



The Role of Customary Leaders on the Decision Making Process in the Ethics of Land Clearing and Harvesting Process in Rice Farmers in Puday Village, Wonggeduku Barat Sub-District, Konawe District

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Abstract

Customary leaders have dominant roles and influences, these facts are shown in the land clearing process (*monahundau*) and the harvesting process (*meolu*) of paddy rice crop. These processes begin with the opening ceremony or in the form of a small ritual carried out by customary leader numbering one person called *Puusaraormandaranosara*. The purpose of this study is to find out how the role of customary leaders in decision-making in the ethics of land clearing and harvesting processes in paddy rice farmers. Analysis of the data used in the form of qualitative descriptive analysis, where the data obtained is then described qualitatively using the Miles and Huberman model which consists of three stages, namely (1) Data Reduction, (2) Data Presentation, (3) Conclusion Drawing / Verification. The results of this study indicated that land clearing (*monahundau*) and the harvesting process (*meolu*) were influenced by hereditary customs in Puday Village, Wonggeduku Barat Sub-District, Konawe District. *Monahundau* is a land clearing process which is the first step to open a new planting season every year. *Meoluis* a harvesting process that is carried out in the same steps as the process of land clearing (observation, reciting intentions and praying silently for the best wishes desired in the harvesting process), and the final step is done by investigating at the rice fields who first turned yellow (ripe), then the rice fields that will be harvested first, the rice begins to be harvested when there is already a statement then the other farmers' land that has yellowed (ripe) may be harvested by themselves (*meoludowo*). Customary leaders are people chosen by the people of Puday village (*puusaraormandaranosara*) and have an influence on decision making in the process of land clearing (*monahundau*) and harvesting (*meolu*)

Keywords: customary leaders, decision making, harvesting, land clearing

A. Introduction

Southeast Sulawesi is one of the provinces in the Republic of Indonesia with diverse ethnicities and customs; it is one of the identities of life of a heterogeneous region. These ethnicities include Tolaki, Muna, Buton, and Wawonii. The existence of these ethnicities will be one of the heterogeneous unifying lives. One of the dominant forms of action or value is the value of customs that binds and regulates human life in various aspects.

Custom is a hereditary habit of a group of people based on the cultural values of the community concerned. Custom has regulated how humans relate to other communities and humanbeingswith nature or the environment. As a cultural system, culture provides a set of models for behavior that originate from vital values and ideas. This main value and idea will be materialized in an ideological, social and technological system (Esten, 1992).

Customs typically consist of cultural values, life views and ideas, norms and laws, and knowledge and beliefs, while cultural values are concepts of what lives in the mind. Most of the community knows what they consider valuable, meaningful and important in life, therefore can function as a guide that gives direction and orientation to the lives of certain community (Koentjaraningrat, 1990).

Syani (1995), suggests that customs are behaviors and regulations that have stricter sanctions. Community members who violate customs will get legal sanctions both formal and informal. For example in rice harvesting activities, a farming community always performs it together alternately from one field to another. Farmer who does not cooperate in rice harvesting activities will get social sanctions in the form of exclusion, where if the farmer will carry out harvesting activities then no other farmer community will help him.

Customary life system is led by a customary leader who is a formal leader and involved in official government, their opinions and recommendations are accepted and obeyed by the community. A customary leader of a village does not recognize the line of his superiors and subordinates, they only recognize the circle of power (influence). The influence size of a customary leader can be seen from the extent of influence circle, they recognize the line and followers. The followers of an informal leader are horizontal; they are not limited to certain village areas but can be wider; vertically, not only in the highest layer. One of the facts that customary leaders have a big role is shown in customary leaders in Puday Village, who play a role and influence the decision making in the process of land clearing and harvesting.

Puday Village is one of the rice-producing villages in Konawe District. This village is one of the villages that adhere to customs in the life of the community and makes it a living guide in carrying out an activity whether it is social, religious, agricultural, and other activities that are conducted for together benefit. In the application, custom values certainly require a person who better understands the ethics and orientation of a value, called Customary Leader (*Puusara*). In the field of agriculture, customary leaders have dominant roles and influences. One of that facts showing the role of customary leaders is shown in the process of land clearing and harvesting in paddy rice crops.

The role of customary leaders is still needed in the process of land clearing (*monahundau*) and the harvest process (*meolu*) to determine the ethics of land clearing and harvesting processes. The activity begins with an opening ceremony or a small ritual conducted by customary leaders. Customary leaders in the process is one person called *Puusara* or *Mandaranosara*, who will be replaced by someone else when the customary leader has passed away.

The aim of this study is to find out how the role of customary leaders in decision making in the ethics of land clearing and harvesting processes in paddy rice farmers at Puday Village, Wonggeduku Barat Sub-District, Konawe District.

