

## THE TRADITIONAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM OF MANGGARAIAN CULTURAL COMMUNITY

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### KEYWORDS

*Traditional Government, System, Manggaraian, Cultural community*

### ABSTRACT

This paper describes the traditional government system of Manggaraian cultural community in view of social anthropology. The study is descriptive. The results of the study show that the traditional government system of Manggaraian cultural community is based on genealogical relationships traced according to the father's line known as wa'u as a patrilineal-genealogical clan. The highest leader of the wa'u known as the tu'a golo is of the wae tu'a as the eldest descendants of the wa'u who has spiritual authority. The tu'a golo as the highest leader of the wa'u carried out not only executive duties but also judicial duties as a village justice that can be clearly seen when there is a dispute between and among the members of the wa'u. The tu'a golo as the highest leader of the wa'u is assisted by the tua teno who carries out the technical duties of opening new farming land and distributing farming land into sectors. The traditional government system of Manggaraian cultural community is no longer applied in their today's lives. The change began to occur when Bima and Goa colonized the region of Manggarai through the implementation of a government system in the form of a kingdom. As a result, most of the members of Manggaraian cultural community, especially those of younger generation, do not know exactly the system of traditional government inherited from their ancestors.

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### INTRODUCTION

Culture is one of the prominent features functioning as an identity marker of a society as members of a cultural community. A society is identified as members of a cultural community because they are bound by the awareness of sharing the same culture that functions as the frame reference for them in viewing and making sense of their world. However, the function of culture as an identity marker of a society as members of a cultural community is multidimensional. This is

because, in addition to being a sense of identity for them as members of a cultural community, culture is also a symbol of identity distinguishing them from those of other cultural communities (Adimihardja, 1983; Cassirer, 1987; Harsojo, 1988; Ochs, 1988; Barker, 2004; Koentjaraningrat, 2004; Bustan, 2005; Bustan, 2006; Alshammari, 2018). The function of culture as the identity marker of a society as members of a cultural community can be seen in a number of main elements. One of the elements is the system of social organization which is concerned with the ways a people as members of a cultural community organize their patterns of behavior to keep and maintain social harmony (Ochs, 1988; Kaplan & Albert, 1999; Alshammari, 2018; Koentjaraningrat, 1992; Keesing, 1998; Koentjaraningrat, 2004; Bustan, 2018). The manifestation of their social organization is reflected, for instance, in the system of traditional government which is concerned with the pattern of leadership. As every culture has its own ways in viewing the world, the system of traditional government is specific in some respect to the parent culture as the hosting culture in which it is embedded (Ochs, 1988; Koentjaraningrat, 1992; Koentjaraningrat, 2004; Bustan, 2018).

This study describes the traditional government system of Manggaraian people as members of Manggaraian cultural community residing in the region of Manggarai which occupies most of the western part of the island of Flores in the province of East Nusa Tenggara (Bagul, 1986; Erb, 1999; Lawang, 1999; Toda, 1999; Bustan, 2005; Bustan, 2006; Bustan, 2018; Bustan, 2019; Bustan & Liunokas, 2019; Bustan & Kabelen, 2023). The study is conducted for the basic reason that the traditional government system of Manggaraian cultural community is specific to Manggaraian culture as the parent culture or hosting culture in which it is embedded. The specific features of their traditional government system are reflected in their patterns of leadership in the contexts of living together as members of a clan. However, due to the dynamics of Manggaraian cultural community, the traditional government system of Manggaraian cultural community is no longer applied in their today's life. The change began to occur when Bima and Goa colonized the region of Manggarai through the implementation of a government system in the form of a kingdom (Daeng, 1995; Lawang, 1999; Toda, 1999; Bustan, 2006; Bustan, 2018). As the result of the change, most of the members of Manggaraian cultural community, especially those of younger generation, do not know exactly the system of traditional government inherited from their ancestors. Therefore, it is important to conduct the study in order to document the traditional government system of Manggaraian cultural community as one of the cultural products of past history inherited from their ancestors serving as an identity marker of Manggaraian people as members of Manggaraian cultural community.

