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**Research Article****Ideology Behind the Ritual of Defembula Kahitela; A Ritual for Planting in the Muna Ethnic Community in Barangka District, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia.****La Ode Syukur**

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**Abstract:** Indonesia is known as an agricultural country where most people work as farmers, both as primary or part time jobs. Most of those who make farming as their main job are people who live in rural areas and one of them is the Muna community in Barangka District, Southeast Sulawesi. For the Muna in Barangka Subdistrict, farming is not only exploring or manipulating nature but more like their lives, their safety, especially when it comes to corn farming. Related to this rescue, farming corn becomes a tradition of the Muna community in Barangka Subdistrict which has its own ritual called the Kahitela defembula. For centuries, corn has become the staple food of the Muna people. Maintaining corn for the Muna community means maintaining their traditions. Thus, the ritual of cahitela defembula not only functions for the success of the corn harvest, but also their safety in real life. This ritual is led by a person known as special knowledge. This figure is called parika, whose role is to regulate each stage in the ritual of the Kahitela defembula and ensure the safety of the corn plantation owner and all members of his family. This paper aims to answer the question of what ideologies lie in the ritual of the cahitella defembula which was maintained by the people of Muna in Barangka District for centuries. This paper applies field observations to meet with Parika and corn garden owners directly to collect key data to explore the ideology behind the practice of the cahitela defembula in Barangka District.

**Keywords:** Rituals, defembula cahitela, parika, farmed corn.

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**Background**

The current development of globalization has introduced new values such as market economy, technology, efficiency, and rationality. In addition, it also carries the cultural principle of modernity which makes rituals inefficient in terms of time, energy and costs that can lead to various social problems and threaten human civilization. As Giddens stated, (2003: 37) that the culture of globalization in Indonesia has brought two conflicting large currents into the social structure of society. One stream attracts the Indonesian people to world norms, while the other flows actually give birth to strengthening ethnic groups. Nevertheless, the phenomenon that exists in the Muna ethnic group in Barangka Subdistrict still carries out a ritual tradition, namely the practice of corn farming (cahitela defembula) which persists and is maintained in the midst of globalization. The influx of globalization at the level of the Muna ethnic community in Brangka Sub-district then gave rise to the suspicion of the emergence of agents who played a role in the ritual practices of the cahitela defembula. The practice of the cahitela defembula practice in Muna ethnic communities in Barangka Subdistrict can even be said to be included in the massive group with many corn farmers doing the ritual practices. In the implementation of the ritual practice of the bitter defembula of the Muna ethnic community in Barangka Subdistrict, it brings a big question related to the ideology behind the preservation of the ritual practice of this Kahitela defembula in Barangka Subdistrict.

**Method**

The methods in this study include research design, research location, type and source of data, research instruments, and data collection techniques. Data sources include primary data sources and secondary data sources. Furthermore, data

collection is divided into three steps, namely interviews, observation or observation, documentation. Then the data analysis techniques and the data presentation techniques are described. All components are described as follows.

The type of data in this study is the type of qualitative data and quantitative data. Qualitative data is data in the form of words and actions while quantitative data are supporting data in the form of numbers, for example, in stating population, number of people involved in the implementation of the ritual practices of the cahitella defembula and so on.

Based on the source, the data in a study are divided into two categories, namely primary data sources and secondary data sources. The primary data source in this study is data that will be obtained by observing the ritual practices of the cahitela defembula. Secondary data sources in this study are data that will be obtained from written sources in the form of the results of previous research on ritual practices in the midst of the development of globalization that affects the ideology of society, including textbooks that are relevant to this research.

