



The Role Of Malesi In The Customary Structure Of Amahai Country (Study About Social And Cultural Functions)

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Abstract

Study This aim For study role *Malesi* in structure customs the people of Negeri Amahai , in particular in context function social and cultural aspects . *Malesi* is part important in system kinship and government customs , which have task accompany and, if required , replace *Lieutenant* in various activity customs , including dance war (*Cakalele*). Research This use approach qualitative with technique data collection through observation and interviews deep to figures customs , such as the King of the Country, Saniri of the Country, Kapitan Soa, and *Malesi* from each question .Research result show that role *Malesi* No only nature symbolic , but also strategic in guard harmony social preserving values culture , as well as bridge communication between about and between inhabitant custom .Function social *Malesi* seen in his contribution to deliberation customs , settlement conflict and coaching generation young . Meanwhile that , function cultural reflected in preservation tradition , delivery message symbolic , and reinforcement identity collective society . In the midst of current modernization , role *Malesi* experience challenges , but still relevant and necessary preserved through revitalization education custom and wise adaptation .

Keywords : Malesi , Customary Structure , Social Function , Culture

A. Introduction

Culture is foundation base from order life social in society. In perspective anthropology culture, culture No only understood as inheritance tradition, but also as system the meaning that forms pattern thoughts, behavior, and structure social society (Geertz, 2017). Herskovits and Malinowski, in draft *cultural determinism*, asserts that culture become framework that influences every aspect life human, good in level individual and collective. Culture as explained Herskovits, is of a nature *superorganic*, namely exceed individual. However arrange all over dynamics social in community (Koentjaraningrat, 2015).

In line with view said, Eppink (in Sedyawati, 2018) stated that culture covers overall system values, norms, knowledge, structure social, system trust, and expression symbolic that becomes characteristics typical something society. Therefore that, culture No only create structure social but also maintain identity inherited collective cross generation.

In society customs, structures social No is static, but rather formed through mechanism kinship, rites, and distribution clear roles between member community. Each individual occupying a certain status that brings rights and responsibilities answer social (Turner, 2019). In Amahai Village, Central Maluku, the social structure social public customs Still system-based soa — the clan group that regulates life communal based on principle genealogical and territorial. In the system here, there is various actor customs such as the King of the Country, the Head of Soa, the Saniri of the Country, the Captain, and the Malesi, who play function strategic in guard sustainability values customs.

Malesi's role is one of the element important that in functional and symbolic support system customs in Amahai Country. Malesi is figure customs on duty accompany the Captain in various activity social and cultural, as well as take over the role of the Captain when No present. Apart from being regulator formation in rites culture like the Cakalele dance — a expression culture public Alifuru who was born from narrative migration and resistance — Malesi also played a role as order keeper customs and mediators in deliberation forums custom. Each so own One Malesi usually originate from certain inherited clans in a way hereditary, such as Wattimena, Lasamahu Kakiai, and Hallatu.

In context dynamics contemporary, role Malesi face various challenges. Influence modernization, urbanization, and shift values in generations young cause position socio-cultural Malesi experience pressure, good from aspect existence and legitimacy. Phenomenon This bring up question crucial about How structure customs maintain role traditional in reality ongoing social changed (Tuhumury, 2021; Pattinama, 2022).

Based on background behind said, research This aim For study in a way deep position and function Malesi in system Amahai Country Customs. Research This focus on three aspect main: (1) Structure roles and positions Malesi in system customs soa; (2) Function social and cultural Malesi in life public customs; and (3) Challenges and dynamics that influence sustainability role Malesi in the middle current change social.

B. Research Methods

Study This use approach qualitative with design studies mini ethnography, which aims For understand in a way deep meaning, role and function socio-cultural from actor customs named *Malesi* in structure customs Amahai Village community, Central Maluku. Approach qualitative chosen Because considered the most appropriate For explore phenomenon social and cultural from perspective participants, with focus on values, practices customs and relations social that is not can measured in a way quantitative (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This study based on paradigm constructivists, who view that reality social formed through interaction social and constructed meaning in a way together by the community (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2017). Therefore that, understanding to position and role *Malesi* done through involvement direct researchers in the field, as well as excavation narratives growing local in community customs.