## **FRAMEWORK**

This study is viewed from the perspective of social anthropology as a branch of anthropology exploring the existence of a society as members of a social group through the lens of culture (Ihromi, 1981; Adimihardja, 1983; Harsojo, 1988; Kaplan & Albert, 1999; Ochs, 1988; Koentjaraningrat, 1992; Koentjaraningrat, 2004). Considering that the term culture is 'omnibus-amorphous' in the sense that culture has various definitions, culture is defined as the world view of a society (Keesing, 1998; Ochs, 1988). The significance of culture as the world view of a society as members of a social group is reflected in a number of main elements. As mentioned previously, one of the main elements making up the content of culture belonging to a people as members of a

cultural community is the system of social organization in which one of its manifestations can be seen in the system of traditional government, as reflected in the patterns of leadership applied in accordance with the customary laws inherited from their ancestors (Harsojo, 1988; Ihromi, 1981; Kaplan & Albert, 1999; Koentjaraningrat, 1992; Koentjaraningrat, 2004).

## METHOD

The study is descriptive-qualitative as it is mainly aimed at describing the traditional government system of Manggaraian cultural community inherited from their ancestors with special reference to the patterns of leadership applied (Spradley, 1997; Yusuf, 2019). The procedures of research were field and library research. The field research was conducted to collect the primary data regarding the traditional government system of Manggaraian cultural community on the basis of the conceptualization ascribed in their cognitive map. The location of research was in Ruteng town as the capital city of the regency of Manggarai. The method of data collection was in-depth interview with the members of Manggaraian cultural community living in Ruteng town represented by three key informants as the sources of data. The library research was conducted to collect the secondary data relevant to the main concern of study. The method of data collection was documentary study. The documents used as the sources of data were general references (books) and special references (research results, scientific articles, and papers) available in the printed and electronic media. The collected data were then analyzed inductively as the process of analysis was started from the data to a local-ideographic concept describing the traditional government system of Manggaraian cultural community on the basis of the conceptualization ascribed in their cognitive map regarding the patterns of leadership (Spradley, 1997; Yusuf, 2019).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of study show that, in terms of patterns of leadership, the traditional government system of Manggaraian cultural community is based on genealogical kinship relationship traced along with the father's line known as *wa'u* in Manggaraian language which refers to a patrilineal-genealogical clan. Referring to the patterns of leadership that Manggaraian cultural community apply, the highest leader of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan is known as *tu'a golo* or *tu'a beo* in Manggaraian language (Bagul, 1986; Erb, 1999; Lawang, 1999; Toda, 1999; Bustan, 2005; Bustan, 2006; Bustan, 2018; Ngebos, 2019). The term *tu'a golo* is a noun phrase made up of two words as its subordinate elements, including the word (deverbal noun) *tu'a* 'old man' or 'chief' as the core word that functions as HEAD (H) and the word (noun) *golo* 'mountain' or 'hill' which refers to *beo* 'village' that functions as its Modifier (M). Likewise, the term *tu'a beo* is a noun phrase made up of two words as its subordinate elements, including the word (deverbal noun) *tu'a* which refers to 'old man' or 'chief' as the core word that functions as HEAD (H) and the word (noun) *beo* 'village' that functions as its MODIFIER (M). The word (noun) *golo* means 'mountain' or 'hill', but as most of the traditional villages of Manggaraian cultural community were built on the top of a mountain or hill, the word (noun) *golo* 'mountain' or 'hill' has expanded its meaning as the equivalent of the word (noun) *beo* 'village' (Bagul, 1986; Erb, 1999; Lawang, 1999; Toda, 1999; Bustan, 2005; Bustan, 2006; Bustan, 2018). As both the word (noun) *golo* and the word (noun) *beo* have the same meaning, the term *tu'a golo* and the term *tu'a beo* can be used interchangeably. Nevertheless, the term *tu'a beo* is almost always used when speaking about the

highest leader of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan in Manggaraian cultural community and in this study as well.

