

THE VALUE OF UNITY IN NUTUK BEHAM CEREMONY IN KUTAI ADAT LAWAS COMMUNITY AT KEDANG IPIL VILLAGE

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ABSTRACT

Culture is one form of stabilization of a society. This is because culture brings noble values that continuously give knowledge to society in maintaining relationship between human with God, human with fellow human, human with nature, and human with the era development. Culture becomes functional in bringing society in unity. One of the cultures that have the function to lift the value of unity is the Nutuk Beham ceremony performed by Adat Lawas society at Kedang Ipil village, Kota Bangun. This research employs ideational approach, where Nutuk Beham has patterns to act and to result a form of public action which is unity in its tribal society. This aspect is inseparable from the systems of knowledge and symbols that are commonly shared by Kedang Ipil village society. Qualitative methodology is used in this research with ideational approach by employing the systems of knowledge of Kedang Ipil society and the interpretation of the symbols appear in the ceremony. The result of the interpretation is manifested in the form of value of unity and the function of Nutuk Beham ceremony

Key Words: Unity, Traditional Ceremony, Nutuk Beham, Kedang Ipil.

INTRODUCTION

The culture of indigenous people or is known as local wisdom has values which will becomes an identity to its society. Those values is used as balancing guidance and live continuity which inseparable from Pancasila and traditional symbolization in an effort to filter the global development influence towards the local culture ((Janah, Rosdiana, & Indriastuty, 2018). Culture is one of the forms of stabilization of society since it always provides knowledge to society in maintaining the relationship between huma and God, human and human, relationshipbetween human and

nature, and between human and the development of times.

In a cultural process, there are meaningful symbols which can be interpreted into society's everyday life. Those symbols can be regarded as the transformation form that is conducted to maintain the local wisdom in order to survive and will be able to be passed on to the next generation so they will have a tough character in line with the character implied from Pancasila ideology. In the grand design of Indonesian character building 2010-2025, it states the importance of transformation of local wisdom as one medium to build nation

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characters. Those are stipulated as follows: 1). Philosophically, a nation's character building as basic needs in a nation's life since only the nation with strong character and identity that will exist; 2). Ideologically, character building is the manifestation of the Pancasila ideology in the national and states life. Normatively, a nation's character building is a real manifestation of nation's steps towards the nation's mission; 3). Historically, the nation's character building is a core dynamic of nation process which continuously takes place across the historical timeline, either from colonial-era or independence era; 4). Sociocultural, nation's character building is a must for a multicultural country (Yunus, 2014)

The Forms of culture according to J.J. Henigman (Koentjaraningrat, 2003) are:

- a. **Idea**
A form of culture that comes in forms of the collection of ideas, values, norms, rules, etc. that are abstract, untouchable.
- b. **Activities**
The patterned behavior of humans of a particular society. This form is commonly referred as social system. A social system consists of humans activities that interact to each other. Doing contact and living with other humans according to particular patterns based on behavior rules and traditions.
- c. **Artifacts.**
The physical form of culture resulted from activities, behavior, and works of all humans in society in form of properties or visible items, touchable and can be documented.

Culture in forms of an abstract idea is still located in the mind or the thought of the communities of the particular society in which they live. Whenever those ideas are transferred into writing forms, then they are transferred in writing, books, discs, archives, collections, microfilms, etc. All ideas, norms, values, and rules are the works of writers from a particular society (Thohir, 2007).

Those values and ideas are reflected in cultural value system universally with the orientation to five basic components of life as seen in the following table

Tabel 1 –
**Kluckhohn and
Strodtbeck's (1961) Values
Orientation Framework**

Core Issue	Possible Solutions		
Primary orientation to time	Focus on the Past (emphasis on maintaining traditions)	Focus on the Present (emphasis on achieving best solution for current situation)	Focus on the Future (emphasis on planning ahead)
Relationship to the environment	Subjugation to nature (belief that humans should submit to higher forces & not try to control them)	Harmony with nature (belief that humans should control what they can but also live in harmony with nature)	Mastery over nature (belief that humans can and should control the forces of nature)
Quality of human nature	Basically evil	Mixture of good and bad	Basically good
Relationship among people	Lineal (preference for hierarchical relations)	Collateral (emphasis on consensus within extended group)	Individualistic (emphasis on the individual or individual families within the group who make decisions independently from others)
Mode of human activity	Being (acceptance of the status quo)	Being-in-becoming (preference for transformation)	Doing (preference for direct intervention)