Data collection was carried out through three technique main, namely: Observation participatory, Interview in-depth, and documentation studies. While Data analysis was performed with using analysis models interactive from Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists on three stages Main: Data reduction, Data presentation, and Drawing and verifying conclusions. Analysis process done in a way cyclic and reflective, in line with approach *grounded theory* that allows theory developed in a way inductive from field data (Charmaz, 2014).

C. Results and Discussion

A. The Position and Structure of the Role of *Malesi* in Amahai Custom

Structure customs The people of Negeri Amahai in Central Maluku reflect system hierarchical and kinship - based social system (*soa*). In the social system this , role and position *Malesi* occupy position strategic , good in a way symbolic and functional , as figure second after *Captain*, a figure who is traditional identified as leader military and protector of the country. *Malesi* is not only *Captain's* companion , but also the holder mandate customs that have authority in various aspect social , cultural and spiritual aspects of society Amahai

1. Hierarchical and Functional Position in Customary Structure

In formation troops reflected customs in war dance *Cakalele* , *Malesi* occupy position as the deputy captain, whose duties accompany , prepare need logistics , as well as set up a defense strategy with *Captain*. Formation nine people inside troops *Cakalele* reflect structure hierarchy , where the *Kapitan* is at the top , followed by the *Malesi* , then troops supporters . This is show structure social an organized and reflective collective distribution clear roles in community customs .

As stated in interview with *Kapitan Soa Lesi* and *Soa Loko*, *Malesi* No just maid , but is figure with capacity high leadership , appointed based on courage , ability strategic , and loyalty to the *Captain*. In the situation battle , *Malesi* can replace the role of the *Captain* if He fall or prevented . This shows that role *Malesi* nature **substitutional**, but also **strategic and integral** in maintain stability social and symbolic community.

According to *Levi-Strauss's* view (2016), structure social traditional No only formed on base connection power , but also over base symbols and meanings attached to the role social certain . In the context of this , role *Malesi* own weight highly symbolic Because represent continuity values courage, loyalty, and honor custom .

Cultural and Spiritual Dimensions of the Role of *Malesi*

Malesi's role is not only limited to the field war or rites ceremonial like *Cakalele* , but also reaches various dimensions social and spiritual in life public Amahai . In carrying out traditional rituals like **Pela Heat** , **king's inauguration** , **wedding customs** , as well as ceremony **religious local** , *Malesi* play a role active as part from **Data** — structure customs that are the pillars of decision making decisions and enforcement mark customs

As emphasized by the informants (*Kapitan Soa*, Head of *Saniri Negeri*, and figures customs others), *Malesi* also has *right voice in deliberation customs* , including in appointment of king, settlement conflict inter-*soa* , as well as taking decisions concerning interest collective . This means that the function *Malesi* covers dimensions *political custom* making it as actor important in guard *balance social and legitimacy customs* .

This matter in harmony with *Bourdieu's* thoughts (1990), which states that actor social in public traditional get legitimacy No only from formal positions , but also from accumulation symbolic *capital* , such as honor , trust , and recognition community .

Appointment Criteria *Malesi* : Heredity vs. Skill

Findings field show that there is difference view about mechanism appointment *Malesi* . Some informants , including *Upu Latu* and certain *Kapitan Soa* , stated that position *Malesi* determined in a way **hereditary** through a certain family line in *soa* . However , some other figures emphasize importance **skills personal** — namely courage , skill customs and abilities lead — as condition main become *Malesi* .

Difference This show existence dynamics in preservation customs and flexibility in adjustment mark customs with reality contemporary . In the study public custom , this known as *adaptive traditionalism* — concept that tradition can changed without lost substance , so that it remains relevant in context developing social (*Pattinama*, 2022; *Tuhumury* , 2021).

