# The Community System Based on Kolo Bian Myth in East Nusa Tenggara

# (Sistem Masyarakat Berdasarkan Mitos Kolo Bian di Nusa Tenggara Timur)

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#### **Abstrak**

Tujuan utama penelitian ini adalah menganalisis sistem komunitas Weoe pada mitos Kolo Bian di Nusa Tenggara Timur. Metode yang digunakan adalah studi literatur melalui analisis struktural dan refleksi pada cerita mitos Kolo Bian. Hasil diskusi menunjukkan bahwa proses perkembangan genealogis masyarakat Weoe tercermin dalam sistem kekuasaan yang berkembang dalam pola perdagangan dan perkawinan. Pola perkawinan khususnya merupakan sarana untuk melanggengkan sistem kekuasaan. Partisipasi penguasa lokal diintegrasikan ke dalam kelompok, dan diberikan kebiasaan baru ikut mendukung kelangsungan kekuasaan. Organisasi berbasis agama yang hadir di masyarakat mendukung pola sistem kekuasaan ini, baik secara politik maupun spiritual. Sistem kekuasaan bukanlah pemaksaan penguasa terhadap masyarakat yang ada, rakyat menyambut baik kehadiran penguasa yang memosisikan dirinya lebih rendah daripada penguasa sesungguhnya yang berasal dari hasil pengusiran di tanah atau wilayah lain. Sistem kekuasaan dalam masyarakat Weoe dilestarikan dalam habitus ini. Sistem kekuasaan tersebut kemudian terbentuk dalam rangkaian sistem perkawinan.

Kata kunci: Kolo Bian, masyarakat, mitos, sistem kekuasaan, Weoe

#### **Abstract**

The main objective of this study is to analyze the Weoe community system in the Kolo Bian myth of East Nusa Tenggara. The method used was a literature review through structural analysis and reflection on the story of the Kolo Bian myth. The findings showed that the Weoe people's genealogical development process is reflected in the power system that has developed in the trade and marriage patterns. In particular, the marriage pattern is a means of perpetuating the power system. The participation of local authorities, who are integrated into



groups and given new customs, plays a role in supporting the continuation of power. Faith-based organizations in the community support this pattern of power systems both politically and spiritually. The power system is not enforced by the rulers on the existing society; instead, the people welcome the presence of rulers who position themselves lower than the real rulers coming from expulsion on other lands or areas. The power system in Weoe society is preserved in this habitus. The power system is then formed in the concatenation of the marriage system.

Keywords: community, Kolo Bian, myth, power system, Weoe

#### INTRODUCTION

The development of society can be viewed from the elements of the community's origin, the processes that occur in society, and attainments as dynamic reflections of the community development. The community masterpieces can be seen through literature (Christinawati & Pandin 2019), performance artwork (Pandin 2019; Pandin 2020), governance developments (Rahayuningsih, et al. 2019), and progress. In this government development, we can also see the rulers' leadership system (Arrasyid, Amaliyah, & Pandin 2019a; Arrasyid, Amaliyah, & Pandin 2019b). This works studied Weoe people in a sub-district, Belu Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Indonesia. This area is also known as West Malacca, an area located on the west of Timor Island. Most of the people speak Tetun language, and a small part speaks Dawan language or Bunak language.

Malacca was an important transit port in Southeast Asia which was visited by many traders from various Asian countries and regions in Indonesia. Van Leur (in Widiyatmika (2011) stated that Malacca was inhabited by merchants from Gujarat, China, Java, and other traders. The traders from Gujarat who settled in Malacca were around 1000 traders and who did not settle was 3000–4000. The fall of Malacca to the Portuguese in 1511 gave rise to major changes. The king of Malacca, Sultan Mahmud Syah, fled to Johor. The Portuguese policy of conducting a trade monopoly and the strategy of seizing Malacca in defeating Asian traders did not make it possible for them to settle in Malacca. They migrated out of Malacca to other strategic places in the Indonesian archipelago including East Nusa Tenggara.