B. Methodology

The population in this study were 125 farmers who cultivated paddy rice, customary leaders in Puday Village is only 1 person who was elder or trusted to become a customary

leader, so the sample of customary leader is 1 (sampling for customary leader is census of which the entire population was sampled). Sampling on farmers was done by taking 15% of the population (Arikunto, 2008) then the number of research samples was 19 people.

The variables in this study consisted of variables related to the role of customary leader in decision making and variables related to the ethics of farmers in the process of land clearing and harvesting. Variables related to the role of customary leaders in decision making are the personality of the customary leader which consists of credibility, knowledge, and level of figure character. While the variables related to the ethics of farmers in the process of land clearing and harvesting are land clearing time or land preparation, procession or ritual preparation procedures, post-harvest (ethics of storing crops).

Data analysis used in this study was qualitative descriptive; the data obtained is described qualitatively using the Miles and Huberman model which consisted of three stages, namely (1) Data Reduction, (2) Data Presentation, (3) Conclusion Drawing / Verification (Sugiyono, 2009). Data is collected in a reasonable condition (Natural Settings) in the life of an object (according to conditions and facts at the research location). Therefore, qualitative research is inductive; meaning it does not start from a hypothesis as a generalization. This study used a qualitative approach with data available in the form of written or verbal words or behavior that can be observed through interviews, observation, and documentation, so that may be analyzed by qualitative methods.

Qualitative research also intends to understand what phenomena are experienced by research subjects such as behavior, perception, motivation, actions, and others holistically by a description in the form of words and language; and also in a specific natural context by utilizing various natural methods (Moleong, 2007).

C. Result and Discussion

Custom Structure of the Community in Puday Village

The customs of the people of the Puday Village area were influenced by homogeneous ethnic groups. They live together, harmoniously, peacefully and respect each other of their longstanding norms. The ethnic in the Puday Village area is *Tolaki*. Customs are rules or regulations that have sanctions. Community members who violate customs will get sanctions both formal and informal.

The customary life system is led by a customary leader who is an informal leader that is not involved in the official government, but his opinions, recommendations and ideas can be accepted by the community. The size of the influence of a customary leader in a community sphere in Pudayvillage can be seen from the extent of the circle of influence, they are familiar with the lines and followers. Followers of an informal leader of rural communities in a horizontal direction are not only limited to certain village areas or wider area. Vertically, the effect is not only on the lower and middle layers but also reach the high layers.

One of the facts that customary leader have a significant influence can be seen in customary leaders in Puday Village (*puusara* or *mandaranosara*). The customary leader has an influence on decision making for a process of land clearing (*monahundau*) and the harvesting (*meolu*). Before the customary structure was formed in Puday Village, the main institutional actors were formed (in this case farmer groups), in detail the members' data included in the institutional main actors (member's of farmer groups) who were sampled in this study that can be seen in detail in Table 1.

As for the structure of the customary life of the Puday Village community in decision making related to ethical issues of land clearing and harvesting processes.

Table 1. Member's Data of Farmer Groups

No.	Member's Name	L/P	Cultivated Commodities	Land Area (Ha)
1	Muhlar	L	Rice	1
2	Sasbi Aden L	L	Rice	2
3	Risal	L	Rice	1
4	Wonggi	L	Rice	0,50
5	Astibar	L	Rice	1
6	Baudi	L	Rice	0,50
7	Tely	L	Rice	0,50
8	Sartina	P	Rice	3
9	Unding	L	Rice	3
10	Ramli	L	Rice	2
11	Jamal P	L	Rice	2
12	Kammi	L	Rice	1
13	Burhan	L	Rice	1
14	Sarman	L	Rice	1
15	Umar Dema	L	Rice	1
16	Musriakton Maladeni	L	Rice	1
17	M. Aslan	L	Rice	1
18	Baruga	L	Rice	1,50
19	Oktavina	P	Rice	3,50

Custom, is a behavior and regulation in society to conduct daily interactions and is habits inherited from ancestors. Custom is a hereditary habit of a group of people based on the cultural value of the community. Furthermore, it was also stated that custom has regulated how humans relate to other communities, humans and their nature or environment. In accordance with the opinion of Esten (1992), as a cultural system, custom provides a set of models for behavior that originates from the main system of values and ideas. The value and core idea are materialized in ideological, social and technological systems.

1. Customary leaders are the people chosen by Puday Village community, the person was chosen based on several criteria from the member of the community (interview with Mr. Muhlar, 50 years old). Community leaders are informal leaders in a society who know a lot about the ins and outs of their society.

2. Farmers are people who cultivate paddy rice in Puday Village.

The process of implementing the customary law in the local community is basically carried out by the customary leaders themselves. Customary leaders act as stakeholders or implementers of customary laws will decide on various problems in terms of agricultural activities. Farmers carry out the process of land clearing (*monahundau*) and the harvesting process (*meolu*) are influenced by the decisions of customary leaders. Although farmers have known the ethics of land clearing and harvesting, the processes are carried out still based on the intervention of customary leaders which based on the prevailing customs.

