

# *Application of Emily Durkheim's Theory to 'Mapalus', a Minahasan Culture in North Sulawesi, Indonesia*

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**Abstract:** The aim of this study to reveal the application of Emily Durkheim's theory in solidarity through 'Mapalus', a Minahasan Culture, in North Sulawesi, Indonesia. In conducting this study, the cultural and sociological approaches are applied to see 'mapalus' as a Minahasan culture and social facts occurred in the community of 'Mapalus'. 'Mapalus' is an activity formed, created and done by a certain group of people in a certain place of living, in this case, Minahasan people, for the same interest. They do it together to reach the same goals. To have a fair agreement this activity is done with some rules that must be obeyed by the members. Thus, those rules push the members to do the activity. Since this is a social activity so it has become a social fact as its consequences. The phenomenon found in 'mapalus' shows the embodiment of Durkheim's theory of mechanical solidarity.

**Keywords-** 'Mapalus'; culture; social facts; and mechanical solidarity.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Minahasa community recognizes a form of cooperation which is commonly called as Mapalus. Mapalus is a form of traditional mutual assistance to help each other and it has been inherited within ancestors in the land of Minahasa to this date; Mapalus is something intended for mutual benefit by and for each member. Mapalus is part of gotong royong culture, which is common in the Indonesian context, meaning selfless cooperation and mutual assistance (unlike helping each other where there are rights and obligations). Mapalus commonly is implemented in the area of agriculture, and it was in 1960 became the turning point for Mapalus development[1].

Being as a cooperation activity it is a social fact that has long existed in Minahasa, North Sulawesi. This was done to realize the ideals with fellow community members

who participated in this 'mapalus' group. They feel unable to carry out their works on their plantations, so they need help from others to complete their work.

'Mapalus' is one of the regional cultures in the Minahasa district of North Sulawesi Province. Talking about culture, the writer cites a sentence from a book entitled *Kemanusiaan Universal* edited by Moedjanto and friends that culture that truly lives is impossible without philosophy. Even though they [people] do not remember exactly where they read the sentence in years past, but they could still receive the truth until when the book was edited. Then philosophy is related to the inevitable tendency of human to think, ask, question, and philosophy is also a critical institution that is very much needed to dynamize culture as a whole[1]. In another section of the discussion, they also stated that the source and center of culture are human. Culture only lives as far as human life[1].

Then, culture, where the source and center of culture are human, is closely related to philosophy. This means that one of the cultural philosophical theories conveyed by Emily Durkheim about society and its nature can be applied to the culture of 'mapalus'. Therefore the writer is interested in discussing it and written it as an article.

## II. RESEARCH PROBLEM

'Mapalus' is an activity carried out by a community that has the same commitment to achieving the same goals. This is done and has been practiced for so long without realizing that this is a social phenomenon and is a social fact that has become a culture in the Minahasa community. So mapalus is not an ordinary activity that it has social values in it that can be analyzed using sociological theory as found by Emily Durkheim. For this reason, it is important to know how far this Mapalus is perceived using Durkheim's theory.

### III. METHOD

In analyzing the Mapalus culture in Minahasa the writer applies qualitative methods because of the data collected in the form of words or statements. Specifically, to analyze Mapalus as a culture, a cultural approach is needed, and to see the social facts that arise in Mapalus activities as social activities by Emily Durkheim's theory of mechanical solidarity, a sociological approach is needed [2].

### IV. DISCUSSION

Before discussing the application of Emily Durkheim's theory to one of the cultures of the Minahasa region of North Sulawesi Province, namely "mapalus", the author first wanted to explain a brief curriculum vitae from Emily Durkheim.

Emily Durkheim was born in 1858 in the small town of Lorraine as the son of a family of French Jews. In 1887 he became a lecturer in sociology at the University of Bordeaux, and in that period he wrote his first and also very important three works on the subject of elementary elements and the principles of society. In 1902 Durkheim was appointed professor at the l'École Normale Supérieure College in Paris, and there he educated the young sociology scholars above and combined them in his study group. In 1912 he wrote another important work concerning the elementary elements of religious life entitled *Les Formes Elementaires de la Vie Religieuse* (1912), which had a profound influence, not only among sociology scholars but also among anthropology scholars.

The basis of all Durkheim's thinking about society is his view of a living society. Some human think and behave concerning one another. Human beings are called individuals, while the thoughts they emit, and their behavior are called symptoms, or individual facts.

Durkheim wrote: "Here, then is a category of facts which present very special characteristics: they consist of manners of acting, thinking and feeling external to the individual, which are invested with a coercive power under which they exercise control over him. Consequently, since they consist of representations [i.e., ideas] and actions, they cannot be confused with organic phenomena, nor with psychical [i.e., psychological] save in and through the individual consciousness. Thus they constitute a new species [of things] and to them must be exclusively assigned the term social." (qtd.in Smith, 2014)

Related to Durkheim's statement above, Koentjaraningrat said that in thinking and behaving human beings are faced with phenomenons or social facts (*sociaux faits*) that seem to have existed outside of the individuals who became a part of the community. The social facts are independent entities, apart from individual facts. Social facts even have the power to force individuals to think and act

according to certain ways. The social facts also have a general nature in the sense that their influence is not usually limited to just one or several individuals, but to a large proportion of the people who relate. Language, for example, is a social fact that has very general compelling power, and individuals who try to deviate from the rules of grammar will be punished with ridicule and will be considered as people who do not know manners[3].

