

The Traditional Calendar of Dry Land Farming In Manggarai Culture

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ABSTRACT: This study explores the traditional calendar of dry land farming in Manggarai culture with reference to conceptualization ascribed in the cultural knowledge of Manggarai society as dry land farmers. The study is viewed from the perspective of social anthropology. The study is descriptive-qualitative in nature. The results of study show that there are twelve months in the traditional calendar of dry land farming in Manggarai culture, involving *Rengka, Bongko, Hobal, Duru, Nempong, Lideng, Poco, Kere Kao, Caba Cea, Wandu Wak, Tasak, and Cece Corang*. The months are named with reference to natural phenomena amalgamated with the dry land farming activities of Manggarai society as dry land farmers. However, the traditional calendar of dry land farming in Manggarai culture is no longer used as seasonal dry land farming patterns have been largely abandoned by Manggarai society in the last few decades.

Key words: traditional calendar, dry land farming, Manggaraian culture

I. INTRODUCTION

There is no society living without culture or, vice versa, there no culture living without society. The relationship of both culture and society is symbiotic-reciprocal in nature because culture exists in society and society exists in culture. The reason is clear and understable that culture is concerned with the ways a society as members of a social group view and make sense of their world (Keesing, 1981; Ochs, 1988). Culture in this light serves as one of the prominent features making the life of a society as members of a social group meaningful (Boas, 1962; Berger & Luckman, 1967; Cassirer, 1987; Suriasumantri, 2001; Bustan, 2005; Bustan & Kabelen, 2023; Bustan et al., 2023). The meaningfulness of the life of a society as members of a social group is reflected in the function of culture they share as culture serves as the self-identity marker designating their concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others. In addition to being a unitary phenomenon for a society as members of a social group, culture is also a source of differences between societies (Hoggs and Abrams, 1988; Alshammari, 2018; Bustan, 2006). The natures of differences between cultures can be seen in the system of knowledge shared by a society as members of a social group, as reflected in such cultural aspects as the classification of seasons and the traditional calendar of farming land (Sudikan, 2001; Bustan, 2005; Bustan, 2006).

In general, this study explores the classification of seasons in Manggarai culture as the worldview of Manggarai society as members of Manggaraian ethnic group residing in the region of Manggaraian which occupies the western part of the island of Flores in the province of East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia (Verheijen, 1991; Erb, 1997; Lawang, 1997; Bagul, 1997; Bustan, 2005; Bustan, 2006; Bustan & Semiun, 2019; Bustan & Kabelen, 2023; Gunas et al, 2023; Bustan et al, 2023). However, as the classification of seasons is so complex in nature that the study focuses on the traditional calendar of dry land farming in Manggarai culture with reference to

conceptualization ascribed in the cultural knowledge of Manggarai society as dry land farmers. The researcher is interested in conducting the study for the basic reason that the names of the months in the traditional calendar of dry land farming in Manggarai culture are unique and specific in some respect to Manggarai culture as the parent culture in which it is embedded. The months are named on the basis of natural phenomena which are amalgamated with the dry farming land activities of Manggarai society as dry land farmers (Bustan, 2005; Bustan, 2006).

II. FRAMEWORK

This study is viewed from the perspective of social anthropology as the branch of anthropology which studies the relationship between society and culture. In the perspective of social anthropology, the existence of a society as members of a social group is explored through the lens of culture they share aimed at uncovering the ways they view and make sense of their world. The aim is based on the conception that culture is the worldview of a society as members of a social group (Schneider, 1976; Koentjaraningrat, 2004; Bustan et al, 2023). This comes closest to the conception of Ochs (1988) that culture is an identity marker that functions both as a sense of identity designating a society as members of a social group and as a symbol of identity creating distinctions between societies. Nevertheless, as culture can be defined differently, it is difficult to find out a comprehensive definition and significance of culture that can be used as the source of reference in cultural studies (Kaplan & Manners, 1999; Sudikan, 2001). As the definition and significance of culture vary from school to school, according to Ochs (1988), within the field of social anthropology, most approaches treat culture as in the following: (1) a system of implicit and explicit ideas that underlies and gives meaning to behavior in society; (2) a system of symbols and meanings; and (3) a worldview of a society. The orientations of the approaches are realized in such aspects as in the following: (1) social behaviors such as political, economic, religious, and kinship relations; (2) events, interactions, and institutions; (3) values; and (4) conceptions of the world (Bustan et al, 2023). The approaches emphasize that culture plays an important role in the social life of a society as a whole. In addition to creating distinctions between societies, culture also facilitates the generation of commitment to something larger than one's individual self-interest in the sense that culture is social-collective in nature as it belongs to a society as members of a social group as a whole (Ochs, 1988; Foley, 1997; Koentjaraningrat, 2004). The function of culture as a distinctive feature of a society as members of a social group can be seen, for instance, in their system of knowledge which is concerned with cultural knowledge as the collective understanding of values, customs, beliefs, and practices they share in viewing and making sense of their world. The manifestation of cultural knowledge shared by a society as members of a social group can be seen in their conceptualization regarding the classification of seasons, as reflected more specifically in the traditional calendar of farming land they share (Kaplan & Manners, 1999; Koentjaraningrat, 2004; Bustan, 2005; Bustan, 2006; Bustan & Kabelen, 2023).