Decision Making in Land Clearing (*monahundau*) and Harvesting Process (*meolu*)

Decision-making process about the ethics of land clearing and harvesting in the local people, based on the results of interviews with customary leaders (*puusara* or *mandaranosara*) namely Mr. Drs. Abdul KaharLiambo (67 years), stated that "*the decision on the ethics of land clearing and harvesting processes is influenced by the decisions of the customary leaders themselves*". The results of the interview illustrated that there is a significant influence from customary leaders in taking and determining a decision. In the ethics of land clearing and harvesting, the determined decision related with determining the day (time) and

procedures, which are carried out based on the results of deliberations between farmers and customary leaders (based on interviews with farmers namely Mr. Sasbi, 50 years and Mr. Risal, 48 years). The decision-making process is conducted by thinking or analyzing and using feeling, which is in accordance with the opinion of Aryanto (2003) who suggested that two ways of making decisions are:

1. *Thinking*, one method for making decisions is to use the power of reasoning; by thinking, usually we will estimate the logical consequences of an action or choice taken. If we make that decision objectively based on cause and effect, after going through the analysis or basis of facts and existing data, then we will make decisions in accordance with the logical consequences that occur, even though there may be things that are not comfortable. They are generally very adept at analyzing what is right and what is wrong.
2. *Feeling*, Another way to make decisions is to use feelings. Feelings that are intended do not mean emotions but tend to consider the impact of a decision on ourselves or others; what are the benefits for ourselves and or others (without requiring beforehand that must be logical). Decision making on the basis of this feeling is based on personal values or norms rather than referring to actions called emotional. When we make a decision based on feelings, we will inquire how far we personally will involve ourselves directly and also how far we feel responsible for the impact of the decisions taken, both on ourselves and others.

Monahundau (Land Clearing) dan Meolu (Harvesting Process)

Land clearing activity are influenced by customs or habits that have been hereditary done, it began in the early new planting season on paddy rice, *monahundau* activities are intended as a first step to open a new planting season each year (interviews with customary leaders / Drs Abdul Kahar Liambo, 67 years old). Based on the results of the interview, it was also stated by customary leaders, there are several steps taken in the process of land clearing (*monahundau*) which are:

1. Observing a land that represents the land clearing and will collect all paddy rice fields.
2. Reciting intentions or intent silently about the expectations in the monahundau process (land clearing).
3. Praying.

Puday villagers, in general, are one of the social groups who still uphold the values of customs that existed in their environmental areas, this can be seen from one of the rice farming activities through land clearing and harvesting processes. Based on the results of interviews with customary leaders and rice farmers, the harvesting process or *meolu* is carried out in the same steps as the process of land clearing (observation, reciting of intentions and praying silently about the best wishes in the harvesting process), then the final step is done by investigating at the paddy fields who firstly yellowing (ripe) that furtherly will be first harvested field, after began to be harvested; if there is already a statement about that condition then the other farmers who have yellowed (ripe) rice crops are allowed to conduct self-harvested (*meoludowo*).

Each tradition has a number of conventions that serve as guidelines, whereby violations of conventions mean violations of custom. This is in accordance with the opinion of Moertjipto (2002), which states that violating custom means violating the provisions and beliefs that stand in the community. Community members who violate customs will get informal sanctions. For example in rice harvesting activities which are carried out gradually and alternately from one to another land, farmers who do not cooperate in harvesting activities will get sanctions in the form of exclusion. In addition, the customs that have become a tradition or the habits of the farmers are how they treat the harvested product; that is storing a portion of their harvest for household consumption needs, it is in accordance with the opinion by Pranoto (2016), that storing crops has become community tradition or farmer characteristics.

D. Conclusion

Based on the description of the research results, it can be concluded that land clearing (*monahundau*) and the harvesting process (*meolu*), are influenced by hereditary customs in Puday Village, Wonggeduku Barat Sub-District, Konawe District. *Monahundau* is a land clearing process which is the first step to open a new planting season every year. *Meolu* is a harvesting process carried out with the same steps as the land clearing process (observation, reciting intentions and praying silently for the best wishes desired for the harvesting process) and the final step is conducted by investigating at the paddy fields who firstly yellowing (ripe) that furtherly will be first harvested field, after began to be harvested; if there is already a statement for that condition then the other farmers who have yellowed (ripe) rice crops are allowed to conduct self-harvested (*meoludowo*).

Customary leaders are people chosen by the Puday Village community (*puusara* or *mandaranosara*) based on several criteria by each community. Customary leaders have an influence on decision making in the process of land clearing (*monahundau*) and the harvesting process (*meolu*). Community leaders are informal leaders in a society who know a lot about the ins and outs of society.

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