4. Moral Authority and Social Mediation

As the deputy captain and part from *Dati* structure , *Malesi* own respected *moral authority* in community . He play role as *mediator* in settlement conflict social and become bridge communication between family big *soa*. In the structure social as in Amahai , the role of this mediator is very important in guard *cohesion social* and sustainability values customs , as stated by *Turner* (2019) in studies about function rites and symbols in guard stability community.

B. Social Function of *Malesi* in the Indigenous Society of Negeri Amahai

In structure social public Amahai Country customs, role *Malesi* No only nature symbolic or ceremonial, but also playing function very strategic social in guard harmony community , strengthening identity culture, as well as ensure sustainability values custom . As part from

system customs based *dati* and *soa* , Malesi act as connector social uniting community through practice kinship , deliberation , and participation collective .

Function social Malesi can mapped in four dimensions main : *solution conflict* , *strengthening identity culture* , *development solidarity social* and *function educative in transmission mark custom* Function This make Malesi as actor social integration in structure customs of Negeri Amahai .

1. Social Conflict Resolution

One of function social main Malesi is as a mediator in settlement conflict , both at the level individual , intergroup *fam* , as well as inter-*soa* . As stated by the informant like Sernik Lernaya and Upu Latu Lounusa Maatita , Malesi often accompanying the King and Saniri of the Country in finish dispute with put forward principles customs like deliberation , consensus and respect against ancestral norms .

Interview results with Mr. Hallatu , 2025 that ; Malesi become figure the mediator who guards connection inter-*soa* still harmonious and prevent conflict develop become division .

In perspective theory Resolution Conflict, role Malesi This reflect principle *restorative justice* namely settlement conflict with method restore connection social and not punish in a way repressive (Zehr, 2015). This is very relevant in context public custom , where harmony social more important than punishment .

2. Strengthening Identity Culture

As part from institution customs, Malesi play a role in strengthen identity culture public Amahai through involvement active in various traditional rituals, such as weddings, mourning , *panas pela*, and dancing *cakalele* . In the activity said , Malesi responsible answer on organizing role each *fam*, settings the way rites, and supervision against the prevailing customary norms.

Based on results interview with Mr. Lasamahu 2025, that ; " Malesi No only figure customs but also guardians memory collective and values long live the brothers . "

According to Geertz (2017), symbols and rituals is a medium of articulation values culture . In terms of this , Malesi play a role as *guard meaning symbolic* , which ensures that every action customs still relevant and meaningful for community .

3. Building Solidarity and Mutual Cooperation

In life daily, Malesi become a driving force solidarity and mutual cooperation between citizens , good in activity customs and social activities like development House customs , handling disaster , collection assistance ,or Work devotion implemented on coordination Malesi together institution other customs . Through function this , Malesi become bridge communication inter - *fam*, avoiding isolation social , and strengthen the sense of belonging towards the country.

Social capital theory from Putnam (2000) explains that bond strong social , mutual trust , and participation collective is foundation from healthy society . In this case this , role Malesi strengthen deep - rooted *bonding social capital* from structure customs .

4. Social Education and Transmission of Traditional Values

Malesi also runs function education social (*social pedagogy*), namely transmit values sublime to generation young . As explained by the informant , Malesi become example in attitude speech , and involvement in deliberations and traditional events . Children and teenagers Study from roles and attitudes Malesi about manners, history the origin of the surname, as well as importance life in brotherhood (*the life of the basudara people*).

Based on results interview with Mr. Karel Hallatu , 2025, that ; " Malesi must So good mirror for society , so that authority customs still respected and lived with Really . "

According to Banks (2016), education in public traditional often informal and done through exemplary behavior figure customs . Malesi plays a role as educator social that is not only teach norms, but also shape character and identity collective .

