

# **Social Construction about Religious Life Concord of the Halaika Traditional Belief Adherents**

## ***A Phenomenological Study in Boti Village of KiE Sub District South Central Timor Regency of East Nusa Tenggara Province***

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**Keywords:** Social Construction, Halaika Traditional Belief, Life Concord.

**Abstract:** This qualitative research with phenomenological approach aims to find out social construction about Religious Life Concord of the Halaika traditional belief Adherents in Boti Village of KiE Sub District of Middle South Timor Regency of East Nusa Tenggara Province. The subject of research as the adherents of Halaika traditional belief selected using purposive sampling. The data was collected through observation, in-depth interview, and documentation, and then analyzed using Social Construction theory. The result of research showed that Halaika traditional belief contains Lais Manekat tenet meaning loving each other as the form of their affection expressed in maintaining deed and action in order not to harm others. The externalization of such the tenet was conducted by family, formal education institution, and religious institution. Then, there was community objectification conducted by villagers repeatedly as the Boti people's habit and culture internalized in daily life.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background**

Indonesian people are a plural society even some people calls it dual society. Indonesians are a plural nation consisting of various Ethnic, Religions, Races and Intergroup as well as languages. This plurality is established in one Indonesian nation bond as a whole and sovereign nation unity. In addition to base on social-cultural background, same geography and history, Indonesian nation unity builds on shared ideology and life philosophy in nation and state as well. The plurality of Indonesian society is natural and the cultural resource of it, other states have rarely in the world, and it has been existing since our ancestor time and each ethnic have distinctive custom becoming its identity. It is reflected holistically on the *Pancasila* (five principles) becoming Indonesian state foundation. Meanwhile, shared unity, ideology, life philosophy of Indonesian nation explicitly included in the state symbol with slogan "*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* meaning unity in diversity, should be appreciated positively, as it is the God's blessing (Sujanto, 2007).

Religious life concord is not only respecting, appreciating, building and developing and giving guidance and direction for the development of nation's life, but should also be embodied into a variety of collective activities, corresponding to the government's policy in building life in nation and state, based on Pancasila and 1945 Constitution. If all of these are not maintained well, conflict will occur between Race, Religion, Race and Inter-group (SARA) like conflict in Ambon Maluku (Islam vs. Christian) on January 19, 1999, riot in Poso, Sulawesi Tengah (Islam vs. Christian), on December 25-29, 1998, Conflict in Tolikora Papua (Islam vs. Christian) on July 17, 2015. Meanwhile in Boti, there are adherents of *Halaika traditional belief*, Christen and Catholic religions living adjacently in peace and concord. It encourages the author to study how the social construction of *halaika traditional belief* adherents in religious life concord in Boti Village.

Andung (2007) states that Halaika adherents are the minorities who live in one out of 4 hamlets existing (hamlet A). Viewed from its number, the adherents of traditional belief (*aliran kepercayaan*)

are only 12.54% of total populations. Despite its minority, Halaika adherents can accommodate those differences thereby creating mutual life concord. They always uphold tolerance values thereby avoided from social conflict. Halaika adherents can build commonality, appreciate each other, help each other, and are tolerant so that there is no domination and minority occurring.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Considering the background elaborated above, the author is interested in studying the Halaika traditional belief adherent community living harmoniously amid communities with different religions. It is interesting as social environment interacts with each other, as a community's environment is occupied with a group of communities with different religion and original traditional belief, and understands what elements should be constructed to create a good relationship and to realize a tolerant society. The adherents of Halaika traditional belief in Boti village is a social community, who still have ancestor origin hereditarily, has strong value system or rule and have Halaika traditional belief implemented by its adherent until today.

Previous study on theology in on Boti ethnic showed that theologically, Boti ethnic believes in two Masters of Universe: the Master of Eternal World or Uis Neno and the Master of Secular World or Uis Pah (Peters, 1998). The result of research on the syncretism of belief and religious values shows that the adaptation process conducted by Boti villagers occurs more in Christians than in Halaika traditional belief adherents who still hold on their cultural values tightly (Nope, 2002). It has been constructed since a long time ago; the conception of halaika values has an implication to social reality in the adherents of Halaika belief adherents, Christians or native people and newcomers so that the life concord among religious communities is created.

From the background aforementioned, the author can formulate the main problem in this research: "How is the concept or Tenet of Halaika traditional belief about Religious Life Concord in Boti Village, Kie Sub District of South Middle Timor of East Nusa Tenggara province?"

## 2 MANUSCRIPT PREPARATION

### 2.1 Social Construction

Social construction has broad definition in social science. It is usually connected to social effect in individual life experience. Basic assumption of reality is social construction. Social construction of reality became popular after it was introduced by Berger and Thomas (1999), they represent social construction through action and interaction, in which individual continuously creates a reality shared and experienced together subjectively.

