is a kind of

idolatry of men whose lives were sincere and good. Essentially, this thing is a kind of worshipping dead people.

According to Minahasan belief, death is just a kind of residence transfer. The dead people are still related to living people. Mukur is the spirit of the dead relatives. The dead people, who in their past lives, had done good and honorable things, had shown responsibility, heroism, power and good example are transferred to a new residence in Kasendukan, a place which is very high, very far, very big and wide, like big tree, big stone or boulder, forest, water spring, and mountain. However, the dead people who had done evil things are transferred to an uncertain place. They become spirits which bring disaster and illness. They are the ancestors who are called opo, apo, empung, kasuruan, which are often translated as dewa or god. According to Graafland (1969 : 121) : (“They believe in good spirits (empung rengarengan; si mukud, Tonsea, mukur, Tombulu). To those gods they pray and ask for protection”).

The good, great and powerful spirits are called empung. Those good qualities are attached to the ancestors (opo-opo) who are still considered alive. They are given power, greatness and honor. They are considered as mediator between Empung Wailan and Man.

The one who functions as the mediator is a certain person like Walian (who is responsible for arranging worship and teaching), teterusan waraneyo tonaas, dukun (each with certain level, duty and

authority), and certain animals (like burung manguni/owl, kembaluan, oot, wara) (Saruan, 1991).

About the balance of relationship among Man, Opo Wailan Wangko, the ancestors, and the nature, included the natural resources (the physical environment),

according to Saruan (1991, 90) : (“the way and the expression of life cannot be separated from the connection and the relation of man to the highest power, the ancestors (opo empung-empung, kasuruan-kasuruan), to the community of family, relative and society, to the nature, that cannot be sorted or separated”).

2. *Foso and Kaposanan*

Etimologically, foso or baposo is derived from the word posan (is prohibited, solemn). By poso, all activities are desisted and prohibited except for the activity of offering (Graafland, 1969). The basic reasons for conducting this activity are the thankfulness for various kindness which has been felt, the fear, and the respect for the ancestors.

The purpose of conducting foso are to request land fertility, good harvest, luck, longevity, and much wealth. At the time of the poso activity, all the other activities which are not related to it have to be stopped. The people bring offering to the ancestors in order to get blessing and to prevent the ancestors' anger.

Saruan (1991) mentions 16 ritual ceremonies according to the belief of the tribe in Minahasa. Those are house building ceremony, before crop ceremony, harvest celebration

ceremony, tumalinga si kooko ceremony, foso mauri ceremony, children descending ceremony, wedding ceremony, new farm opening ceremony and ceremony for children, genie persuasion ceremony, eating ceremony, soul returning ceremony, for sick people, pig liver checking ceremony, charm delivering ceremony, opo-opo contacting ceremony, hunting ceremony, and healing ceremony. From the 16 ceremonies, Saruan explains some foso ceremonies; Foso Tumalinga Si Kooko (listening to the bird), Foso Mauri (sumungkul and sumamput), Foso of Children Descending, Foso Luwoang, Foso Mengelur (persuading), and Missing Soul Returning Ceremony. Foso Luwoang and Missing Soul Returning Foso are well-known to Kumelembuai community and the other Toumpakowa villages. Foso Luwoang is the foso conducted to open a new farm field. It is led by a tonaas who is considered as the chief priest by the community, and is attended by priests and the community (Saruan, 1969). Each of them bring a handful of rice and a piece of coconut shell. They wait for bird sound to know whether a chosen location for a new farm field is appropriate or not. If the bird sound does not reach nine times or more, it signs that the location is not appropriate and the harvest on the field will fail. Thus, the people wait until they get a good sign from the bird sound.

The Soul Returning Ceremony is carried out to heal sick people who get sick because they go to or pass by sacred places like big stone, big tree, water spring, ravines, bank, land graveyard, or because they cut trees, spit on something or defecate on such places. According to them, the cause of

their sickness is the spirit of tree. This foso is held by slaughtering animals (pig or chicken) in order to return the taken soul.