**Discussion**

The practice of the cahitela defembula ritual has not disappeared until now, and even experienced acculturation with religious teachings. So that religious behavior seems to be colored by the practice of local culture, by the Barangka community it is understood that ritual practices are considered a necessity. One of the most influential actors in the defembula ritual practice, kahitaela is a parika or dukun taman. Parika's position is very strategic as a person who provides services to people who believe in dealing with supernatural things (Yauri, 2008: 329). The Barangka community believes that Parika can communicate with metaphysical beings, especially when the ritual is being held. This indirectly legitimizes Parika as an

important actor in the ritual ceremonies. In the sense of society in general ideology is always interpreted simply as a collection of ideas or ideas. According to Franz Magnis Suseno (1991) Ideology is not only talking about ideas or ideas but there are other dimensions namely internalization of individuals or groups so that the ideology becomes spirit or soul for them in carrying out activities. Ideology is always interpellating (calling) individuals to be concrete subjects (individuals who do work) in their daily lives. Individuals because of their ideological influence, manifest themselves as concrete subjects following what is desired by ideology. In such situations, all individuals or subjects are immersed in ideology (Althusser, 2008).

### **Ideology of Religiosity**

In addition to belief in religion, Muna ethnic communities also hold various beliefs in their cultural traditions that have been carried out for generations through the forms of ritual practices. One of them is the belief to continue to carry out the ritual practice of the cahitela defembula in cultivating corn. Their belief in guarding is supported by the fact that the results of the rituals of Javanese defembula practices provide safety for corn farmers and their families. Ritual itself is a form of ceremony that relates to several beliefs or religions which are characterized by special characteristics that give rise to respect that are noble in the sense of a sacred experience (O'Dea, 1995: 5-36). This experience includes everything that is made and used by humans to express relations with the transcendental or supernatural realms. This is reinforced by what is said by Dhavamony (2002: 175) which divides ritual ceremonies into four types, where the first type is ritual as an act of magic associated with the use of materials that work because of the mystical power.

The Barangka Subdistrict community believes that these supernatural beings exist and they believe that by practicing ritual practices the cahitela defembula of supernatural beings will not interfere with the land of maize plantations and landowners and humans involved in the agricultural processes around their land area. By performing the rituals they believe that they will avoid danger, be it plants planted or their own farmers, as one of the farmers found in Barangka Subdistrict said, Mr. La Ute (45 years) in his interview said:

"There is no one who does not use Parika, no one dares because it is a bet of life, especially I am now own gardening, there is no neighbor, far away from people. During those four years I planted myself, my wife at home, I just looked at the garden myself. We do not live because we are safe from pests, we believe because there are rituals (so that they are safe). "(La Ute, 2018)

From the interview quote above with one of the farmers, Mr. La Ute, who has been doing corn farming for years using parika services, it can be seen what actually forms the basis of the Muna ethnic community in West Muna Subdistrict never bypassing the practice of the cahitela defembula ritual . Trust in the power of supernatural beings who could one day come to disrupt their lives. The belief is that only someone who is able

to protect them from interference from supernatural beings while doing corn farming activities on their respective land. The belief that if they do not carry out the ritual practices of the cahitela defembula carried out by Parika, then their lives are at stake.

### **Ideology of Knowledge and Power**

In the lives of the West Muna people, especially in Barangka Subdistrict, 539 of the total population were able to enjoy education up to the bachelor level, while at the high school level there were 1133 people. Most of the Barangka Subdistrict people perceive education only until the elementary school stage until the school is over. It cannot be denied that a person's level of education is very influential on the mindset and general knowledge related to the things around him. However, this is not the case in the Barangka District. Community members who have non-formal knowledge are far more valued than those who have knowledge with formal degrees lined up.

The value of non-formal knowledge in Barangka Subdistrict is still far above the value of formal knowledge even at the highest level of education. One member of the community who holds a doctorate and does a farming match with maize in his garden also goes to Parika to carry out all stages of ritual in farming, from opening land to harvest rather than having to find scientific references that he can find in various sources in various ways. This was stated directly by Mr. La Densi (65 years) as in the quotation below:

"There is a person who always calls me so that his garden, we know here he is a doctor and if he opens a garden, always call me. He opened a new land, the land of his parents that opened me again, which also surrounded me when planting was up to him, only he asked me a day. "(La Densi, 2018)

In the quotation above which was the result of an interview with one of the Parika in Barangka Subdistrict, he clearly stated that even one member of the community with doctoral education continued to use his services in farming matters ranging from clearing land for gardens, making fences for his garden, until a good day to start planting. If viewed from a parika perspective, it is clear that the knowledge possessed from formal education still depends on non-formal knowledge possessed by him. This is one of the pride of the Parika itself, where the Parika consciously thinks that people with higher education can actually seek knowledge through books to carry out farming activities in Barangka District.