Social construction has some powers: firstly, central role of language provides concrete mechanism, in which culture affects individual's thought and conduct. Secondly, social construction can represent complexity in one single culture. It does not assume uniformity. Thirdly, it is consistent with community and time (Sosilo, 2012).

Samuel (2012) states that social construction departs from community established as objective reality because of many individuals externalizing themselves or expressing their own subjectivity through their activity. So, basically, social construction is the establishment of mind-set departing from an action and social interaction ending up in an individual's perspective on what the public thinks of.

Patternger (2007) suggests that sociology-based social construction contains two important elements: power and knowledge. Basic assumption of its approach lies in the community with diverse power, either material or ideational facilitating and all at once energizing the agent and the structure becomes a social process arena. Knowledge on and respond to social phenomena existing in the society are the key.

Social construction, according to Ngangi (2011), is an assumption that all values, ideology, and institution are man-made. Social construction is a statement of belief and a view that the content of consciousness and the way of interacting with others are taught by culture and society.

Social Construction, according to Waters (1994), is human beings construct social reality in which subjective processes can become objectified. Social construction is the concept representing how social reality is established and interpreted subjectively by the members of society. Social construction represents the process in which action and interaction, creates continuously the shared reality experienced factual-objectively meaningful-subjectively.

Considering some arguments above, it can be concluded that social construction is the establishment of individual's mind-set departing from an action and social interaction ending up in an individual's perspective on what the public thinks of generally and experienced subjectively, created as social reality.

So, it can be said that social construction is a concept explaining that social structure abides not only outside but also inside human beings or objectified in their subjective consciousness. Social construction shows that (socio-cultural, social order, religion) in human consciousness is something not acceptable mechanically but interpreted by human beings as a rational creature into subjective meanings.

## 2.2 Religious Life Concord

The attempt of achieving such concord needs time process and dialogue, being opened to each other, accepting and appreciating each other, and loving each other. Meanwhile, the religious community concord is the relationship between fellow religious communities based on tolerance, understanding each other, respecting each other, appreciating each other in the equality of religion tenet implementation and cooperation in living within society and state. The basic guideline of religious life concord of religious community life concord building project guides the religious community life corresponding to and harmoniously with Pancasila and 1945 Constitution, to make every religion adherent, either individually or as members of society and citizen, in addition to complying with and implementing their religion tenets, simultaneously implementing, conceiving, and applying Pancasila.

From the elaboration above, it can be seen that establishing religious life concord and developing religious life, not only respecting and appreciating, building and developing and giving guidance and direction for the better development of nation life, corresponding to government policy in building life in nation and state based on Pancasila and 1945 Constitution. It is the objective of religious life in living within society in which individual can live adjacently in concord and peace.

The term life concord is often equated with tolerance, understanding each other, appreciating each other, respecting each other, and harmony in inter-human relation. Concord contains recognition of difference and appreciation to each other. In social science, the term concord is a part or included into social integration (Budiyono, 1985).

The concept of concord is the reference to minimize the conflict cracking the principles of harmony in the plural community life. Furthermore, religious community concord in Indonesia involves three dimensions: internal religious community concord, inter-religious community concord, and concord between religious communities and government. This three dimensions becomes the focus of government's and every religious community's attention, to build tolerance, concord and harmony. In bringing the trilogy of concord into reality, regulation and legislation are published, and dialogue is intensified to solve the problems related to religious community relation (Sardy, 1981).

Life concord is a social unity of individuals the members of which respect and appreciate each other in certain environment so that concord and peace is created within society (Sardy, 1981).

Life concord is the collective need in living within society; living within society, individuals cannot avoid difference. The existing difference is not hindrance for living in concord and adjacently in fraternity and unity frames. The awareness of religious life concord should be dynamic, humanistic and democratic, in order to be transformed into the lower class of society or the next generation, so that concord cannot only be felt or enjoyed by the rich or those living in the present but also transferred to the next generation. It is because religion cannot stand alone and be considered as solving all problems. The definition of religious community concord, according to Mukti, is a condition in which all religious community groups can perform and undertake their own religious obligation collectively without reducing their own basic rights and live as the good religion adherents in peace and concord. It is manifested into three concords: internal religious community concord, inter-religious community concord, and concord between religious communities and government (Mukti, 2009).

From the argument above, it can be concluded that the religious community life is a social condition of individuals or members respecting each other, appreciating each other, and living in peace and harmony based on tolerance and cooperation in their society environment, either internally or externally to achieve collective welfare in society, both physically and spiritually.

## 2.3 Traditional Belief

Paul Radin in his work entitled *Primitive Religion: Its Nature and Origin*, cited in Haryanto (2015)

stated that in every culture, the difference of individual's religion belief degree is dependent on the extent to which his/her service is to profundity. Furthermore, he said that religion is an object of study getting much attention from social scholars particularly sociology, anthropology, psychology, economy, history and politic (Haryanto, 2015).