The community considers that on the kaposanan (posan means forbidden) places, people cannot do anything they want because there reside the spirits of opo-opo (the ancestors) for genies, and those are the places for performing the foso ceremonies. In Kumelembuai village, the community also considers tumotowa as kaposanan. Tumotowa is the place where the three stones of village founding monument are placed. Forest is considered as kaposanan because there resides a forest spirit which is called lolok. Lolok is an evil spirit that resembles an adult but it is just as tall as a child, with long hair sweeping the ground. If someone enters the forest and cut away any tree he wants, he will be possessed by lolok and he will get lost and mad. A Christian elder person of Kumelembuai village said that the Kumelembuai community still believe the existence of lolok. The belief about the forest guardian spirits that are feared by the community is still alive among the community. The story about one's experience with those spirits is told to other people or family members. This becomes a widely-known and easily-believed information even by the children, because the source of it is the respected public figures.

Generally, as it is still widely accepted by Kumelembuai community, people are afraid to cut trees or to take wood around water spring. They usually make cough-like sound every time they pas by a big water spring, a big stone, and a big tree, in order not to startle the spirit that devils at the kaposanan places; if not, they are afraid that they

will get sick or something unpleasant will happen to them. According to information, there was someone who got sick because he cut trees and took firewood from Kumelembuai and Masalosot water springs. For the elder people of Kumelembuai and Minahasa. Cutting trees in the forest without conducting foso will cause sickness. There are still many community members who believe that evil spirits transform themselves into animals like cats and snake. Since most of the animals live in the forest, people cannot enter or destroy it by cutting the trees without conducting foso.

D. The Concepts of Opo and Foso as Cultural Knowledge

Cultural knowledge is what is known and understood by a person or a group of people, and consciously or unconsciously serves as a basis of their behavior. Basically, the core of the concepts of opo and foso is the cultural knowledge of the people, which is manifested into the forms of personal and social conduct in the context of a life system as a whole unity which covers physical, ecological, social, and spiritual environments.

The entering of the influence of foreign culture like Christian religion and other aspects European culture, and the progress in education field have caused a change in the knowledge and the thinking pattern of the community. However, the traditional cultural knowledge has undergone modification through a cultural adaptation process in facing the influence of the other culture's elements, the continuously changing life demands, and the local ecological environment. This matter can be seen in the development and the

shifting of the Minahasan cultural values, and the purpose of life which now emphasizes on getting wealth, or at least fulfilling the continuing life needs either for individual of the next generation and descendants.

This cultural knowledge gives a sign of the importance of a conduct to conserve the available natural resources for the sake of man's life preservation, and life continuation after death that use the natural environment as its place of dwelling. The existence of appreciation and respects values for elder people or leaders who manage the collective life order shows the importance of social structure in a collective life to guarantee the orderliness and patterns of life.

Foso , that is understood as prohibition and avoidance or taboo that must be given attention so that men can live well and happily, is not separated from the people's belief of opo. The prohibition and taboo that are related to life environment, come from the cultural belief and knowledge which are conducted from time to time as a habit. That prohibition help control or prevent men from conducting disturbing or destructive behavior toward environment balance.

A balanced environment requires harmonious relation between men and opo-opo that dwell in the environment. Keeping the environment from any conduct that disturbs its harmony is a part integrated to the whole system of men's life. This is the main function of conducting foso. According to Lonan (1992; 202), "foso is a ceremony that prohibits the village people, in a certain period of time, to do certain activities around the village, like going and

working in farms, cutting plants or trees, and doing harm to forest.

E. Kalakeran dan Kakelian

Natural resources conservation is influenced, among others, by its system of usage. The usage of natural resources is influenced by the effective land ownership system. Kalakeran or kakelian is an aspect of the land ownership system in Minahasa. The word kalakeran comes from the word laker meaning many. In Kumelembuai, they use the term kakelian (keli means many) which has the same meaning as kelakeran. Generally, kalakeran means something or an object with the status of collective ownership.

Kalakeran means that the objects belongs to a group of people like family (a big family), village community, and district community (Wilken, 1873). According to Adam (1976) the objects that are classified as kalakeran are large houses or resting houses, offices, and market places. Kabasaran and cakalele costumes and horses that are used by government officials, forests, lakes, rivers, beaches and the sea are categorized as collective kalakeran. Everybody has responsibility and right over them according to the effective regulation about the right of land ownership in Minahasa.

