



Balêele As A Ritual To Inherit Banggai Cultural Values

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Abstract: This research aims to examine *Baleele* culture as a value inheritance ritual in Banggai culture. This research is qualitative, using an ethnographic approach with the following steps: [1] Determining the object of ethnographic research; [2] Identifying and determining the location of the cultural group; [3] Selecting the cultural theme of the cultural group; [4] Determining the type of ethnography; [5] Collecting information; [6] Writing research results. The result found that *Baleele* is a form of ritual communication carried out at a certain time, ahead of the "Big Ritual" of Banggai custom, namely the *Mabangun Tunggul* Ritual, held every 6 years. *Baleele* is one of the rituals that takes place three nights before the *Mabangun Tunggul* Ritual. The Banggai people strongly believe in the advice delivered, and consider the process as something sacred, valuable, for themselves, their families and the Banggai community as a whole.

Keywords: *Baleele*, Ritual Communication, Value Transmission, Culture, Banggai

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a great nation. A nation that has been built by our predecessors with various ethnic groups. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (2015), data on ethnicity in Indonesia was first generated through the 1930 Population Census (hereafter SP) by the Dutch Government. However, in the New Order era, this data collection was halted due to a "political taboo" that viewed discussing ethnicity as an effort that could threaten the integrity of the nation. Only seventy years later, in the Reformation era, tribal data began to be collected again by BPS through SP 2000 and continued in SP 2010.

Bauman (2004) said that ethnicity is difficult to define. In general, a person identifies her/himself with a particular ethnicity because of its origin, lifestyle, language, kinship, or even political elements. Based on this, questions in a census or survey are open-ended and the self-identification method is used, namely. H. ethnicity is recorded based on the information provided by the respondent. In addition, to facilitate the analysis of ethnic data, each respondent's answer is given a certain code.

In SP 2010, there were 1331 ethnicities. A total of 1331 categories are codes for tribal names, sub-tribal names and even sub-tribal names. Therefore, the analysis often requires regrouping/classification. In the SP 2010 Ethnic Information Diversity Follow-up Survey, which measured diversity using the Ethnic Fractional Index (EFI) and Ethnic Polarized Index (EPOI), the EFI was 0.81 and the EPOI was 0.50. Indonesia proved to be highly heterogeneous but not polarized, so the potential impact of conflict is generally minimal.

As an ethnic group with a long history dating back to the 16th century and earlier, Banggai has a value system, passed down through the generations, that is still alive today among its people. The inheritance system has been partly institutionalized through customary institutions supported by the government, which will and have been enforced. In the reality of Banggai society, both the government, traditional leaders and the community are very enthusiastic about welcoming traditional rituals, for example *Molabot Tumbe*, which is carried out once a year, around December 2-3 of the current year, involving two ethnic groups namely Banggai and Batui (Saluan), crossing 3 districts: Banggai, Banggai Islands as the crossing place, and ends in Banggai City, as the final destination of the Maleo Egg carrier.

Another ritual that is also a medium of *Baleele* tradition, is the *Mabangun Tunggul* Ritual, a ritual of "erecting the Tunggul Flag", an activity held every 6 years, 6 months and 6 days, as a commemoration of the unity of the Four Basalo (Four Great Men) who ruled the Land of Banggai, when they united to build the Kingdom of Banggai at the end of the 16th Century, recorded in 1530 AD (Almanac, 2020). *Baleele* is a type of song, sung at one of the Sacred Houses, namely *Kamali Boneaka*, because *Kamali Boneaka* is considered a *lipu tumbuno* (owner of the area), or the owner of Banggai. Three nights before the *Mabangun Tunggul* Ritual is held, the *Baleele* Ritual process is carried out. This paper will then examine *Balêele* as a ritual to inherit Banggai cultural values.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

***Baleele* as a Legacy of Local Cultural Values**

The *Baleele* tradition as stated by several figures in the FGDs held in 2021 and 2022, as a series of research on the Implementation of Local Wisdom Values in Building the Banggai Nation Tribe, is part of the ritual, accompanying the "big ritual" activities held every six years, six months and six days, namely the *Mabangun Tunggul* Ritual. At certain ritual moments, traditional leaders, community leaders, traditional activists, academics, school children, local communities and tourists, together welcome this ritual with enthusiasm. The customary leaders prepare themselves, time and energy as well as material, for the implementation of the ritual. Everyone in the Banggai community participates according to their position in the ritual. The descendants of the Banggai traditional carriers prepare the activities based on the division of labor that has been arranged based on custom, and it is done for generations. Traditional leader who prepares the bamboo used for the *Mabangun Tunggul* Ritual, for example, will be passed on by the next generation who are descendants of the traditional leader with the responsibilities that have been carried out before. Thus, the overall preparation is a continuation of the responsibilities of the previous generation.

Similarly, those who prepared the thatched roofs, the bamboo sticks used for the walls, and those who were given the responsibility to build the houses. The work they are doing now is part of the responsibility that their ancestors had taken on before them.

Three nights before the *Mabangun Tunggul* ritual, at *Kamali Boneaka*, on the night of the ritual preparation, two people will automatically go into a trance. At that time, "someone" who is not themselves, will begin to "sing" like in a Wayang performance in the Javanese region, with an opening verse, as it has been for generations. The two *Baleele* are on top of the house, and the people listening are under the sacred house or *Kamali Boneaka*. For three straight nights, *Baleele* will be chanted every night, after sunset, until dawn. The song starts from the origin of Banggai Island, then the origin of life, giving advice, advice, and various things about life, which is considered as "occult" information because it is performed by people in a trance. The person who is singing about the history of Banggai, while giving advice, counsel, messages about life, is called *Baleele* in Banggai tradition. When a person is possessed by the "spirits" of the ancestors. This process is considered sacred by the Banggai people, and is part of the beliefs that may be difficult to understand by other communities outside the Indigenous Banggai community.