III. METHOD

This is a descriptive study as it is aimed at describing the traditional calendar of dry land farming in Manggarai culture on the basis of conceptualizations ascribed in the cultural knowledge of Manggarai society as dry land farmers (Muhadjir, 1995; Afrizal, 2014). To achieve the intended aim, the study was based on primary and secondary data. In line with the process of acquiring the data, the procedures of research were both field research and library research (Afrizal, 2014). The field research was aimed at collecting the primary data dealing with the traditional calendar of dry land farming in Manggarai culture. The field research was carried out in the region of Manggarai with the main location was in Ruteng as the capital city of Manggarai regency. The approach used to obtain the required data was ethnographic approach, especially dialogic-ethnographic approach (Bernstein, 1972; Hymes, 1974; Spradley, 1997; Geertz, 1971; Foley, 1997). The methods of data collection were observation and interview. The observation was aimed at having a general picture on blood kinship shared by in Manggaraian society. Based on the data of observation, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with the members of Manggaraian society represented by five persons as the key informants selected on basis of the ideal criteria proposed by Faisal (1990), Spradley (1997), and Sudikan (2001). The interviews were mainly aimed at distilling the conceptualization ascribed in their cognitive map regarding the classification

of seasons in Manggarai culture. To achieve the intended aim, the kinds of interviews were of two kinds, including facial interview and nonfacial interview by using hand phone as the medium of communication especially when negotiating the results of study with the key informants for the sake of data triangulation. The techniques of data collection were recording, elicitation, and note-taking. The library research was aimed collecting the secondary data relevant to the main concern of the study. The method of data collection was documentary study. The documents used as the sources of data were general documents (books) and special documents (scientific articles, results of research, paper). The collected data were then analyzed qualitatively by inductive method as the analysis was started from the data to the theory which is local-ideographic in nature as it describes the traditional calendar of dry land farming in Manggarai culture on the basis of conceptualization ascribed in the cultural knowledge of Manggarai society as dry land farmers (Muhadjir, 1995; Afrizal, 2014).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

The results of study show that the function of Manggarai culture as the identity marker of Manggarai society as members of Manggarai ethnic group in viewing and making sense of their world is manifested in their system of knowledge that involves the knowledge of natural environment, the knowledge of flora and fauna, and the knowledge of space and time. The knowledge of those kinds are not only united in their minds and feelings but also expressed in their patterns of behavior in daily life as dry land farmers. Along with their social roles as dry land farmers, it is found out that the knowledge of natural environment they share is reflected in their knowledge regarding the classification of seasons in one year formed on the basis of their practical needs in one side and their daily activities related to dry land farming on the other. More specially, the knowledge of Manggarai society as dry land farmers regarding the classification of season in one year is reflected in the traditional calendar of dry land farming. As conceptualized in the cultural knowledge of Manggarai society as dry land farmers, one year of the season consists of twelve months and each of which has its own name characterized on the basis of natural phenomena and dry land farming activities.

4.2 Discussion

With special reference to the conceptualization ascribed in the cultural knowledge of Manggarai society as dry land farmers, the names of months in the traditional calendar of dry land farming in Manggarai culture along with the reasons of providing the names in question are as follows:

(1) *Rengka*

This month is named *Rengka* (*wulang Rengka* in Manggarai language) because, in this month, the leaves of trees fall (*loda taungs saung haju*). As conceptualized in the cognitive map of Manggarai society as dry land farmers, the natural phenomenon is a medium of reminder for them to slash and clear their new farming land known as *uma rana* in Manggarai language.