Based on the customary laws inherited from the ancestors of Manggaraian cultural community, the *tu'a golo* was elected on the basis of birth order within one *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan. The person entrusted to hold the role as the *tu'a golo* is of the *wae ka'e* or the *wae tu'a* 'eldest descendant' (Bagul, 1986; Erb, 1999; Lawang, 1999; Toda, 1999; Bustan, 2005; Bustan, 2006; Bustan, 2018). The term *wae ka'e* is a noun phrase made up of two words as its subordinate elements, including the word (noun) *wae* 'water' as the core word that functions as HEAD (H) and the word (noun) *ka'e* 'eldest brother' that functions as its MODIFIER (M). Likewise the term *wae ka'e* is a noun phrase made up of two words as its subordinate elements, including the word (noun) *wae* 'water' as the core word that functions as HEAD (H) and the word (noun) *tu'a* 'eldest brother' that functions as its MODIFIER (M). The word (noun) *wae* used in the verbal expression is a form of figurative language in Manggaraian language which refers to 'descendant'. Nevertheless, not everyone from the *wae ka'e* as the eldest descendant is entrusted to be the *tu'a golo* as the highest leader of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan, except for a person who has spiritual authority. The possession of spiritual authority is one of the main potential resources that underlies the obedience of the members of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan to the *tu'a golo* as their highest leader (Bagul, 1986; Erb, 1999; Lawang, 1999; Toda, 1999; Bustan, 2005; Bustan, 2006; Bustan, 2018).

The possession of physical authority characterized by the possession of wealth is not the main requirement for a person to be the *tu'a golo* in the traditional government system of Manggaraian cultural community. The reason underlying the non-acceptance of the requirement is reflected in the verbal expression of Manggaraian language, *bom landing le mese gelu* 'not because of having big arms'. Connotatively, the term *mese gelu* 'big arms' that means having material wealth (*ata bora*) is usually measured empirically on the basis of the number of livestock (*do weang*) such as buffalo (*kaba*) and horses (*jarang*) are owned. A person who possesses a lot of livestock such as buffaloes and horses is identified as the *ata bora* 'rich person' or the *ata mese gelu* 'people with big arms' in Manggaraian cultural community. The possession of a lot of livestock as the image of physical authority just implies indexical meaning that indicates his social status in the social system of Manggaraian cultural community, especially in the contexts of living together as the members of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan (Bustan, 2005; Bustan, 2006; Bustan, 2018).

Along with his role as the highest leader of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan, the *tu'a golo* carries out the executive duties of managing all aspects of the lives of the *wa'u* residing in the *golo* as a whole. The executive duties of the *tu'a golo* as the highest leader of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan living in one village are reflected in the verbal expression of Manggaraian language, *ata nipu pa'ang olo ngaung musu* or *ata nipu ngaung lau pa'ang le* 'person who organizes or takes care of all the residents of a village from the front to the back yard' (Bustan, 2005; Bustan, 2006; Bustan, 2018). The word (noun) *ata* means 'person', the word (verb) *nipu* means 'take care of' or 'manage', the word (noun phrase) *pa'ang olo* means 'front yard', and the word (noun phrase) *ngaung musu* means 'back yard'. The noun phrase *pa'ang olo* is formed from two words as its subordinate elements, including the word (noun) *pa'ang* 'the front' as the

core word that functions as HEAD (H) and the word (locative marker or adverb of place) *olo* 'front' that functions as its MODIFIER (M). The noun phrase *ngaung musu* is formed from two words as its subordinate elements, including the word (noun) *ngaung* 'under' as the core word that functions as HEAD (H) and the word (locative marker and the adverb of place) *musu* 'back' that functions as its MODIFIER (M). The verbal expression is one of the linguistic evidences revealing that the members of one *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan live in one village (*ka'eng one ca beo*) and, as such, it is not surprising that the term *beo* is defined by Verheijen (1991) as a unilocal settlement unit of the *wa'u*. The definition is not accepted today as many villages in the region of Manggarai have inhabited by more than one *wa'u*. Therefore, the term *beo* is defined as a multilocal settlement unit of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan in today's Manggaraian cultural community (Bustan, 2005; Bustan, 2006).

In certain contexts, the *tu'a golo* as the highest leader of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan is also called the *tu'a gendang* in Manggaraian language. The term *tu'a gendang* is noun phrase made up of two words as its immediate elements, including the word (noun) *tu'a* which refers to 'old man' or 'chief' as the core word that functions as HEAD (H) and the word (noun) *gendang* 'drum' that functions as its MODIFIER (M). The word *gendang* is the conversion of the term *mbaru gendang* 'drum house' which refers to the main house or the origin house of the *wa'u* living in one village. The *tua golo* is called the *tu'a gendang* because he lives in the *mbaru gendang* as the main house or the origin house of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan living in one village (Erb, 1999; Lawang, 1999; Bustan, 2005; Bustan, 2006; Bustan, 2018; Ngebos, 2019). As the *mbaru gendang* is the cultural identity of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan, it is not surprising that the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan is also known as a house-based community in Manggaraian language (Bustan, 2005; Bustan, 2006).