Cultural theory takes the key of shared knowledge and symbols of a particular culture. The meaning of cultural symbols can be understood via an interpretation. This interpretation shall move from the perception of the tribal actors since the form of the behavior and its results are inseparable from the movable ideas and are moved by the level of knowledge of the actors (Thohir, 2007).

a. **Cognitive View**

Culture is viewed as a system of knowledge. According to Ward Goodenough (Keesing, 2014):

A society's culture consists

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of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members. . Culture Is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behavior, or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things. It is the forms of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating, and otherwise interpreting them.”

Culture consists of standards for deciding what is,...for deciding what can be,...for deciding what an individual feels about it,..for deciding how to behave toward that,...for deciding how to deal against it.

In the cognitive view, as proposed by Keesing, Goodenough, Tylor, and Spradley, the core of culture is knowledge and symbols. Culture is not behavior, instead, it is the patterns of human's behavior. Therefore, Suparlan describes culture becomes functional and operational in a way that it becomes a reference in relating and identifying various existing categories and usable categories for human needs as social beings. (Thohir, 2007).

b. Symbolic View

According to Geertz, a meaning is not located in “people's mind”. Symbol and its meaning are shared by the members of society, not within them. Symbol and its meaning are public, and not private. " Cultural system is ideational, same with the ideational of Beethoven quartet. The system is located outside or between the manifestation of the individual's thought or concrete appearance. Cultural pattern is not reified or metaphysical. Just like stone and dream, they are things in the real world”.

Geertz considers his view towards

culture is semiotics. Learning a culture means learning the rules of meaning that are shared. By borrowing one larger meaning of “text” from Ricoeur, Geertz these days considers culture as “a collection of text”. For that reason, anthropology is considered as a way of interpretation and is not *decipherment*. on this view, Geertz opposes it with Levi's Strauss approach (Keesing, 2014).

An example of how culture reflects a national character can be found in the traditional ceremony of Nutuk Beham of Adat Lawas society, Kedang Ipil village. This ceremony is a cultural activity to extend gratitude for the result of harvests.

The process in this ceremony reflects a meaningful symbol that shows the characteristics of the society which is the value of unity. Those aspects are shown one of them through the community mutual cooperation that is conducted by members of community in preparing the ceremony.

Thus, this research is important for, first, to reveal the forms of unity value as a form of character within the society of Adat Lawas in Nutuk Beham ceremony. Second, this research is important in revealing the purpose of Nutuk Beham ceremony that shows the value of unity.

Methodology

This research is conducted with qualitative method with an ideational approach by utilizing the system of knowledge within the society of Kedang Ipil village in Nutuk Beham ceremony, also the interpretation of the symbols in the ceremony. The stages of this research are: 1) Data collection stage by direct observation during Nutuk Beham ceremony and interview with the committee of the ceremony. The interview is related to the meaning of the process of ceremony and photo documentation. 2). Data analysis is conducted based on the

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problem formulated related to the forms and purpose of Nutuk Beham ceremony. 3). The result of the analysis is presented descriptively to provide the description of the forms and the purpose of Nutuk Beham ceremony.

Finding and Discussion

The forms of unity in Nutuk Beham ceremony are reflected through some of the activities conducted before the ceremony until the ceremony is taking place, as follows:

1. Preparation before Nutuk Beham Ceremony

During the preparation for 2018 ceremony, the local village government did not hold the ceremony for its citizens only, or for the surrounding villages as previous years. The local village government considers the ceremony as a cultural asset and wants to introduce the ceremony to more people outside the villages and its surrounding since the Nutuk Beham ceremony can be a medium to share cultural knowledge and it has a high cultural value.

a. Preparing Building for Nutuk Beham

One of the activities done during the preparation of 2018 ceremony is to construct a building for Nutuk Beham. The building is designed as a permanent stage house so it will not be rebuilt again and can be used for another future ceremony.