C. Function Cultural Malesi in Customary Structure of Amahai Country

In structure social and cultural public customs of Negeri Amahai , Malesi No only play a role in realm social and administrative customs , but also have *function* very important *cultural* function . This related with preservation values culture local , heritage customs customs , as well as identity collective public Amahai rooted in the system kinship traditional and values spirituality local .

1. Preserving Traditions and Traditional Ceremonies

Malesi plays role main in ensure continuity *rituals and ceremonies customs* , such as *Washing the Country* , *Panas Pela* , *acceptance visitor customs* , until implementation *Cakalele* . In the implementation rites this , Malesi know with clear sequence , symbolism , and meaning cultural from every stages ceremonies , which are passed down in a way oral from generation to generation .

As per the interview with Sernik Lernaya, 2025 that ; " Every Malesi Already know position and duties in ceremony custom . That's not taught in schools , but inherited from parents and ancestors . "

According to Edward Shils (2018) and reinforced by Sahlins (2017), the function institution customs in public traditional is as guard continuity culture through implementation rites and symbols collective . In the context of Amahai , Malesi become actor key in guard values That still alive and not replaced by culture outside coming in through modernization .

Transmission Media Indigenous Knowledge

Function cultural other is *transmission knowledge customs* to generation young . Malesi has knowledge about genealogy offspring (*eyes house*), history origin *soa* , customary area , land boundaries customary law , as well as rules and laws customs . Knowledge This taught through socializing customs , informal discussions , and involvement direct in activity customs .

Interview results with one of the Amahai Youth , 2025 that ; "We used to sit and listen story about origin of the country, the role of fam in customs and values life from the Malesi . It is important so we know Who We . "

In perspective anthropology education , Banks (2016) stated that institution social traditional like Malesi functioning as *agent informal education* , which bridges generation old and young through inheritance cultural values and norms .

"We used to sit and listen story about origin of the country, the role of fam in customs and values life from the Malesi . It is important so we know Who we . " - (Interview , Amahai Youth , 2024)

3. Guard Identity Culture and Integrity Communal

Malesi becomes symbol from *identity culture public Amahai* . Its existence reflect continuity between the past , present and future community customs . In every rites collective , Malesi present as representation mark togetherness , honor customs , and spiritual ties between families and between communities .

According to Smith (2019), identity culture No only problem symbol or language , but also embodiment mark in structure social activities that are carried out continuously . In case this , Malesi become structure cultural preservation *continuity* and *authenticity* identity local Amahai in the middle onslaught global culture .

" That's a shame No just position . It's a symbol that customs Still alive . If Malesi is missing , that means There is One part culture that is also lost . " (Interview , Mr. Zeth Lernaya , 2025)

4. Strengthening Socio-Customary Relations and Symbolic Roles

Function Malesi culture is also visible in *strengthening relation inter-agency customs* In every implementation customs , Malesi side by side with the Captain, Saniri, and King of the Country. Relations This show that structure Amahai Country customs nature collective and integrated . Malesi became connector in communication customs , implementation decision customs and guards stability social based culture .

This matter in line with draft *cultural embeddedness* by Granovetter (2020), which explains that action social in public traditional attached strong on values and institutions culture . In society Amahai , relation social customs No Can released from existence Malesi

D. Dynamics and Challenges of Malesi's Role in Customary Structure of Amahai Country

1. Introduction : Malesi in Current Socio- Cultural Change

Malesi is a an integral part of structure the customs of Negeri Amahai , which are historical has hold role important in guard regularity social , implementation rites customs , as well as mediation in state deliberation and relations between groups . However , in context contemporary role Malesi experience *dynamics* influenced by factors external like modernization , education , state policy , and progress technology information .

According to Eisenstadt (2017), modernization No only bring change structural in society , but also creates tension between *mark traditional and modern rationality* . Tension This reflected in effort Malesi maintain function customs in the middle demands of changing times fast .