Based on the Timorese tradition, logging the sandalwood outside the area under the control of local authorities was one of the causes of war. The Wewiku Wehali Kingdom succeeded in enforcing a sandalwood monopoly from the upstream and downstream areas of the Benain River. The control of the monopoly was strengthened by the politics of marriage between the nobility' sons from the South Belu with the local rulers' daughters in the sandalwood growing areas in the hills. Mixed marriages change the politics of violence in controlling the sandalwood area Mixed marriages change the politics of violence in controlling the sandalwood area with local rulers into politics of peaceful coexistence.

The new kingdom established by the migrants from Malacca was known as the twin Kingdom of Wei Wehali. The Wewiku Wehali kingdom was ruled by a king with titled Maromak Oan. The Maromak Oan did not immediately rule but became a symbol of spirituality and was not allowed to work. He only sleeps, eats, and drinks. As the executor of government under Maromak Oan's rule, there are 3 liurai, namely Wehali liurai, Likusaen liurai, and Sonbai liurai. Liurai Likusaen controlled the territory of East Timor, while liurai Sonbai in the west covering the Miomaffo area to Kupang. Two important positions were shouldered on liurai Wehali, namely as the Wehali liurai who ruled over the entire Belu and Biboki regions, Insana and parts of the kingdom in East Timor. As Liurai Fatuaruin he controlled Fatuaruin, Manulea, and

Bani-Bani which were the main logistics suppliers for the liurai.

Under the *liurai* there are the *loro* and below the *loro* are the *nai*. Specifically, under Liurai Wehali in South Belu, four kings had the title *loro*, namely: Wewiku, Wehali, Hatimuk, Lakekun, and Dirma who were the *mone hat laen hat rin besi hat rin kmurak hat*. In North Belu there is a Fialaran kingdom with the *loro* status. In the Fialaran kingdom, there are several kingdoms/*nai* including The Kingdoms of Lidak, Jenilu, Naitimu, and Mandeu who have *basa isin hat kaer kadun hat* status which is a safe link area to Atapupu and Batugede ports. According to Widiyatmika (2011), the four kingdoms are the outer areas of *dasi sanulu aluk sanulu* namely (a) Mendeu Raimanus, Halioan-Kufeu, (b) Nanaet Dubesi-Faturenes Kalianak, (c) Manu Aman Tukuneno Halidait Nureu, and (d) Kene Bibui Dualiu, Kabunak Leosama.

In the traditional language, the four kingdoms are called oa natar hat, oa laluan hat, basa isin hat kaer kadun hat, taka ulu hat sabeo hat. These four kingdoms had their government but were subject to Fialaran Nain power. These four kingdoms were a posse for Western Fialaran. Subordinate kingdoms with the status of liurai, loro, and nai were tied to marriages with the royal princesses. Tetun Meto's mixed-blood usifs are usif-usif Insana, Sonbai and at the same time allied themselves and/or subordinating themselves to usif-usif are Kono/Takaeb, Oematan, Atok, Bana, Lake, Senak, Mella, Manbait, Boko, Ukat, Olin, Taolin, Benusu, Hitu, Sijao, Tefnay and a large number of amaf meto. Through the marital relationship with Sonbai's usif-usif, hence usif Kune and Pitay are categorized as Sonbai's usif allies. All the usifs mentioned above have significant socio-cultural influences from the Tetun ethnic taking place in the Meto ethnic groups in the hills and mountains of Miomafo-Mutis-Mollo-Fatuleu to the bay of Kupang. (Widiyatmika 2011)

Based on previous findings, it was discovered that the Timorese kingdoms were defeated by Malacca which grew and developed in Timor. The progress and intellectuality that surpassed the local people made the refugees from Malacca displace the position of local people. Another finding was that control over trade made their position strong. The research question is what does the structure of the new society at that time? What is the myth of Kolo Bian mean about community system?

### **METHOD**

The studied applied Levi-Strauss method analysis. There are two main point in the story that were *ceriteme* and *mytheme*. Mytheme is sentences that indicate the existence of certain relationships between the characters in a literary work, while *ceriteme* is units in literary works that can be several sentences, a paragraph, or several paragraphs showing a particular picture or view (Ahimsa-Putra 2010, 13).