People will intentionally come together to listen to the *Baleele*. People in trance will tell stories about many things. Most of them use the Banggai language, some of them use the ancient Banggai language, and only certain people today can still translate it. *Baleele* lasts for three nights, and usually the person in trance will wake up during the day, and continue *Baleele* at night. The person will be awake, not sleeping, not eating and drinking and not feeling sleepy and tired. The uniqueness of this tradition is that the people of Banggai strongly believe in what is said by the person in trance, and is used as a medium by the ancestors of Banggai to be present in the midst of their descendants, or the current community and give messages about the end of days; protecting the land and its children and grandchildren, living together peacefully, for the prosperity of Banggai.

Baleele is also used as a medium to ask about the history of Banggai, and various things that have not been revealed in reality. For example, they asked about the whereabouts of Adi Cokro's grave, which is still unknown. The information obtained was that Adi Cokro died in the 16th century and was (supposedly) buried in Cirebon, and this information is considered a reliable source of information, although it still needs scientific research. Many things are questioned when a person is in trance, because when the person wakes up from the trance, the person will not give any information about the things he has said during the trance. In a state of consciousness, everyone who knows him knows that he does not have the capacity to be able to know things that have happened in the past, and his insight into the future. It is this uniqueness that has led the indigenous people of Banggai, and the people of Banggai as a whole, to believe in *Baleele* as a ritual to receive information from the past through the medium of a person in trance.

Internalization of Islamic Values in Local Culture

The process of internalizing Islamic values in local culture has been carried out during the Islamization process in various regions of the world, including in Indonesia. In Indonesia itself, Islam has entered through trade and proselytization, allegedly since the beginning of the existence of Islam, namely in the 7th Century AD. Islam has been institutionalized through various Islamic Kingdoms in the archipelago, since the 13th Century. While in Banggai, according to the site located in Lolantang, Banggai Islands Regency, on the tombstone of Imam Sya'ban's tomb, the existence of Islam is stated in 168 AH or around 792 AD (8th Century). It is strongly suspected that the route used by Imam Sya'an was the spice

route (Sadi, 2021) which is still a debate whether the Malay Arabic letters used to write on Imam Sya'ban's tomb were written in that year. In various writings found, Malay Arabic writing was used around the 14th century. When compared to the information on Imam Sya'ban's tomb, it is stated that he died in 168 AH or around 792 AD. Meanwhile, in that year, Malay script had not yet been created in Indonesia, people were only familiar with Arabic (Kumparan, 2022).

Mariane (2014) states that local wisdom is a value that is considered good and right so that it can last for a long time, even institutionalized (Mariane, 2014).

The elements that form local culture and wisdom are: [1] human; [2] ideas of good value; [3] truth that has been traditionalized; and [4] recognized by the community. With these four elements, it can be understood that in local culture and wisdom, religious values cannot be separated.

Cultural values, according to Koentjaraningrat (in Aziz, 2021), are actually a crystallization of five main issues in human life, namely (1) the nature of human life, (2) the nature of human work, (3) the nature of human position in time and space, (4) the nature of human relationships with the surrounding nature, and (5) the nature of human relationships with each other. Whatever values exist in a person or group of people will determine their figure as a cultured human being.

Several studies (Aziz, 2021; Setiyawan, 2012; Harahap, 2016; Kastolani and Yusof, 2016), mention the form of Islamic values in local culture, namely:

- 1) The value of divinity. The equivalence between the concept of local culture and religious theology for the community is the implementation of divine values manifested in the pattern of worship or worship sincerely accompanied by love for the one.
- 2) The values of humanity. The implementation of humanitarian values towards the local culture of Muslim communities that have relevance to religious rituals indicates a harmonious relationship in utilizing all forms of their local cultural products, providing awareness of the importance of tolerance (*tasamuh*) values in living individually and in society.
- 3) The value of life. Religious people's view of life, especially in Islamic teachings, is worldly and ukhrawi life, and has certain patrons.
- 4) Spiritual value. Values that direct humans to something transcendent, beyond themselves and human strength.
- 5) Ritual value. It is a cultural practice that contains elements of worship that lead to the worship of Allah SWT.
- 6) Moral values. Moral values or morals as an urgent part of human behavior can be seen from various cultures and traditions of people who maintain good attitudes and behavior in social life.
- 7) Social values. Local culture contains social values, this is understood from the reality of society in an area, has a social environment and with the community forming a common life association, they help each other in goodness and remind that human happiness is also related to their relationship with others.
- 8) Intellectual value. Ancestral messages for Muslim communities contain intellectual value to maintain the customs of the community in addition to reminding humans to diligently do good deeds and leave reprehensible actions for safety in this world and in the hereafter.

Hude et al (2019), stated that local wisdom was born because of the need for values, norms and rules that become models for action. Local wisdom is also one of the sources of knowledge (culture) of the community, manifested in tradition, history, formal and informal education, art, religion and other creative interpretations.

Holy Verse cues on Quran-based character education include:

[1] The Concept of Environment-Based Education:

Surat Al-Baqarah (2), Verse 30, which means:

Remember` when your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to place a successive` human` authority on earth." They asked `Allah`, "Will You place in it someone who will spread corruption there and shed blood while we glorify Your praises and proclaim Your holiness?" Allah responded, "I know what you do not know." (al-Baqarah [2]: 30).