Figure 1 – Building Stage House for wooden mortar placement during Nutuk Beham ceremony

(Source: IG Kedang Ipil tourism village)

The interesting part during the construction of the stage house is the togetherness shown by Kedang Ipil society that mutually cooperate and work together without any form of payment. The spirit of mutual cooperation has become a part of the everyday life and has been a cultural inheritance that passes on from the past generation to the next to maintain the value of togetherness and unity among the members of community. Thus, although the effect of the era development is unavoidable, the value of mutual cooperation is still maintained in the relationship between fellow humans.

Other than the village traditional house, the stage house building also becomes the symbol or a medium in bringing all members of Kedang Ipil village community into togetherness and unity. At this building, members of the community will gather to pound rice and is done consecutively between men and women. The rice is pounded to be prepared for consumption during Nutuk Beham ceremony, starts from the morning, the midday, the evening and until the next morning, all is done happily.

b. Making woven mats

Other than preparing the stage house for pounding rice, Kedang Ipil village society also makes woven mats. The mats are made from pandan (screw pine) leaf, and the mat will be used in the stage house during the pounding rice process, so the rice that overflows from the mortar will stay clean when it lands on the mat.



Figure 2- Men and Women, work together to make the woven mat for stage house. (source : IG Kedang Ipil tourism village)

The woven mat itself is the symbol of togetherness. Weaving or making woven products is the craft or action of forming a fabric by interlacing threads. (Choirumuddin, 2007).

Koko Koswara in Ade Eka Rosita asserts that woven works is the action of forming a fabric by weaving particular materials and must be done with determination, and competence, and with aesthetic values. Weaving is an activity that gives a fun experience, both for young and for old people. The activity itself is not only to create products but also to spend time productively. The creativity does not seem outstanding or does not place as the primary objective, since it relates to the limitation of the material used itself (Rakhmat, 2018).

In line with the definition of weaving above, the making of a woven mat in the preparation of Nutuk Beham is a form of togetherness and mutual cooperation that exists in Kedang Ipil village society. Instead of using their spare time to have a rest at home, they all go to the village house to make a woven mat to be used during pounding rice at Nutuk Beham ceremony. This reflects the notion of humans to humans relationship that brings forward the dependency to each other and to implement

the value of mutual cooperation as the nature of life itself.

The valuable lesson that describes the position within the dimension of space and current time shall always be maintained for the sustainability of the next generation. Apart from the complexity or the criss-cross as seen in woven mat, the value can shape functionality as well as the esthetic value.

c. *Harvesting Beham Rice*

Harvesting rice for Nutuk Beham ceremony is also conducted together. The harvesting process is done mutually by all people in the village to express gratitude.



Figure 3- Harvesting Rice together for Nutuk Beham ceremony. (source: IG desa wisata kedang ipil)

Some portion of the crops will later be donated to Nutuk Beham ceremony. As a form of humans with nature relationship that provide the crops in the particular year, they donate some portions of the crops to be used and to be consumed by villagers and all visitors during the ceremony to show a gratitude.

2. **During Nutuk Beham Ceremony**

Nutuk Beham ceremony is started with cooking rice that has been harvested and has been soaked before in the river. The rice was put in sacks and is marked based on the name of the donator before they are soaked in the river as seen below :

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Figure 4 : Soaking the rice in the river
(source: IG Kedang Ipil tourism village)

a. *Roasting Beham Rice*

Roasting rice is done by all women in Kedang Ipil Village and is scheduled based on each RT (Neighborhood unit). This activity is conducted from the morning until evening and is done every day until the peak day of Nutuk Beham ceremony. Generally, a roasting process is conducted within 2 days 2 night



Figure 5 – Roasting Beham rice by Kedang Ipil Women
(Source: ulum janah)

Similar to the previous activities, togetherness and the spirit of mutual cooperation is also reflected from roasting Beham rice. Whether or not, an individual does not donate rice, they will still involve and taking turns in assisting the activities. This is a proof of showing their working manifestation to find the position as a part of Kedang Ipil village. Where the expectation is, they will also receive support from others whenever they need it, or at least others will care of their existence.

b. *Pounding Beham Rice*

Pounding race was used to be done by three or five people in one wooden

mortar. Pounding rice activity uses selected wooden and is made in a convex shape as a place to pound the rice. Whereas the pestle is also made of wood and is shaped cylindrically long to pound.