(2) *Bongko*

This month is named *Bongko* (*wulang Bongko* in Manggarai language) because, in this month, thunder begins to sound (*wangkan bo bongko*). As conceptualized in the cognitive map of Manggarai society as dry land farmers, the natural phenomenon is a medium of reminder for them to quickly plant corn in the old farming land known as *uma lokang* in Manggarai language.

(3) *Hobal*

This month is named *Hobal* (*wulang Hobal* in Manggarai language) because, in this month, corn and rice begin to be planted in the new farming land (*wangkan weri woja agu latung one uma rana*). The general stipulation or requirement is that corn is planted before rice (*olong weri latung po woja*).

(4) *Duru*

This month is named *Duru* (*wulang Duru* in Manggarai language) because this month is schedule for the end of the rice planting season in the old farming land (*tanda paesn weri woja one uma lokang*).

(5) *Nempong*

This month is named *Nempong* month (*wulang Nempong* in Manggarai language) because, in this month, they start mowing the grass (*tawi remang*), especially the grass growing around the plants of corn and rice. As mowing the grass in the farming land is their main activity during this month, this month is also known as Mowing month (*wulang Tawi* in Manggarai language).

(6) *Lideng*

This month is named *Lideng* (*wulang Lideng* in Manggarai language) because, in this month, the corn is starting to fill up (*wangkas icid latung*) and, at the same time, the farming land is cleared again, especially the grass growing around the stalks of corn so as not to hinder the growth and fertilization of corn fruit so as to provide an abundant harvest.

(7) *Poco*

This month is named *Poco* (*wulang Poco* in Manggarai language) because, in this month, the corns are starting to ripen (*wangkas te'ed latung*) and are ready to be harvested (*pu'ung goks latung*).

(8) *Kere Kao*

This month is named *Kere Kao* (*wulang Kere Kao* in Manggarai language) because, in this month, the rice grains are starting to ripen and are ready to be harvested (*wangkas te'e agu kudut akod woja*).

(9) *Caba Cea*

This month is named *Caba Cea* (*wulang Caba Cea* in Manggarai language) because, during this month, rainfall begins to decrease (*teki caba cea usang*) and they start to get busy making preparations for harvest.

(10) *Wandu Wak*

This month is named *Wandu Wak* (*wulang Wandu Wak* in Manggarai language) because, in this month, they are very busy transporting the harvest from their farming land to the house in the village (*nggerpe'ang ngger'one elong mendo ba pe'ang mai uma*).

(11) *Tasak*

This month is named *Tasak* (*wulang Tasak* in Manggarai language) because, during this month, the children start playing tops (*tasak* or *mangka*) to fill their free time. This month is also known as 'the month of rest' (*wulang ka'eng bo*) because, during this month, they take break from works related to dry land farming activities.

(12) *Cece Corang*

This month is named *Cece Corang* (*wulang Cece Corang* in Manggarai language) because, in this month, the men go looking for wood for machetes (*ngo kawé haju te corang kope*), while the women start cleaning up the old farming land (*ronca lokang*).

It is noteworthy that, along with the dynamics of Manggarai culture, the traditional calendar of dry land farming in Manggarai culture is defined as a meaningless cultural property in today's Manggarai society. The calendar is no longer used as the source of reference for them as seasonal dry land farming patterns have been largely abandoned by Manggarai society in their today's life.

V. CONCLUSION

Different societies share different cultures because every culture has its own ways in viewing and making sense of the world. The differences between cultures can be seen in the system of knowledge as one of the main elements making up the content of a culture. The system of knowledge shared by a society as members of a social group is manifested in the conceptualization ascribed in their cultural knowledge regarding the classification of seasons, as reflected in the traditional calendar of dry land farming. As conceptualized in the cultural knowledge of Manggarai society as dry land farmers, there are twelve months in one year of the season and the months are named on the basis of natural phenomena which are amalgamated with their activities as dry land farmers. The names of months in the traditional calendar of dry land farming in Manggarai culture are as follows: *Rengka, Bongko, Hobal, Duru, Nempong, Lideng, Poco, Kere Kao, Caba Cea, Wandu Wak, Tasak, and Cece Corang*. Along with the dynamics of Manggarai society, the traditional calendar of dry land farming in Manggarai culture is no longer used as seasonal dry land farming patterns have been largely abandoned by Manggarai society in the last few decades.

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