In this verse there is a relationship between Allah, nature, and humans. According to Ibn Ashur in *At-Tahrir wa at-Tanwir* (in *Tafsir al-Qur'an.id*), the Angel's question in the verse "Why do You want to make (khalifah) on the earth those who will make damage to it and shed blood?" shows that the task of humans on earth is to protect and manage the earth properly.

Conserving the environment is part of preserving the earth. Utilizing the earth's potential effectively and non-exploitatively is also part of caring for the environment. Managing and developing the potential of nature effectively is part of preserving the earth. All of this is part of the implementation of the task of khalifah that is assigned to humans. Humans are also warned to never damage the earth, be it by bloodshed or damaging the environment. Anything that causes damage on earth, anything that endangers the preservation of the environment is forbidden by Allah since the beginning of human creation.

[2] Character Building Based on Self-Potential

Surah Al-Qalam (68), verse 4: "And you are indeed of excellent character" (Quran, Surah Al-Qalam [68]:4).

Imam Ghazali (1989) in the book *Ihya' 'Ulumuddin* explains that character is a trait embedded in the soul that gives rise to actions easily, without requiring prior thought and consideration. In Fitri's analysis (2018) In the verse, it is explained that character building in the perspective of the Qur'an and hadith, has existed since the time of the Apostle, where the Apostle himself is a role model in learning. Because, there is no doubt that everything in the Prophet Muhammad is a great character achievement, not only for Muslims but also for people all over the world.

[3] Character Building Based on Culture

Surah An-Nahl [16]: Verse 123, which means: "Then We revealed to you (Muhammad): 'Follow the religion of Ibrahim, the Hanif,' and he was not one of those who associate partners with God". An-Nahl [16]: 123.

According to Syafi'ie (2017), states that the lesson of the study verse above (123) is the need to preserve the culture that is in accordance with religious sharia. Abraham's teachings are guaranteed to be true by Allah SWT, so we are rightly ordered to follow. The command is a revelation that must be true and must be obeyed. According to Syafi'ie (2017), Muslims are obliged to maintain Islamic traditions and preserve cultures that are in

accordance with Islamic shari'ah. Meanwhile, cultures without religious values should include Islamic values. While cultures that are contrary to Islam, must be changed wisely, considering local diversity.

[4] Character Building Based on Religious Value found in the Quran Surah Luqman (31) verses 12-14:

Indeed, We blessed Luqmân with wisdom, 'saying', "Be grateful to Allah, for whoever is grateful, it is only for their own good. And whoever is ungrateful, then surely Allah is Self-Sufficient, Praiseworthy (Quran, Surah Luqman: 12).

And 'remember' when Luqmân said to his son, while advising him, "O my dear son! Never associate 'anything' with Allah 'in worship', for associating 'others with Him' is truly the worst of all wrongs." (Quran, Surah Luqman: 13).

And We have commanded people to 'honour' their parents. Their mothers bore them through hardship upon hardship, and their weaning takes two years. So be grateful to Me and your parents. To Me is the final return. (Quran, Surah Luqman: 14).

The explanation of Surah Luqman verse 12: in Tafsirquran.id (2021), it is explained that in a narration from Ibn 'Umar, he once heard the Messenger of Allah say, "Lukman is not a prophet, but he is a servant who reflects a lot, he loves Allah, so Allah loves him too." At the end of this verse, Allah explains that the one who is grateful to Allah is grateful for his own benefit. This is because Allah will give him a great reward for his gratitude.

Explanation of Surah Luqman Verse 13: In Tafsirquran.id (2021), Allah reminds the Prophet of the advice that Lukman once gave to his son when he gave him a lesson. Associate 'anything' with Allah is an injustice because it means putting something out of place, i.e. equating something that bestows favors and bounties with something that is unable to provide them. Equating Allah, the source of favors and bounties, with statues that cannot do anything is an act of injustice.

Explanation of Surah Luqman Verse 14: (Tafsirquran, 2021), in this verse, Allah commands humans to be filial to their parents by trying to carry out their orders and realize their wishes.

These verses provide insights and lessons to humans, especially to the people of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, about character education starting from [1] Gratitude only to Allah; [2] Do not associate Allah with anything because it is a wrongdoing; and [3] The command to do good to both parents.

Urf as Part of Islamic Law

Urf is an Islamic term that is interpreted as customs that are passed down from generation to generation (Wikipedia, 2021). Scholars agree that not all *'urf* can be used as evidence to determine Islamic law. *'urf* can be accepted as a legal basis if it meets the following conditions: [1] It does not contradict the sharia; [2] It does not cause a disadvantage and does not eliminate the benefit; [3] It has been generally accepted among Muslims; [4] It does not apply in *mahdhoh* (worship that contains a relationship with Allah SWT alone, which is a vertical relationship) worship; [5] The *'urf* is already in the community when it will be determined as one of the legal standards.

Ritual Communication

Ritual communication is a form of communication used to fulfil human identity as an individual, as a member of a social community, and as one of the elements of the universe. Individuals who perform ritual communication affirm their commitment to the traditions of their family, tribe, nation, ideology, or religion. Some forms of ritual communication include wedding ceremonies, *siraman* (part of the wedding ceremony process in certain culture in Indonesia), praying (praying, reading holy books), flag ceremonies, sports moments, and so on. Mulyana (2005:25), says that ritual communication is usually carried out by communities that often perform different ceremonies throughout the year and throughout life, which anthropologists call rites of passage, ranging from birth ceremonies, circumcisions, birthdays, engagements, weddings, to death ceremonies. Those who participate in such forms of ritual communication reaffirm their commitment to the traditions of their family, tribe, nation, country, ideology or religion.