The activity of pounding the roasted rice is an inseparable part of mortar plays. This activity is similar to the pounding rice culture across different regions in Indonesia, one of them is in Minagkabau. Pounding rice while at the same time playing mortar that resulting a particular sound is conducted day and night. It is also the same in Kedang Ipil village, the pounding rice is conducted from the morning till the next morning and sometimes almost 2 days and evenings. The sound of the mortar is related to the philosophy of fertility where the shape of mortar symbolize the intercourse between male and female. Pestle as lingga or male sex organ and mortar as yoni or female sex organ. In the ritual, the sound of the mortar is believed as a wish for fertility in the form of the abundant harvest that may bring prosperity to the whole villagers (Emri, 2016).



Figure 6 – Pounding Rice Together
(Source: ulum janah)

Knowledge about the meaning of the symbol that will bring the good thing of

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fertility is used as the tools in ceremony Nutuk Beham at Kedang Ipil village. This knowledge is a part of the good life notion, where the symbol of fertility from the mortar is applied in the ritual for the purpose of wishing for the prosperity in the form of the abundant harvest. This is also related to the finding for live harmony with nature that is reflected from the tools for pounding rice that is made from natural resources.

After the rice is pounded, the next stage is winnowing the rice. This process is conducted to separate the grain of the rice with its bran before then continue to the next process. Winnowing rice is generally done by the women at the village house Kedang Ipil.



Figure 7 – The Winnowing rice process after the rice is pounded
(Source: Ulum Janah)

After winnowing rice process is completed before the peak of the ceremony, the rice is cooked as pulut (sticky rice) and will be served to all villagers and guests during the ceremony. The cooking rice process is done by men who have strong power since, during the process, the rice will be mixed with other ingredients such as brown sugar, grated coconut, and hot water. These causes the mixing process becomes a heavy task and need men assistance.

In rituals, pulut is also commonly used as one of the offerings as an intermediary between the real world and the unseen world. According to Widjono,

indigenous people of Kalimantan who generally have kaharingan beliefs, offerings themselves have the intention that spirits who possess magical powers do not interfere with their lives either individually or in groups. Trust in the indigenous people of Kalimantan has a deep contact with the myth, namely a sacred event, or an event experienced directly by the ancestors, even though the occurrence of the event cannot be historically ascertained, but the history of the incident for the Borneo people functions as the norm of life. Such thinking gives birth to their perception of the wisdom of forest resource management (Yogi, 2018)



Figure 8 – Men cook the rice onto pulut
(source: Ulum Janah)

In white pulut, it symbolizes a clean heart and makes it easier for someone to submit a request. Meanwhile, the red pulut symbolizes the courage and victory of someone who has been proven (Tarung, 2014). In the Nutuk Beham ritual itself, sticky rice is made in red pulutan which is a symbol of the success of the community in farming. This is an encouragement for the community in the future in farming and farming to get better results. In addition, this sequel is a manifestation of people's gratitude for the harvest obtained.

c. Welcoming Guests

Welcoming guests from other villages, and tourists are conducted as a form of respect to the guests. The arrival of guests is a symbol of fortune that should be

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welcomed well so it will bring good fortune in the future. This is a form of life knowledge about the good thing.