The analysis process, first by reading the entire text to find, first: the *mytheme* and second, composing *mythemes*. The following steps as follows: first: the researchers read the entire text to find the overview of the content in the story, second the researchers read again the previous findings of the first step to discover the *ceriteme* and *mytheme* units, third the researchers depicted the existing relationship that formed on the story both from the existing characters of the story (Ahimsa-Putra 2001, 94).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The Weoe Society's Myth

The Kolo Bian story is a myth that has been passed down from generation to generation in the Weoe community, West Malacca sub-district, Belu Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province (Department of Education and Culture 1983). The story happened in a village called We-Kto Talaka a large banyan tree grows precisely in front of the Malacca King's palace. In the story the characters are given abbreviations to ease the analysis. The first character is the King of Malacca was symbolized KM, the second character Liu Rai, Kolo Bian, symbolized was KB, the third character Laun Kiak was symbolized LK, and the forth character figure of Nai Maromak was symbolized NM. In the story, the oppositional figures were KM and LK.

Once upon a time a hen landed on one of the banyan branches. The hen was sent by NM to this world. At the same time, the king was taking a walk to breathe fresh air under the banyan tree. After seeing the hen, KM immediately took his blowpipe to shoot the hen. While the king was looking for a place that was good enough to overload it, suddenly the king heard a voice that said: While the king was searching for a good enough place to shoot it, suddenly the king heard a voice saying, "Oh King of Malacca, do not kill me with your blowpipe. It would be best if we have some negotiation first." Then the hen continued her conversation thus, "Lord King does not kill me, because I am a messenger from the Almighty. I come to this world to face the Lord King." The hen replied, "I have been specially sent here to bear you a son of stars and moon." "If that is the true intention of the arrival, I am very grateful and welcome you with open arms. Get down immediately from the top of the tree and let us both go to the palace." After hearing the words of the King of Malacca, the hen immediately flew down to meet the king. Arriving on the ground, the hen immediately turned into a very beautiful princess. Without wasting any more time, the king immediately approached her and led her into the palace. Since then, the princess officially became the wife of the King of Malacca.

Suddenly one day the king said to KB, he said, "KB, my dear wife, now the time has come for me to make a long journey. The point is that as usual every year I make work visits to all the government areas to see firsthand closely how the real-life of the people are. The only message I reiterate is if the child to be born later is a son and has the sign of a star and a moon, so take care of him till I return, but if he does not have a sign like that it means that your end has come, just waiting for the time for my return to take your life."

KB gave birth to a handsome boy and who had the signs of the moon and stars. Because the king was not there, his wife asked a shaman, a close neighbor, to help. The shaman was named Ina Bei takan Baukau. When the shaman came to help she brought a male puppy which had just been born. As soon as the baby was born, the shaman hid the miraculous baby and replaced him with the puppy she had taken with her.

One day there were some little kids of the same age as LK playing in a large field while riding horses made from waru tree. They invited LK to play together but LK answered, "I don't have Kabau ai Kfau los." His friends answered, "Ask your father!" "How could it be, because my father is a dog while my mother is a cat." While saying this LK returned to his place of residence under the waru tree. On arrival, he immediately told Bei Asu and Bei Busa that his friends had invited him to play horse-riding. "I can't participate because I don't own a horse. In fact, I was eager to take part in the horse race, which is only two days away. I have registered myself as a participant in the competition." Bei Busa and Bei Asu were confused by the complaints from LK. In that confusion, they asked LK for advice, "How can we get these toys?" Then LK replied, "It would be wiser for the two of you to go and meet face to face with NM asking for a sword from him." Hearing the suggestion Bei Busa and Bei Asu conferred. The