The land ownership can be divided into individual right (pasini, kasasaan) and collective right (kalakeran, kakelian). According to the custom, the person who opened a farm or land has the right on it. It is found that, therefore, there are many fields (big or small) which are abandoned and nearly full of underbrush for years because the owner still has other fields to work on or he does it on purpose to

make the field more fertile. This indicates that this field is a pasini or an individual's field. It usually becomes a heritage that will be bequeathed to his children. However, if the field is not wide enough to be divided for all the children, this pasini becomes a kalakeran. There is a rule which says that a field that is opened by a family member will become his family's property after his death, or what is known as family kalakeran. Adam (1967) puts forward three kinds of kalakeran. These are family kalakeran, village kalakeran, and district kalakeran. The family kalakeran or the kalakeran for children is a collective property of the family, not individual property. This family kalakeran may consist of field and other properties like house, cellar, and a fenced part of the lake. And as it is stated above, the custom says that a field opened by a family member will be his family's property after his death.

The official who deals with family property is called "tua un taranak" (Adam, 1967 : 90). The kalakeran field, then becomes pasungkulan field, that is a field which is not divided so that it will be a kind of family bonding. Because of its status as a collective property, kalakeran is kept and preserved for the family using. This kalakeran may consist of house with its yard and farm field that are not divided under an agreement. The family members take turns in using it, according to an agreement.

Kakelian is an object that belongs to many people. Keli means many; kakelian is a collective property of family members. This kakelian property is meant to be a means of family bonding among the members.

Recently, the amount of kakelian fields declines because of the increasing population. Because of the increasing demand of land, kalakeran land or field, then, is divided among heirs. Besides the advantages of kakelian, it also has disadvantage, since it often becomes the source of family quarrel or dispute, if the person who is in charge of taking care of this kalakeran on behalf of the whole family members has desire to take it over for him self. However, the core of kalakeran is the principle of unity which is manifested in collective ownership, collective life, collective importance, collective agreement, collective using, and collective harmony. Kalakeran may preserve family bond and family harmony. Kalakeran is an area that cannot be owned by individual, but by public or the community college. There fore, it is used together according to the customs of the social group based on the society's high awareness of its function (Kaunang, 1995).

From the aspect of conservation, kalakeran contains cultural values which support environment conservation. This cultural concept belongs to the wisdom of environmental tradition that emerges and survives through experience with natural resources which has been used from many years ago. Kalakeran may help control people's desire to cut trees in the forest. Since the ownership and maintenance are on many people's hands, this kalakeran concept contains a meaning of social control over the individual conduct in the using of the kalakeran areas.

F. Conclusion

From their view and perception of environment, water spring, forest and

human relationship with environment, it shows that the cultural knowledge of the Kumelembuai community is the crystallization of their traditional cultural knowledge obtained through empirical experience, their theoretical knowledge obtained through formal education and religious teaching, and their knowledge from other sources of information.

The community's perception about their experience; e.g., sickness after trees at water spring, or death after cutting trees in sacred forest; shows that the experiences contains mystical aspect which is included in their traditional cultural values; though, as religious people, they are considered as superstition and animism. This matter reveals that the old cultural values do not disappear completely by their acceptance of new values. The old cultural values still function and are used to answer concrete problems when the new values cannot give satisfying answers.

Kalakeran, kakelian, maranoan and maandoan also have a social aspect. Kalakeran and kakelian are closely related to the ownership and using systems of land and other natural resources. The core of those systems is the collective utilizing

according to collective agreement. Kalakeran/kakelian contains cultural values that support environment conservation and social control toward individual conduct in using the environment and natural resources. The cultural concept of kalakeran contains knowledge about the governmental rules which regulate the natural resources conservation and influences the conducts of conservation. Although the

community knowledge about the conservation rules is relatively poor, it is found that they possess the conduct which gives benefit to the conservation aspect. The community knows and obeys the prohibition related to forest protection, water spring maintenance, and erosion prevention.

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