Other than executive duties, the *tu'a golo* as the highest leader of the *wa'u* also carries out judicial duties as a village justice of the peace. Because of carrying out the judicial duties, the *tu'a golo* as the highest leader of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan is called *wae nggereng* 'clear water' in Manggaraian language (Lawang, 1999; Bustan, 2005; Bustan, 2006; Bustan, 2018; Ngebos, 2019). The term *wae nggereng* is a noun phrase made up two words as its subordinate elements, including the word (noun) *wae* 'water' as the core word that functions HEAD (H) and the word (adjective) *nggereng* 'clear' as its MODIFIER (M). The *tu'a golo* as the highest leader of the *wa'u* is called the *wae nggereng* because his main judicial duty as a village justice of the peace is to clear a dispute occurring between and among the members of the *wa'u*. The dispute is known as *rintuk tau lewing agu kebor* 'collide between pot and spoon' in Manggaraian language because it occurs between or among the members of the same *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan (Bustan, 2005; Bustan, 2006; Bustan, 2018). As mentioned previously, the existence of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan is not only formed of having the same blood lineage, but also indicated by living in the same *mbaru gendang* and eating from the same pot (*hang one mai ca lewing*) in connection with the application of the *kilo hang neki* which refers to the pattern of family eating together. In addition to living in one big house as the main and origin house, the members of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan eat together from the same pot (Erb, 1999; Lawang, 1999; Bustan, 2005; Bustan, 2006; Bustan, 2018). The mechanism of solving the dispute is win-win solution as the two parties involved are of the same *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan.

Based on the customary laws inherited from their ancestors, in carrying out his duties, the *tu'a beo* as the highest leader of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan is assisted by the *tua teno*. The *tu'a teno* in the capacity of his role as the assistant of the *tu'a beo* is in charge of distributing agricultural lands into sectors (*moso*) and of opening of new agricultural lands (*lodok lingko*). In connection with this, the main requirements to be the *tu'a teno* as the mandatory of the *tu'a golo* are capable and wise (Bagul, 1986; Erb, 1999; Lawang, 1999; Bustan, 2005; Bustan, 2006; Bustan, 2018; Ngebos, 2019; Bustan et al, 2020; Bustan et al, 2023). Apart from the aspects of justice, as mentioned earlier, the requirement is aimed at keeping and maintaining social harmony in their context of living together as the members of one *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan from various disputes especially in regard to the issues of land distribution carried out by the *tu'a teno* as the assistant of the *tu'a beo* (Lawang, 1999; Bustan, 2005; Bustan, 2006; Bustan, 2018; Ngebos, 2019). As the ownership of the *moso* as the sectors of farmings land distributed by the *tu'a teno* is fixed in the present, the role of the *tu'a teno* as the assistant of the *tu'a beo* as the highest leader of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan is no longer applied in today's social life of Manggaraian cultural community.

## CONCLUSION

The system of traditional government in Manggaraian cultural community is based on genealogical relationship traced according to the father's line known as *wa'u* in Manggaraian language which refers to a patrilineal-genealogical clan. The manifestation of the system of traditional government in Manggaraian cultural community is reflected in the patterns of leadership. In the patterns of leadership applied by Manggaraian cultural community, the highest leader of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan known as the *tu'a golo* is of the *wae tu'a* or the *wae ka'e* as the eldest descendants of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan who possesses spiritual authority as one of the main potential resources underlying the obedience of the members of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan to the *tu'a golo* as their highest leader. In addition to carrying out executive duties, the *tu'a golo* also carries out judicial duties as a village justice when there is a dispute between the members of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogical clan. In carrying out his duties, the *tu'a golo* is assisted by the *tua teno* who is in charge of carrying out the technical duties of distributing a farming land into sectors and opening a new farming land. Along with the dynamics of Manggaraian cultural community, the system of traditional government inherited from their ancestors is no longer applied today. The change began to occur when Bima and Goa colonized the region of Manggarai through the implementation of a government system in the form of a kingdom. As a result, most of the members of Manggaraian cultural community, especially those of younger generation, do not know exactly the system of original government inherited from their ancestors. Therefore, the traditional government system of Manggaraian cultural community is important to be well documented as it is one of the cultural products of their past history.

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