2. Dynamics of Malesi's Role : Adaptation Without Losing Cultural Roots

Interview results with the characters customs like Mr. Sernik Lernaya and Mr. Yopi Lasamahu show that although the people of Negeri Amahai is at near with center city district and exposed various form change social , position and authority Malesi still guarded through *commitment customs* , including *oath position* and recognition from structure customs other .

This matter show existence *adaptation cultural adaptation* , as explained by Berry (2018), where the community customs capable adapt self with change without release core values of its culture .

The youth (Murua Malakao) are also still give respect to Malesi and the customs of the country. Support This strengthen legitimacy Malesi as figures that are not only symbolic but also functional in guard continuity customs in the middle transformation social

3. Internal Challenges: Indigenous Regeneration and Resilience

One of challenge main is *regeneration role Malesi* in the middle change pattern think generation young Some generations young more focused on opportunities modern economy and start avoid from roles customs that are assessed No give direct material benefits

However , according to UNESCO (2020) in report *Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage* ,transmission values customs and roles institution traditional like Malesi requires an engagement strategy generation young in education customs including revitalization Language local , art and system kinship .

Malesi *also* faces challenges *internal leadership*, need will capacity adequate education to be able to bridge mark customs with reality social contemporary. Statement from Mr. Cak Hallatu and Mr. Beni Lasamahu strengthen matter this, that quality education and insight become factor important For maintain credibility a Malesi .

4. Challenges External: State, Technology, and Globalization

In a way external, structure customs like Malesi face to face with complexity state regulation intervention in form policy government village, and increasingly dominant culture popular that can erode practice customs.

In line with Appadurai's (2019) analysis of globalization culture , modernization process often bring homogenization potential value weaken structure local . Although Thus , society Amahai show trend *syncretism*, namely integrate role customs with system formal government .

For example , now Malesi No only involved in affairs customs , but also active in activity community villages , including in field *education , business economy small , and preservation environment customs* like practice *month sea* .

Sustainability Strategy : Wise Adaptation and Cross- Generation Collaboration

In order for the role Malesi still relevant , a sustainability strategy is needed that emphasizes

- a. Revitalization education customs based community , for reach generation young
- b. Collaboration with government village , without weaken structure customs that have been There is .
- c. Improvement capacity Malesi , especially in face challenge modern administrative and social
- d. Documentation history and knowledge customs , including family tree , rites customs and systems mark local .

According to Rahman (2022), sustainability institution customs in the modern era are very dependent on the ability community local For formulate repeat role customs as part from governance inclusive and participatory social .

D. Conclusion

1. Malesi's position in structure customs Amahai show that his role No just symbolic or administrative , but covers dimensions strategic , spiritual, and sociocultural . Malesi became actor customs that negotiate between past and present — guarding old values while adapt with demands social contemporary . In the context of this , Malesi is guard balance between power symbolic , wisdom local , and harmony social in Amahai Country .
2. Function social Malesi in public Amahai reflect role important institution customs in guard stability social , preserving culture , and fostering morality community . Malesi does not only play a role as the Captain's deputy in structure customs , but also as leader social , mediator, motivator solidarity , and educators values local . In the context of public multi-clan and layered like Amahai , presence Malesi ensure that values customs still become guidelines in life collectively , simultaneously strengthen identity culture in the middle current change social .
3. Function Malesi culture in Amahai Country reflect role double as guard inheritance culture at a time as educator values customs . Malesi does not only operate function in realm ceremonial , but also plays role substantial in guard sustainability system knowledge local , strengthening identity culture , and bring to life solidarity social based customs .
4. The existence of Malesi became vital indicators that culture No just past memories , but reality that still exists active executed in life society . Therefore that , in context

modernization and change social , sustainability function Malesi need supported with policy preservation culture based community .

5. Role dynamics Malesi reflect flexibility culture public Amahai in respond changing times. Although challenge come from in (regeneration , education) as well as outside (pressure) globalization , state policy), role Malesi still significant as guard values , social mediators and connectors intergenerational in customs .

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