Ritual communication is often expressive. Ritual communication activities allow participants to share emotional commitments and become the bond of their cohesion. The essence is not the ritual, but the feeling of camaraderie that accompanies it, meaning that we are bound by something bigger than ourselves, and that we are recognized and accepted by our group.

Ritual communication is sometimes mystical and often the behavior of people in the community is difficult to understand and comprehend by people outside the community. This ritual communication will probably remain throughout the ages, because it is a human need, although its form changes in order to fulfil the needs of humans as individual beings, members of certain communities, social beings, and as part of the universe.

Ritual in the Communication Perspective

According to Mulyana (2005:25), ritual communication which is closely related to expressive communication is ritual communication that is usually carried out collectively. A community often performs different ceremonies throughout the year and throughout life, which anthropologists call rites of passage, ranging from birth ceremonies, circumcisions, birthdays, engagements (proposing, exchanging rings), *siraman*, wedding ceremonial processes, such as *ijab-qabul*, *sungkeman*, sawer, and so on), wedding anniversaries, to death ceremonies. Furthermore, according to Mulyana (2005: 25). In these events people say words or display certain behaviors that are symbolic. Other rites such as praying (*salat*) reading the holy book, pilgrimage, flag ceremony, graduation ceremony, Eid al-Fitr or Christmas celebration are also parts of ritual communication. Those who participate in such forms of ritual communication reaffirm their commitment to the traditions of their family, tribe, nation, country, ideology or religion.

According to Rothenbuhler (1998:28), ritual is always identified with habit or routine. Rothenbuhler further elaborates that, "rituals are the voluntary performance of precisely patterned behaviors to symbolically affect or participate in serious life". Meanwhile, Couldry (2005:60) recognizes ritual as a habitual action, a formal action and also contains transcendental values. Rothenbuhler (1998:29-33) outlines some characteristics of ritual itself as follows: Ritual as action, performance, awareness and willingness, irrationality. Ritual is not just recreation, collective, expression of social relations, subjunctive and not indicative, effectiveness of symbols, condensed symbols, expressive or aesthetic Behavior, customary behavior, regularly re-curing Behavior, communication without information and sacred.

Ritual is one way of communicating. All forms of ritual are communicative. Rituals are always symbolic behavior in social situations. Therefore, rituals are always a way to

convey something. Realizing that ritual is a way of communicating, the term ritual communication emerged.

The term ritual communication was first coined by James W. Carey (1992:18). He mentioned that, "In the definition of ritual, communication is associated with terms such as "sharing", "participation", "association", "fellowship", and "possession of the same faith". The communication pattern that is built in the view of ritual is a sacred ceremony where everyone is together in fellowship and commonality. Couldry (2005:15) added that communication patterns in a ritual perspective are not the sender sending a message to the receiver, but as a sacred ceremony where everyone takes part together in fellowship and gathering at the same time. In the ritual view, what is more important is the togetherness of the community in praying, singing and ceremonies.

Ritual communication in McQuail's understanding (2000: 54) is also called expressive communication. Communication in such a model emphasizes the intrinsic satisfaction of the sender or receiver rather than other instrumental goals. Ritual or expressive communication relies on emotion and shared understanding. According to McQuail (2000:55), communication in this view is an activity related to celebratory, consummatory, and decorative. Therefore, to realize the occurrence of communication, several performance elements are needed. The communication that is built is like a pleasant reception.

The messages conveyed in ritual communication are usually latent, and confusing/ambiguous, depending on the associations and communication symbols used, not symbols chosen by the participants, but provided by the culture. Media and messages are usually rather difficult to separate.

The use of symbols in ritual communication is intended to symbolize ideas and values related to hospitality, celebrations or ceremonies of worship and fellowship. The symbols are widely shared and understood, although varied and vague in meaning (McQuail & Windahl, 1993:55). This ritual communication will never be finished or timeless and unchanging. In the life of a community, ritual communication plays a very important role, especially in social relations. Hammad (2006:3) stated that in understanding ritual communication, there are characteristics of ritual communication as follows:

1. Ritual communication is closely related to the sharing, participation, gathering, friendship of a community that shares a common belief;
2. Communication is not directly aimed at transmitting messages, but at maintaining the integrity of the community.
3. Communication is also not directly to convey or impart information but to represent or re-present the shared beliefs of the community.
4. The communication pattern that is built is like a sacred ceremony where everyone is together in fellowship and gathering (e.g. praying together, singing and other ceremonial activities).
5. The use of language both through artificial and symbolic (generally in the form of dances, games, stories, and oral speech) is intended for confirmation, describes something that is considered important by a community, and shows something that is ongoing and breakable in a social process.
6. As in ritual ceremonies, communicants are sought to be involved in the sacred drama, and not just be observers or spectators.
7. In order for communication to be involved in the communication process, the selection of communication symbols should be rooted in the community's own traditions, such as things that are unique, original and new to them.

8. Ritual communication or expressive communication relies on people's emotions or feelings and shared understanding. It also emphasizes the intrinsic satisfaction of the sender or receiver.
9. Messages conveyed in ritual communication are latent, and confusing/ambiguous, depending on the associations and communication symbols used by a culture.
10. It is rather difficult to separate the media and the message. The media itself can be a message.
11. The use of symbols is intended to symbolize ideas and values related to hospitality, celebrations or ceremonies of worship and fellowship.