Figure 9 - Welcoming Guests from other villages
(Source: IG Kedang Ipil Tourism village)

d. Bememang (Reading Spell)

Bememang is derived from memang means spell. Bememang means to read a spell. This activity is can be compared with saying a prayer



Figure 10 – The community elders conduct memang so the ceremony can run smoothly
(source: ulum janah)

The spell reading is done by the community elders where the community figures are iewed as the one who has the spiritual ability to connect the lower world (Humans) with the upper world (Creator / spiritually unseen). This kind of knowledge views that there is still figures in a community that viewed as the elders for traditional ceremony. This should not be eliminated as this reflect a balance of a relationship between the lower world and the upper world which relates to each other and exist in harmony in human's life.

e. Beseprah

Beseprah is the final stage of Nutuk Beham ceremony. At this activity, all community members and guests gather together at the village house to have a meal. They come from different backgrounds of race, religion, profession, and age. This moment reflects that beseprah unites all different background of community and have them sit together. (Janah & Rosdiana, 2019).



Figure 11- beseprah ends the process of Nutuk Beham ceremony
(source: IG Kedang Ipil Tourism Village)

The activity is understood as the good life notion, by having togetherness in everyday life that keeps society in unity.

Based on the value of unity above, the activities conducted in Nutuk Beham ceremony, from the preparation until during the ceremony, they reflect the following purposes :

1. To improve hospitality

Nutuk Beham ceremony becomes an activity that can improve and strengthen the spirit of hospitality among Kedang Ipil community members as well as to the community from outside of the village who come to visit during the ceremony. This can be seen in preparation stage until during the ceremony.

All members of Kedang Ipil community take parts together in cooperation in building the stage house for pounding rice, weaving mat, roasting rice, pounding rice, and cooking the rice to be served during the peak of the ceremony as a meal for all community members and

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guests. Those activities have become a strong tie to strengthen the hospitality in Kedang Ipil village in bringing the community members together and depending on one another as it is how a community holds its local wisdom.

Mutual cooperation as the reflection of Kedang Ipil community also becomes the inseparable strengthens value in community's life. This value provides a high kinship notion for its society. They will have high empathy in living the community life. Thus, it is expected that it will minimize conflict within the community.

2. To Strengthen the spirit of Unity in Diversity

Having all community members sitting together in one place at Kedang Ipil village house, besides improving hospitality among one to others, the Nutuk Beham ceremony also plays an important role as a medium of communication regardless any social differences. All community members from any religion, any educational background, or profession are gathered as one.

Beseprah (gather together) significantly reflects unity in diversity and relates with Pancasila value particularly the fourth principle of Pancasila. Beseprah put all members of the community seated in one place, the superior and the subordinate, the leader, and their people to discuss various subjects and to be able to reach a consensus decision. Those approaches are expected to be a benchmark for all leaders and their society to take lessons from and to take positive values in those activities (Janah & Rosdiana, 2019). Furthermore, beseprah that is not only attended by the local villagers but also attended by guests, other villagers, and tourists that may have differences in terms of race, traditional values, religion, etc. Therefore, the

reflection of Unity in diversity in Nutuk Beham ceremony can be clearly seen.

Conclusions

Culture is one of the forms of stabilization in a particular community. This is because culture brings great values that always keep giving knowledge to the society in maintaining a balance relationship between humans with God, humans with humans, humans with nature, and humans with the development of an era. One of the cultural practices that reflects unity is the ceremony of Nutuk Beham conducted by Adat Lawas Community at Kedang Ipil Village, Kota Bangun, East Kalimantan.

The reflection of the value of unity in Nutuk Beham can be seen from the preparation stage before the ceremony by building the stage house for pounding rice, weaving mate until harvesting rice that all conducted together. At the second stage, starting from roasting rice, until beseprah (gather together) at the closing ceremony, the whole processes show the value of togetherness, the outstanding communal cooperation, and tolerance that is done to support the success of the ceremony.

All of the processes above have the purpose to maintain and at the same time to strengthen the hospitality ties among the community members, not only for Kedang Ipil villagers but also to visitors and guests. The value of unity and diversity is always shown regardless the different background of education, profession, race, and cultures. Thus, Nutuk Beham ceremony is a very effective medium to maintain and to reflect the value of unity, particularly in Kedang Ipil village.

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