decision was that Bei Asu was assigned to go to NM in the upper realm to ask for a sword from him. "All you have to do, Mother, is take a chicken egg, make a hole in the ground, put the egg in it and sit on it." As she was sitting on it the egg broke and out of it came a rooster. The rooster immediately flew, perching on the large banyan tree in front of the king's palace, crowing, "Kokorekoooo, LK mane, sei mai malo funa atu mai lai. O inan feto ikun tama at ona, KB feto ikun tama ata ona." The war between LK and KM was inevitable. Hours, days still not a single one had lost. Finally, both LK and KM agreed to go to NM to resolve the dispute. However, even in the upper realm, the problem was solved by fighting. KM, finally suffered defeat. Nevertheless, LK didn't kill him, he just peeled off KM's beard to attach it to the hilt of his sword. KM was then ordered to return to Raiklaran. LK returned to Raiklaran to pick up KB and brought her to the upper realm, to NM.

These sentences are formed in three series of episodes or relationships. These relations reflect the realities of life of the Weoe people. The first episode shows the genealogical reality of the Weoe people, the second episode shows the reality of the Weoe people's struggles, and the third episode is a system of maintaining power.

# Structural Analysis of Kolo Bian Myth

The framework for interpreting Kolo Bian myth shows the oppositional relations of the characters which are described in the following three episodes.

## 1. "Kolo Bian and the King of Malacca" and the Genealogy of the Weoe People

The origin of the Weoe people can be indicated in the first ten chapter. The story informed that RM found KB from the top of the banyan tree in the form of a hen incarnate. NM ordered this hen to give RM an offspring. RM accepted this fact and invited KB to unite as an empress in his kingdom. This episode shows that the origins of the Weoe people began with the arrival of the displaced Malacca people. They identified themselves as descendants of NM, the ruler of the world. We learn from history that the people who came to Timor were defeated traders and were driven out of Malacca. For their arrival to be welcomed and for a close relationship, then the women who fled from Malacca were given to marry the king of Timor at that time. The King of Timor was identified with KM. Initially, KB's arrival as an NM delegation was rejected and wanted to be destroyed, but because of their intense desire to provide better offspring, and KM who was also eagerly awaiting accepted them happily.

In this episode, we can also see a marriage system demonstrated by offering women to local rulers. The marriage will form new allies. The formation of new allies also signifies new strength. KM said that the family planning descendants must carry signs, namely the moon and stars. There are several interpretations which state that these signs indicate the influence of Islam that will enter the kingdom of Timor. In the history of trade development in Timor, the Timorese authorities formed a new ally with the Kingdom of Gowa. This kingdom was known as the Islamic kingdom in Makassar. Portuguese traders then fought the kingdom in Timor on the grounds of preventing Islamic influence from entering. We also know this spirit as the spirit of the conquistadores of the Portuguese kingdom against the Islamic kingdom as the influence of the defeat of Christian troops in the crusade.

The birth of LK carried the expected sign, but then LK was thrown into the forest by the midwife and replaced with a puppy. KM's anger towards KB peaked when KM came home to get KB only carrying a puppy. KM then carried out his vow to kill KB. In this episode, the relationship between RM and KB shows the relationship between the indigenous Timorese and

the migrants from Malacca. The Timor Kingdom, which was symbolized by RM, then refused the presence of KB due to the promise that the descendants according to the signs were not realized. This was strengthened by the war between the Timorese kingdom and the immigrants from Malacca, namely traders. The severance of this relationship did not necessarily mean that the migrants disappeared from Timor Island. On the contrary, with their strengths and skills, these newcomers appear to dominate the existing kingdoms. From this episode, we can see that KM represents the indigenous people of Timor, the real Timorese kingdom, while KB is the representative of immigrants, who identified himself as the new ruler, known as NM.

### 2. "Laun Kiak, Bei Asu, and Bei Busa" and the Struggle of the Weoe People

The second episode describes the struggles of the forerunners of the Weoe people. The mixture of migrants and local people produced children who were symbolized by LK. LK is symbolized as a miraculous child. Even though he was not fed, he could become big and strong. The history of the development of migrants from Malacca is said to form new alliances with residents. Although they were not supported, in the story it is symbolized as being fed, by their parents, the local people, LK grew because of the strong support from NM, and by nature, they exceeded the existing local people.