Furthermore, Couldry (2005:15) added that in ritual communication there are three terms that are closely related. These three things are communication, communion, and common. Dewey (1916) as cited by Carey (1992:22) emphasized that the words common, community, and communication are not just verbal ties. It is emphasized that people who live in a community have something in common; and communication is a way to enable them to have these things together.

So, it is clear that in the context of ritual communication, the three elements (communication, communion/celebration, and togetherness) are linked. Communication that is built is closely related to the ceremony or communion/worship activities of a community. As with a communion, it is usually carried out by the residents of a community together.

Ritual is often understood as a system of cultural construction of symbolic communication. It is practiced through verbal and non-verbal and actions expressed in various media. Ronal Grimes (1982) suggested models of rituals such as, ritualization, ceremony, church worship, magic and celebration (Bowie, 2000:157).

Holiness as the final or ultimate value of a community is not only maintained by punishment or exclusion and negative social labels, but also by rites. The unity built on the common interest in the sacred gives birth to social rites. Society lives itself by moving to and from the sacred. Celebrations, festivals, and cultural events in society can be called as forms of rites. Rites are held collectively and regularly so that the community is refreshed with collective knowledge and meanings. Rites mediate for community members to remain rooted in the sacred.

The functions of rituals, as stated by several experts, can be described as follows:

1. Ritual as action

Ritual is an action and not just a thought or concept. In everyday life, myths are one of the rationalizations of ritual activities. Thus, ritual is seen as a form of action not only as a way of thinking. Ritual is also something that people practice and not just keep in their minds.

2. Performance

Rituals are performed as a form of high-level communication characterized by beauty (aesthetics), designed in a special way and demonstrating something to its audience. Because it emphasizes aesthetics, ritual performance contains two characteristics. First, rituals are never created in the momentum of the action itself. Rather, it is always an action based on pre-existing conceptions. Second, rituals are always performances for others. The performance is intended to demonstrate communication competence to the audience.

3. Consciousness and Willingness

Rituals are always performed consciously and therefore voluntarily. In the case of rituals that are special events, people are consciously involved both as performers and as spectators. Usually to be involved in a ritual is a choice. People can choose to be involved or not to be involved.

4. Irrational

Often rituals are seen as irrational because they are considered to have little benefit for specific purposes. Parsons in Rothenbuhler (1998: 29) concluded that the performance of rituals is often associated with the practice of magic. In such a context, rituals are seen as nonsensical.

5. Rituals are not just recreation

The various rituals practiced are not just recreational activities. While there is often celebration through rituals, rituals are not just for fun and frolic. In fact, rituals are part of serious life.

6. Collective

Overall, a ritual is not something that is done individually for the benefit of the individual in a purely individualistic way. Rituals, although performed privately, are always socially structured. For example: the language and sign systems used, traditions, and morals. In addition, rituals are also group-oriented and are generally performed in social situations.

7. Expression of Social Relations

Rituals include the use of behavioral models that express social relations. The forms of ritual action are symbols of referents or pointers in social relations, commands, and social institutions where the ritual is performed.

8. Subjunctive and Not Indicative

Rituals always occur in a suppositional mode. This means that rituals are often about possibilities such as how it should be, and not what it is about something that is happening.

9. Effectiveness of symbols

Symbols in a ritual are very effective and powerful. The power of ritual symbols is clearly visible in the form of rites. Ritual symbols always play a role in all forms of ritual. Even when there is a social transformation that does not display the explicit intention of a ritual performance such as a song, dance, gesture, prayer, banquet, custom, and so on.

10. Condensed Symbols

Condensed symbols refer to the characteristics of ritual symbols that have multiple meanings and actions. Therefore, condensed symbols are often ambiguous and difficult for social observers. For example, symbols can be displayed in different ways to different people; depending on their sensitivity to differences in valence. The implication is that symbols carry more meaning than usual.

11. Expressive or Aesthetic Behavior

Expressiveness is one of the core forms of ritual which takes the position of being part of what is done in ritual as well as how it is done. Ritual also has a fundamental aesthetic component.

12. Customary Behavior

Rituals are forms of customary behavior. Ritual implies repetition as done in a similar way in previous times or eras. This means that rituals are not made up by the actors. Instead, rituals are behaviors that are based on habits or standardized rules. As such, this habitual behavior is imperative, related to ethics, and social injunctions.

13. Regularly Re-curing Behavior

Rituals are behaviors that are done repetitively on a regular basis. Many rituals are performed on a scheduled basis, and are determined to follow a time cycle. One important implication of this regularly occurring ritual is that it is not governed and dictated by a specific situation, but rather through what is seen as right.

14. Communication without information

Actually, the idea of ritual as an uninformed communication emphasizes that rituals are more about performance than information. In certain instances, it tends to prioritize acceptance over change. It is known that there is an element of willingness in rituals. Then the action to engage in ritual is also a choice. Therefore, there is little information in every ritual.

15. Sacred

Many experts emphasize that rituals are actions related to the sacred activities. The criterion of sacredness is related to the pattern of activities or actions of community members.

Ritual Communication Theory

Ritual communication examines how people create and express meaning through rituals, both verbal and nonverbal. Ritual communication goes beyond collective religious expression. Although ritual communication is largely formulaic and repetitive, it is a highly participatory and egocentric process. These rituals are shaped by time, space, and individual creations, linguistic ideologies, local aesthetics, context of use, and relationships between users. (Senft & Basso [Ed.], 2007).