The knowledge planted by Parika regarding the sacrifices they made in carrying out ritual practices was well received and became a matter that was rightly considered by the corn farmers in Barangka District. In addition, the choice of Parika which is very selective in inheriting its knowledge is also accepted as fairness by the Muna ethnic community as an action taken as an effort to prevent the existence of people who can abuse the knowledge of Parika that can cause evil or evil in society.

In this condition, the Parika have successfully hegemony not only the people who work as corn farmers in Kecamatan

Barangka, but also the people of Barangka in general. The Barangka community is very respectful of Parika as an elder and knowledgeable person and a person who can give them salvation with the sacrifices he also makes. Furthermore, the Barangka community accepts fairness where they must be compensated for what they have done in ensuring the safety of the community, so that the practice of standardized payment services is one that is justified and accepted consciously by the community.

### **Food Security Ideology**

The Muna community is generally a community that is identical to corn. Apart from being able to sell and feed the Muna community, the results of farming corn make them one of their staple foods that can be processed in various derivatives such as *kambose* and *katumbu*. In this case, corn processed is old corn. The inclusion of modernization then introduced the Muna ethnic community to rice which could replace corn as their staple food so that some of them had started to replace corn and chose rice as their daily food. When globalization began to enter the level of the Muna community in Barangka Subdistrict, the community then began to recognize other types of staple foods, namely rice. To get rice, people who work as corn farmers then start harvesting their maize plants at a young age whose prices are more expensive than the price of corn selling old corn. Then what became a fear of Parika was that young harvested corn would not last long during the period of survival of old harvested corn. Young corn will only last a matter of days, then if it is not immediately processed, the young corn will rot and cannot be consumed. If all corn farmers in Barangka Subdistrict harvest their corn at a young age and sell it to the market to buy rice, rice that can be obtained from the sale of young corn will not be able to meet food needs for months. Parika's fear of things can be clearly seen from the results of interviews with one of the Parika as quoted below:

"I don't want the Barangka people to eat rice, open the reason. Try to think, if he (the corn farmers in Barangka) sell young corn, then buy rice, only how many liters or how many kilos of rice can he get? Now if he waits to get old, he can keep it as a food reserve for years, not starving. If rice? If he ate the rice, there was also no old corn and the soil wasn't ready for planting or was there corn but it wasn't ready to harvest young, how was he? Going back to debt so I can eat. I will tell you that you are not coral, there are already some who do not want to hear, finally they are now in debt everywhere just to be able to buy rice so they can eat." (La Ode Rasidin, 2018)

The La Ode Rasidin quote above explains where the source of the ban or appeal to corn farmers in Barangka not to harvest their corn plants at a young age is only to be sold then the proceeds are used to buy rice. The exhaustion of rice purchased by corn farmers in Barangka and the absence of old corn stock which can be their main food ingredient will certainly lead to food insecurity due to the failure to achieve food availability or staple food for the community.

### **Conclusion**

The implementation of the *cahitela defembula* ritual practice is based on several ideologies, including ideology of belief, ideology of knowledge and power, and ideology of food security. For Muna ethnic in Barangka Subdistrict, trust is the ideological basis that has been instilled by their predecessors in their activities, both as members of the community in general and as corn farmers in Barangka District. In practice, the *cahitela defembula* also contains a knowledge ideology that controls the ritual procession of practice. This is based on the knowledge held by Parika in carrying out rituals. In addition, in its implementation, it also plays in the ideology of power played by Parika as the ritual leader of the *Cahitela defembula*. The last is the ideology of food security which also runs in the implementation of the ritual practice of this *cahitela defembula*. How food security is one of the basics of the issuance of a number of rules from Parika which must be followed by corn farmers in Barangka District.

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