Dradjat said that the term traditional religion is used only to explain human religion in the first stage that progressed later through polytheism toward monotheism. Furthermore, Van der Leuw in Daradjat stated that traditional religion is a certain structure of human character or a certain way of looking for way out to get human closer to World and God, and a certain view on everything in life in surrounding environment in human mentality (Daradjat, 1996).

Considering the elaboration above, traditional religion is divided into three:

- Dynamism derived from Greek word *Duramos*. In English it is dynamic, and *kekuatan* or *khasiat* in Indonesian. Thus, dynamism is a human belief or understanding on the objects surrounding having strength or supernatural power;
- Animism stated derives from the Greek Word *Anima* (*Anemae*) stemming from Avepos meaning spirit or soul or tenet about spirit reality. Thus, animism is the veneration to the dead spirits. Furthermore, it can be said that animism emphasizes on veneration to spiritual creature, the object of which cannot be seen using human's eye, but can be felt by human beings to get them closer to World and God (Daradjat, 1996);
- Belief in the Supreme God.

Primitive or traditional ethnic recognizes that there are many believes in invisible powers venerated such as the power of object, plant, and the power of nature and even the power existing inside human (Daradjat, 1996).

Furthermore, Tylor and Fraser assume that the oldest form of primitive human religion is the belief in magic and invisible power, because of human's limited mind. However, after it could be proved that the magic science was not successful, they change and no longer believe in the invisible creatures behind the nature that are more powerful than human beings (Daradjat, 1996).

In *Pyramids of Sacrifice*, Berger and Thomas (1999) states that human being is the creature projecting the meaning on to universe. Human beings name the object, label value to those objects, and create broad definition (semiotic system)

constituting the guidelines absolutely needed in life. Furthermore, Berger and Thomas (1999) states that the need for meaning has cognitive and normative dimensions. In other words, human being should find out what is actually and what should be. He informs the members of society where they are and direct them to what they should do in certain position (Dwi and Rachmad, 2008).

Considering some argument above, it can be concluded that traditional belief is human religion in the first stage that progressed later through polytheism toward monotheism, then projecting the meaning on to universe, and human beings name the object, label value to those objects, and create broad definition (semiotic system) constituting the guidelines absolutely needed in life.

### 3 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Social construction theory is used to see the social phenomenon in the field, because social construction is the continuation of phenomenological approach formerly is the philosophical theory constructed by Hegel, Husserl and then continued by Schutz. Then, through Weber, phenomenology became a reliable social theory to be used as social analysis. In understanding and studying social construction the adherents of Halaika traditional belief creates collective life concord, Peter L Berger and Thomas Luckmann's construction theory is used. Berger and Thomas (1999) said that there are three important moments that should be understood simultaneously. They are: *externalization, objectification, and internalization*.

Those three moments are interrelated and conceived as dialectic process. Each of those moments is compatible to an essential characterization in social world. Through externalization, community is man-made; through objectification, community becomes sui generis reality that is unique; and through internalization, human being is a product of community. There is a process of pulling out (externalization) so that it is as if outside (objectification), and furthermore, there is a process of redrawing in (internalization) so that what is outside is as if inside the self (Manuaba, 2010).

The relationship between human beings and social creature is a dialectic one. Human and its social world interact with each other, and the product, as social world, instead affects human being as its producer. Externalization, objectification, and internalization are a moment of a dialectic process

running continuously. Society is a human product, man is an objective reality; and man is a social product. If in this process one moment is ignored, it will result in distortion. Bergerian theory of social construction society sees it from those three moments (Berger and Thomas, 1999).

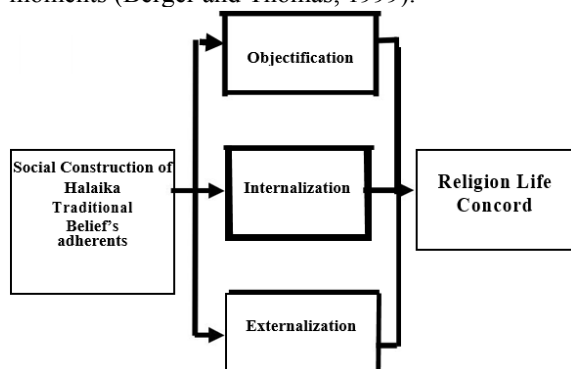


Figure 1: Framework Chart.

#### 4 METHODS

Creswell in Sugiyono (2015) states that qualitative research is the qualitative method that can be used to learn, to open, and to understand what occurs behind every phenomenon occurring in society life. Therefore, the method used was qualitative research method with phenomenological approach aiming to find out the social construction about the religious life concord of Halaika traditional belief's adherents as the meaning of social reality.