James Carey (1989), describes the Ritual Communication Model as shown in Figure 1 below:

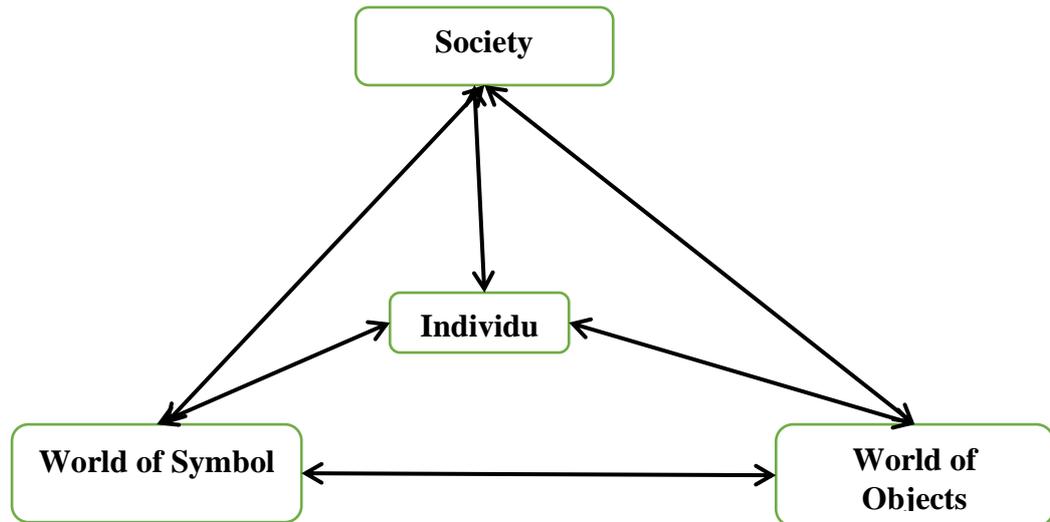


Figure 1: James Carey's Ritual Communication
Source: James Carey, 1989.

Components of Ritual Communication based on Figure 1: there are four components that are interconnected with each other, namely: [1] Individual; [2] society; [3] World Object; [4] World of Symbol. Ritual Communication developed by James W. Carey, is a communication process in society, which is symbolically constructed, aimed at maintaining, adjusting and sharing beliefs in society. The ritual perspective understands communication as a process that enables and enacts transformation in society.

Carey defines the ritual view specifically in terms of sharing, participation, association, and fellowship. In addition, Carey recognizes that, commonality, fellowship, and community, naturally correspond to the ritual outlook of the community. In the same way, the term "ritual" has religious connotations. For Carey, this connection to religion helps emphasize the concept of shared beliefs and ceremonies that are fundamental to the ritual view.

Carey distinguishes between the ritual view and Ritual Communication by emphasizing what he calls the more commonly known transmission view of communication. In the transmission view, the dissemination of information is the primary goal. According to Dr. James W. Carey, transmission is defined as the process of giving, sending, transmitting and delivering information to others. In the transmission view, information is disseminated, and mostly for control purposes. To support this idea, James W. Carey refers to the ancient Egyptian message system where, "transportation and communication are inseparable" and serve as a method of control.

James W. Carey seems to present these two views as oppositional, he recognizes that the dichotomy is false. He states, "neither of these opposing views of communication necessarily denies what the other affirms". Rather, they offer nuanced perspectives of communication that allow for a broader understanding of human interaction.

The basic elements of Ritual Communication, as stated by several experts are:

1. Ritual Communication is a representation of shared beliefs within a community;
2. The speed and amount of information is not as important as in the mode of transportation transmission.

3. There is nothing new to learn, the emphasis is on connection with the community.
4. In *Ritual Communication* (1998), Eric W. Rothenbuhler states that "ritual is communication without information."
5. David Gunkel, in *Hacking Cyberspace* (2001) states that ritual communication is a deliberate and repetitive activity. The reason is to establish and maintain the general principles of an organization or society.

METHODS

The research is qualitative, using Creswell's (2003) ethnographic approach, with the following steps:

1. Determine whether this research problem is best approached with an ethnographic study. As we discussed earlier that ethnography describes a cultural group by exploring beliefs, language and behavior, which is referred to as ethnographic ethnography;
2. Identify and determine the location of the cultural group to be studied. The group should be a combination of people who have been together for a long time because here what will be studied is the pattern of behavior, thoughts and beliefs that are shared.
3. Select a cultural theme or issue to be studied from a group. This involves analyzing the cultural group.
4. Determine the type of ethnography suitable for studying the cultural concept. Either realist ethnography or critical ethnography. This research type is Realist Ethnography.
5. Collect information from the field about the life of the group. The data collected may include observations, measurements, surveys, interviews, content analysis, audio-visuals, mapping and network research. After the data is collected, it is sorted and analyzed.
6. Compose the results of the research

Meanwhile, the character of Ethnographic research is Cultural theme, which is a culture that is implemented or described in a particular group or community. Creswell (2014).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

***Baleele* Tradition as a Ritual of Banggai Cultural Value Transformation**

Baleele has been known for a long time, and according to information received during the research in 2021, 2022 and 2023, the *Baleele* tradition has been part of the life of the Banggai indigenous people (FGD, 2021 and 2022). *Baleele* is a song with certain lyrics. The opening of the *Baleele* song begins with: "Eee lele lakon eee", and so on. This tradition is part of the transformation of values in Banggai society, from the ancestors to the current generation of Banggai. The uniqueness of this *Baleele* tradition is that the person who is considered a "Banggai ancestor", makes the medium of a certain person, "enters" and "exists" in the medium, and then gives advice, advice, a picture of the future, and also various past events, to the people who are listening to him. The medium is in a trance, unconscious or semi-conscious, and recites/sings for three nights without stopping, without eating, without drinking, without sleeping.