Based on Koentjaraningrat's explanation of ideas from Emily Durkheim, the writer can relate it to one social fact in Minahasa, namely 'Mapalus'. From the beginning, the main livelihood of the Minahasa people was farming. Only a few people work as employees, traders, laborers, fishermen, and breeders. Therefore, agricultural activities are very prominent in rural areas.

The technology of the equipment used in the past was still very simple so working with a cooperation system was the most efficient way to speed up and facilitate the completion of work. Work with the cooperation system is known as 'mapalus'. For the Minahasa tribes, working with a system of mutual cooperation or 'Mapalus', not only is work jointly or to complete a work, or simply accelerate the completion of a work but contains values that are upheld by the community, because in 'mapalus' there is a soul and a high spirit of intimacy, sense, and deed, help to help that is not artificial, not fake, a sense of togetherness between fellow group members and group members and their leaders.

The 'mapalus' work ethic is a shared work ethic and godliness. The 'mapalus' work ethic implies devoting all abilities (the basic word 'palus' means working too thoroughly or devoting it to completion). Obviously, the mapalus work ethic is a form of hard work and complete ethos must not work carelessly, work casually, work half-heartedly or work is not finished. Therefore if there are members of the mapalus group who are lazy to work, only work carelessly or do not settle their obligations in a 'mapalus' group then they are directly rewarded by the group, in which, through the Tonsea sub-ethnic language called 'Paendoan tu'a', beaten or given additional burden or other sanctions. In the work ethic there are basic principles as follows:

1. Hard work in the sense of fully devoting all abilities, working diligently, quickly and with quality.
2. Discipline in working together following the rules agreed upon in 'mapalus' society, including voluntary acceptance of all obligations and sanctions if violating rules.
3. God, in the sense of accepting and submitting to all God's referrals (long ago first the instructions / signs through 'Walian') and also performing thanksgiving in regional languages that are called 'Rumages' both at the start of work and in ending or enjoying the first results of mapalus work[4].

The authenticity of 'mapalus' shows that each group member feels united and united by one goal, which is shared prosperity. Each member felt bound by the rules created by the spirit of brotherhood and they realized that the public interest must get beyond personal interests[4].

The explanation above is supported by Koentjara in his book entitled *Manusia dan Kebudayaan* where it is explained that in addition to agriculture, 'mapalus' is also carried out in death events with a series of mourning ceremonies, marriages and other celebrations on the principle of reciprocity. Assistance provided in the form of energy, goods, or money, must always be given back to those who have helped when he needs it[5]. Related to this statement, Salaki also said that 'mapalus' covers almost all activities, both in death event or joy activities, like marriage, baptism, birthdays, new homes, and the activities of housing construction and agricultural production[1].

People who neglect these obligations are considered bad people and when they experience something that needs help, people do not want to[5].

Then, it can be said that "mapalus" which is a social fact, as Durkheim said, has the power to force or encourage individuals to carry it out. This is done by individuals according to rules that have been arranged for the common good. If it is violated or there is one individual who does not do it as well as possible then he will be isolated and even receive sanctions from the community groups, such as there is an explanation above about one social fact exemplified by Durkheim, namely about language.

More clearly, according to Durkheim the community can be distinguished in two characteristics, namely mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity. Mechanical solidarity is social cohesion where the individual level is very low. If each is a microcosm that his characteristics are collective, each of the characteristics of such a society has a limited opportunity to develop their specific or distinctive personality. The dominance of collectivities towards individuals is very strict in punishments given to people who deviate from the collectivity of rules in a society. A little deviation from the rules of collectivity is still considered wrong. This mechanical solidarity arises from moral and social togetherness. Solidarity is strengthened by the discipline of one community[6]. Here the tradition is very powerful. Individualism is absent while Organic Solidarity does not emphasize shared life but respects individuals. Humans can say the word 'no'. Each has a division of labor according to his expertise and this can be seen in the advanced society.

So, based on the explanation above, the writer can say that "mapalus" is a form of social fact that can be categorized into the nature of the society of Mechanical Solidarity. The reason is in 'mapalus', each member upholds the rules that have been set collectively and both have obligations that must be obeyed, otherwise, the individuals who violate will receive sanctions.

## V. CONCLUSION

Durkheim's theory helps the writer think, interpret and classify that 'mapalus' in the Minahasa, North Sulawesi can be categorized as a social fact. The writer can also understand that 'mapalus' is a social fact that has the life force in the Minahasa community which encourages each in his group to do so by accordance with the rules set for the sake of the 'mapalus' group. This is found in the community which has the character of mechanical solidarity where the power of collectivity lives in society rather than individuals.

If so, the writer can say that the nature of mechanical solidarity has its weaknesses, namely that individuals cannot get the opportunity to work on their own according to their creativity and potential.

There is a possibility that this is why 'mapalus' is of little interest to the Minahasa people today even though there are still some people who still want to inherit this culture of their ancestors. Those who are still participating in this group are those who have the same goals and ideals.

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