This research focused on the adherent community of Halaika traditional belief regarding how the view or tenet of halaika traditional belief adherents creates collective life concord as the result of social construction that human being living in certain social environment, conducting interaction process simultaneously with its environment. Society lives in objective and subjective reality dimension constructed through externalization, objectification and internalization moments. Those three moments always experience dialectical process in the society.

The sample was taken using maximum variation sampling with purposive sampling technique representing the main theme cutting the big agreement between varying participants. This sampling technique attempts to achieve the accurate representation of total informant, a maximum variation sample can be used as the representative of random sample (Patton, 2002). Twenty-five informants were employed in this research; initial

was used to keep the informants' confidentiality. Techniques of collecting data used were observation, in-depth interview, and documentation. Data validation was carried out using source triangulation by comparing and cross-checking the degree of freedom or information obtained through different times and instrument in qualitative research, and then analyzed using Miles and Huberman's analysis model.

#### 5 DISCUSSION

Boti village is a remote village located in Kie Sub District, South Middle Timor of East Nusa Tenggara. It is about 177 km from Kupang that can be reached in 3 (three) hours riding, with 2,199 populations: 1,063 males and 1,136 females.

In this village there are 236 Halaika traditional belief adherents (114 males and 122 females), led by a tribal chief. They believe in two Masters: firstly, the Master of Eternal World or Uis Neno, who are respected and worshipped by Boti Ethnic, as it is He who assume, maintain, and raise human being and everything contained in it, and secondly the Master of Secular World or Uis Pah, respected and worshipped by Boti Ethnic as He supervises and protects human being and everything on the earth and determines whether human gets into heaven or hell.

View or tenets of halaika traditional belief contains 2 (two) basic values of view/tenet and 5 (five) prohibitions that should be complied with in daily life:

- Manek es nok es (loving each other);
- Mum'tau ma mus'man neu ho ena nok'ho ama (respect your parents);
- Kaisa,m saksi mam bot, beo (Never become counterfeit or liar witness);
- Kaisa,m mubak' (Never stealing);
- Kaisa,m mu'bae lalu (Never gambling);
- Kaisa,m maka paisa (Never making sexual intercourse out of marriage);
- Kaisa,m ma lol a' ma oet' (Never killing). (Result of interview with HB, on November 2, 2016).

In understanding and studying social construction, the adherents of Halaika traditional belief creates collective life concord, a Social Construction theory is used. Berge and Luckmann said that there are three important moments that should be understood simultaneously. They are: externalization, objectification, and internalization.

Halaika traditional belief contains *Lais Manekat tenet* meaning loving each other as the form of their affection expressed in maintaining deed and action in order not to harm others. The externalization of such the tenet was conducted by family, formal education institution, and religious institution. Then, there was community objectification conducted by villagers repeatedly as the Boti people's habit and culture internalized in daily life.

- Externalization process. Externalization is a devotion of human selfness to the world continuously in either his physical or mental activities. This process occurs among the adherents of halaika traditional belief in Boti village, constituting a cultural imperative that has run in daily life. Externalization is an anthropological imperative, in which the existence of human being unlikely occurs in a closed environment. His existence should continuously devote his selfness to activities. This anthropological imperative stems from human's unstable biological properties to deal with his environment;
- Objectification process. It means that society is human product, stemming from externalization phenomenon. Human product including his own world and then the world outside himself reveals products as the activity outside himself. It is conducted by every individual in intercourse, for example agreeing with others' opinion with word *Ahoit* (Yes, Master), it is the cultural product deriving from human consciousness, but product cannot be reabsorbed suddenly into consciousness. Culture outside human subjectivity becomes a distinctive world. World produced by human beings obtains objective reality property;
- Internalization process. Internalization is an individual's direct understanding or interpretation on objective event as the expression of meaning. In daily life of Halaika traditional belief adherent community, internalization process runs from family, education institution and other custom institutions, in which individual identifies him/herself with a variety of social institutions or social organizations with which individuals are affiliated. Internalization is the reabsorption of reality by human beings and retransformation of objective world's structures into subjective consciousness' structures.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The conclusion of research is that its view or tenet says that in life human has two Masters of Universe that should be obeyed: the Master of Eternal World or *Uis Neno* and the Master of Secular World or *Uis Pah*. The manifestation of *halaika values* in their life can be seen in a slogan *Lais Manekat* (loving each other between fellow human beings), constituting their form of affection expressed by maintaining deed and action in order not to harm others' heart or feeling implemented in daily life.

From the conclusion above, academic community recommends as follows. Indonesian people is a plural society with diverse cultural tradition, Ethnic, Religion, Race, and Groups having their own belief with distinctive peculiarity that should be preserved as Indonesian riches, so that further research should be conducted to find out its characteristics in maintaining collective life concord for the sake of achieving a safe and peaceful Indonesian society.

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