As the people around him take turns listening, the *Baleele* singer will continue to recite without stopping. According to Abuhajim (2022 and 2023), the *Baleele* process usually lasts for three consecutive nights. *Baleele* performers consist of two people, and both are descendants of their ancestors (Abuhajim, Interview, July 29, 2023). *Baleele* is a singing activity, starting with a certain opening, as Abuhajim told the researcher:

"Eee lele lakon eeee", then the person who baleele will tell the story of the origin of Banggai, starting from the incident of the Banggai people, the origin of the Banggai people, the origin of Banggai Island, and a lot of supernatural information, because it tells something that has happened a long time ago" (Abuhajim, Interview, July 29, 2023).

Baleele is only performed by descendants of people who have also performed it in the past, and is performed by two people. The current guardian is Kamali Boneaka. These present ancestors are considered to be "borrowing" the bodies of others, to give advice, religious messages, moral messages, rituals, the history of Banggai, the history of human origins. As Abdul Barry told researchers:

"The narration is like *banunut* (storytelling), which is only one-way, for example a historical journey. When he does the *baleele*, he will talk in a comprehensive context. For example, humans, with beliefs, he will talk about beliefs. Later he will talk about the belief in *Temeneno* or about God in Banggai belief.

Also, for example *dorang bacarita* (he talks) about livelihood traditions, later he will talk about sweet potatoes (Banggai), and he will talk about where sweet potatoes come from.

So, he mixed up history and myth, because as I said earlier, he was just telling the chronology of history. Because when he talks about livelihood, the material about gardening is Sweet Potato. And he will talk about the origin of Banggai sweet potato, which is currently the main theme in the *Sasampe* Ritual: (Abdul Barry, Interview, July 20, 2023).

Abdul Barry's explanation, stating that *Baleele* is a tradition of "storytelling history" performed through song (Abuhajim, Interview, July 29, 2023), performed by the indigenous people of Banggai, is done at a certain time, especially ahead of the "Big Ritual" *Mabangun Tunggul*, which is held every 6 years, 6 months and 6 days (Abuhajim, 2021 & 2022, FGD in Banggai). Three nights before the day of the ceremony, when all elements involved in the ceremony gather in several *Kamali* (sacred houses), the *Baleele* ritual takes place. The two people who will chant the *Beleele* take their places at the top of the *Kamali Boneaka*, while the rest of the listeners, will follow under the *Kamali Boneaka*. The person will tell many things, starting and usually beginning with the "History of Banggai". For this reason, Abdul Barry (Interview, 2023), refers the *Baleele* as the "Oral History" of the Banggai tradition. However, as stated in interviews with researchers, the storytelling history recited through the *Baleele*, is not conveyed sequentially, only explaining about the history itself. However, when the *Baleele* teller explains about the origin of the Banggai people, he will start with a story about the origin of the Banggai people based on a myth, known as the myth of *Boki Sea* (Samatan and Abdul Barry, 2020), so the *Baleele* teller will tell the Boki Sea myth as the origin of the Banggai people's life, which later the beginning of the Banggai people is associated with *Boki Sea*, which is mythological, that is what is told.

"Then the process of diaspora, migration, kinship. Migration, diaspora, kinship, belief, then tradition and ritual" (Abdul Barry, Interview, 2023). This process gave birth to descendants and scattered throughout Banggai which includes the current regions of Banggai, Banggai Islands and Banggai Laut. Or when *Baleele* tellers talk about livelihoods and plantations, they will tell about the Myth of Banggai Sweet Potato, which until now has become one of the rituals called *Sasampe Ritual* (Samatan, et al, 2022), the ritual of delivering Banggai Sweet Potato from Peling Island to Banggai Lalongo, with the myth of

Ubi Banggai, which originated from a young Banggai woman who was willing to *sinapal* (slashed) and *dipidok* (planted / bred) which would later grow into a vine and be called Ubi Banggai, which became Banggai's endemic food.

The long *Baleele* process, three nights, without sleep, without eating, without drinking, the person who does *Baleele* will continue to speak, and stop when the *Mabangun Tunggul* Ritual will be held. The people who listened took turns. Some are there for the whole three nights, but like any human being, they may sleep for a while, or leave to eat, drink, pray and other needs. Then another may come on the second night, and another person may only listen to *Baleele* during the day or night. Therefore, one's knowledge of what is spoken cannot be received in its entirety, in full sequence. This is why, through the same source, people who are listening, will listen, acquire and store information differently from one another (Abdul Barry, Interview, 2023). To the present day, no recording has been done by the Banggai Regional Government or the local community, as the *Baleele* process is considered part of the *pamali* or taboo (Abdul Barry, Interview, 2023). According to Abuhajim (2022), there have been people who have tried to record the sound, but the recording was unsuccessful; when it was played back, only the sound of the wind was heard (Abuhajim, Interview, 2022). To date, there is no recording of the *Baleele*.

Analysis

Banggai, as discussed earlier, is a region that was once an Islamic Kingdom. *Baleele*, on the other hand, is a legacy from the ancestors of the Banggai people long before Islam arrived in Banggai, before the 16th century, and was institutionalized into an Islamic Kingdom or Sultanate through the Kingdom of Banggai (Wikipedia, 2023). *Baleele* tradition is part of the process of transforming moral values from those believed to be the ancestors of the Banggai Nation, to the current generation of Banggai. The *Baleele* process usually occurs during the preparation of the "Big Ritual" of Banggai Custom, namely *Mabangun Tunggul* or Erecting the *Tunggul* Flag (Abdul Barry, Interview, 2023).