The characters Bei Asu and Bei Busa helped discover and reintroduce LK character into the people's lives. Bei Asu and Bei Busa were described as an extension of NM. In historical records, some local people were appointed by the rulers who later became the new kingdoms as a result of control of the sandalwood trade. It is stated that LK grew near the *waru* tree. This tree symbolizes the sandalwood. History shows, that the sandalwood trade was a lucrative commodity and brought great profits to the traders. Whoever controls this trade will control Timorese land. LK, the symbol of the new ruler, is said to have lived from the *waru* tree, namely the sandalwood tree.

This episode tells about LK's relationship with NM through Bei Asu and Bei Busa. This episode tells that the sandalwood trade was approved by NM and was given the means to manage sandalwood into a new force. This struggle is also illustrated in the toy horse-drawn competition between LK and the local children. LK is the incarnation of a new generation of NM descendants and the local people. Indonesian history strengthens this interpretation by referring to the new descendants born from the marriage of the Portuguese and the local people and become the new rulers in the world of commerce.

Widiyatmika (2011) also showed that there are rulers who are not white, but half white who became the new rulers of Timorese land. Concerning the local people, LK was very prominent and was of particular concern to the existing local authorities. The interpretation which is corroborated by history underlines that the struggle of the migrants was not necessarily accepted by the local people. The spirit of the building was accompanied by strong support from the Portuguese (denoted by NM) became an important aspect of its further development. This struggle then wanted to revive the power that had been destroyed by the rulers and kings of Timor; which is denoted by wanting to revive KB.

The barter system became a way to revive foreign powers on Timorese soil. In the trading world at that time, the barter system was commonly used. History records that the entry of foreign influences generally came in two ways, namely through marriage and trade. Both of these methods also occurred on Timorese soil. Judging from the influx of the Catholic Church, LK's desire to revive KB was the desire of the Portuguese, especially the priests in preaching the

gospel through the power of the Portuguese government. Church history shows that many of the priests were victims of the assassination of the rulers of the Timorese kingdom in 1556. In the years when the missionary activity was not routine, the activity was done by incidentally piggybacking on the strength of the existing Portuguese army.

# 3. "Laun Kiak and the King of Malaka" and the Weoe's Power System

The third episode shows the oppositional relationship between LK and KM. The two great powers now came face to face. Battles are inevitable. Although many battles had taken place, none of them was lost. This story shows that many battles took place over the commodity sandalwood. This story shows that the battles for control of the trading area will not end. Likewise, when the battle was brought before NM, as the ruler of the world; he who was symbolized as a Portuguese man, did not help much in breaking up the conflicts that existed in the Timorese kingdoms at that time.

LK who had revived KB felt he had to safeguard KB. KB character was given an egg and from that egg appeared a rooster which always notified KM's attacks intending to reclaim KB. The egg can be symbolized as a new society that gives birth to the church. It was this church that always gave information to the authorities on the royal movements in Timor who wanted to rebel. This fact is supported by the historical record of the Catholic Church, which shows that there were missionary activities from 1556 to the beginning of the twentieth century.

The church structure, which consists of parishes and stations, is a hierarchical unit from remote to urban areas. The church grew with the support of a new ruler, namely from the Portuguese government supported by the Portuguese traders. LK's strong desire to get KB showed the close relationship between the new kingdoms and the church. In return, the church provided information that supported the perpetuation of power in Timor.

In the battle, RM finally lost, but LK did not kill KM, only his beard was taken as a symbol of LK's conquering KM. The relationship between LK and RM, although aimed at destroying each other, in the end, did not happen. LK forgiveness showed that the relationship between the new rulers was still using the old power system. Their presence was not to eliminate and destroy the existing local power but all that is needed is to submit to the new ruler by serving his needs as the ultimate goal.

History records that the Portuguese were finally pushed to the Island of Timor on the eastern part, known during the New Order era as East Timor, while in the current era it has become a new country known as Timor Leste. Sandalwood trade will continue if there is cooperation with the local authorities in supplying the logs to the existing ports. The interpretation of LK's forgiveness of KM is the attitude of the traders who become the new rulers of Timor land to obtain supplies of sandalwood and other trading commodities from the local authorities.