When these two traditions are in the preparation period, which is carried out in several *Kamali* or Sacred Houses, three nights before the *Mabangun Tunggul* Ritual, the *Baleele* procession takes place at *Kamali Boneaka* (Abuhajim, Interview, July 29, 2023). The reason for choosing the place, because *Kamali Boneaka* Sacred House, is considered as "the owner of Banggai" (Abuhajim, Interview, July 29, 2023). The person who will do the *Baleele* consists of two people who will be inside *Kamali Boneaka*, while the one who will listen, is under *Kamali Boneaka*. No one other than the two people is allowed inside the *Kamali Boenaka*. From here, the trance process occurs. The person who is "possessed by the spirit" of the ancestor, will convey what is deemed necessary to be conveyed to the people who are in the location.

Based on Communication Theory, in Carey's Ritual Communication Components (1989), it is found that four components in the *Baleele* Ritual procession, namely: [1] Individual; [2] community; [3] *Baleele* as a symbol; [4] *Baleele* as an object, will be seen as Figure 2 below:

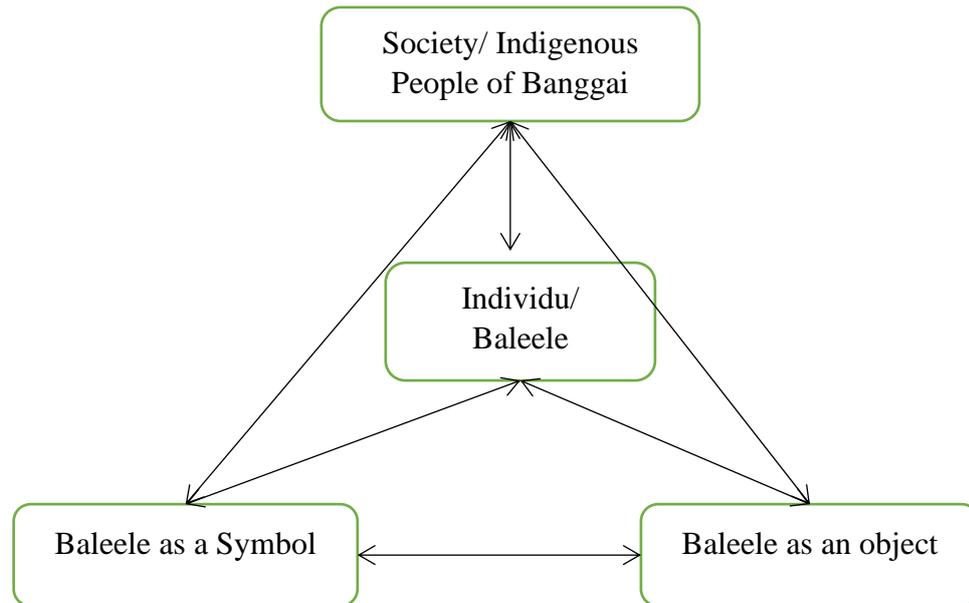


Figure 2. Baleele Ritual Communication Process
Source: Author 2013 (Adapted from Carey)

Figure 4.2 shows that *Baleele* as a medium performed by a certain person, is at the center, *Baleele* is also a symbol and at the same time an object. Meanwhile, *Baleele* can live and be accepted by the community and also give messages reciprocally to individuals as the medium of *Baleele*. *Baleele* for the indigenous people of Banggai, is a process of inheriting values, which is only carried out by certain people, who are believed to be descendants of people who did *Baleele* before. *Baleele* in Carey's Ritual Communication process, is a symbol as well as an object, and this process continues to be carried out because the Banggai people and specifically the Banggai indigenous people continue to preserve it. Ritual Communication developed by James W. Carey, is a communication process in society that is symbolically constructed, and aims to maintain, adjust and share beliefs in society. The ritual perspective understands communication as a process that enables and enacts transformation in society. Ritual Communication developed through *Baleele*, can only be understood and perhaps only accepted by the Banggai people, because sometimes rituals are dated by Parsons in Rothenbuhler (1998: 29), as something irrational.

In the Islamic perspective, tradition is categorized as *Urf*. Traditions can be accepted as part of the traditions of Islamic society, and can be accepted as one of the foundations of law if they meet the following conditions: [1] It does not contradict the sharia; [2] It does not cause any disadvantage and does not eliminate the benefit; [3] It has been generally accepted among Muslims; [4] It does not apply in *mahdhoh* worship (such as prayer, fasting, zakat and hajj); [5] The '*Urf* is already popular when it will be determined as one of the legal benchmarks. The *Baleele* tradition is not considered contrary to sharia, and is not a *mahdhoh* worship. The *Baleele* tradition, which is considered sacred by the Banggai people because it presents Banggai ancestors, is considered a reminder and advice for current and future life. To the present day, there is still much debate about the information conveyed during the *Baleele* process. *Baleele* never created a "new law" outside of Islamic law as the basis of the Banggai Kingdom in the past. Thus, its existence is still acceptable to various parties, especially the indigenous people of Banggai. Some people believe it to be a source of information that needs to be explored further (for example, when the performers of *Baleele*

talk about the history of Banggai that can still be traced); while others consider it as a medium for inheriting values, as well as being part of the social glue of the Banggai community as a whole.

CONCLUSION

Baleele is part of the ethnic rituals of the Banggai Nation, which serves as the bond of the indigenous people of Banggai. Its existence has now been institutionalized to accompany the "Big Ritual" ahead of *Mabangun Tunggul* which is held every six years. *Baleele* has been used by the Banggai indigenous people as a medium for passing on values: history, traditions, values, ethics, and also the identity of the Banggai people since its existence.

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