LK then invited KB to return to the world above also symbolized the movement of the church mission activities from West Timor to East Timor. From the historical records of the church, the entry of Dutch forces also took part in bringing Protestant Christian priests to be involved in evangelizing the local community. Until now, it can be found that the Protestant Christian community is the majority in Kupang area and its surroundings. But in the East, people who embrace Catholic Christianity remain in the majority, as well as in East Timor.

The three episodes above have revealed the origins of the Weoe society, the struggle, and the existing power system. In the myth, it can be found that foreign powers entered the control of Timorese land through marriage and trade. Apart from that, the presence of the church became an extension of the hands of foreign powers on Timorese soil. After debunking the contents of the myth through this structural analysis, we can conclude how the system of power in Weoe society is. This system of power is juxtaposed with the philosopher Piere Bourdieu's reflection on power.

## The Weoe Community System

This story describes the position of the king and the power system that exists within the Weoe community, particularly the power system of the leaders or kings in West Timor. A power arises from the natural conditions of reality. Unconsciously this power is formed through elite groups who master the skills, capital, and other important factors. The Weoe Kingdom was born from a mixture of newcomers from Malacca with the local people. This power system does not necessarily eliminate the local power, even though it has been conquered. This power system is then preserved in church institutions, which are known through the existing hierarchical community. The support of these local rulers was incorporated into the new community, known as new allies.

The new allies were a combination of foreign powers, the local people, and skills. The new allies produced a force that the local people were not forced to accept but its existence is consciously acknowledged and supported to govern and control the existing local communities.

When compared with Piere Bourdieu's reflection on the power that appears in society, this power system can be juxtaposed with the habitus. According to Bourdieu (2010; Harker, Mahar, & Wilkes (eds.) 2009), the concept of habitus is a sociological and philosophical analysis of human behavior. In this sense, habitus is social values that are ingrained by humans and created through a long process of socialization values, so that it settles into a way of thinking and behavior patterns that settle in humans.

In the habitus concept, there is the capital concept. Capital is an asset that allows us to get opportunities in life. There are many types of capital, such as intellectual capital (education), economic capital (money), and cultural capital (background and network). Capital can be obtained if one has the right habitus in his life. Reading, writing, and discussing habitus will produce intellectual and cultural capital. Meanwhile, the attitude of working diligently and having many business networks will generate economic capital. Capital is not dead, it is alive and can be changed. By having intellectual capital (education), people can work as educators and have money (economic capital) to live on. Intellectual capital can also be converted into cultural capital (multiple networks) so that it can enrich the intellectual capital itself. Economic capital can also be changed, for example by investing, thus producing a larger economic and cultural capital.

Comparing habitus and capital in Bordieu with what happened in the power system in Weoe society, clearly, a new force is formed in the capitals in the Bourdieu language, through the institution of marriage and the church. In these two institutions, the perpetuation of control over Timorese land continues. The church as a spiritual institution also helps to enliven this habitus through education. There is a lot of education in Timor land administered by the church.

The power system is not coercion by the authorities on the existing society, even the society celebrates the existence of a ruler who positions themselves lower than the real rulers who come from the results of evictions in land or other areas. Mastery of skills and education as well as ownership of capital makes them higher than the existing local authorities. The power system in Weoe society is preserved in this habitus. The power system is then formed in the fabric of the marriage system.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The process of developing the Weoe community's power system can be seen in the patterns of trade and marriage. The marriage pattern is a means of perpetuating the power system. Participation from the local authorities is integrated into groups and given a new habit of participating in supporting the continuity of the existing powers. The recognition of the superiority of the new ruler was shown by granting the title Mister Ruler.

The role of religious institutions was also evident in the strategy of the power system developed in the Timorese kingdoms, particularly in the Weoe community. This finding becomes richer, not only through comparative reflections but also through national historical records and church history. The power system found from the results of the structuralist analysis is a reflection of the social ethics that existed at that time.

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