

The Moor People of Papua: Kinship, Cosmology, Human-Nature Relations, and Life-Cycle Practices

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ABSTRACT

The following article is an ethnographic study of the Moor tribe in Nabire. This paper describes the Moors and their distribution, worldview, kinship system and life cycle. The Moors classify their sub-tribes into six groups, five of which live on the Moor Island to the Aburu Valley and on the Nabire coast. The Wanggei are classified as a tribe that lives in another world and realm. It is not a tribe and people that exist in reality, but it exists in their worldview only. The kinship relationship between fellow humans and their natural environment is very important and it is represented in their life cycle rites. The purpose of this research is to describe their cultural ethnography in-depth and comprehensively. Therefore, the Rapid Ethnographic Assessment method was used in this study. With research techniques, in-depth interviews, observations, focus group discussions, and genealogical methods to find kinship genealogies.

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1. Introduction

This study is an ethnographic examination of Moor society, with particular attention to its geographical distribution, worldview, kinship relations, and rituals associated with different stages of life. The Moor people inhabit the Moor Islands, located northeast of Nabire Regency in Papua Province. According to Supriyanton et al. (2006: 141), "Moor Island is located between 2°50' S and 3°00' S as well as 135°40' E and 135°50' E and is administratively included in Napan Weinami District, Nabire Regency. The island has an area of 1,350 hectares and consists of two main villages, namely Moor and Kama."

The Moor Islands can be reached from Nabire by traditional boat, a journey that takes approximately four hours under normal conditions. Travel

time may be considerably longer during periods of rough seas and heavy rainfall. By contrast, the return journey from the Moor Islands to Nabire generally takes approximately two hours. Figure 1 shows the geographical location of the Moor Islands and provides a spatial context for the study.

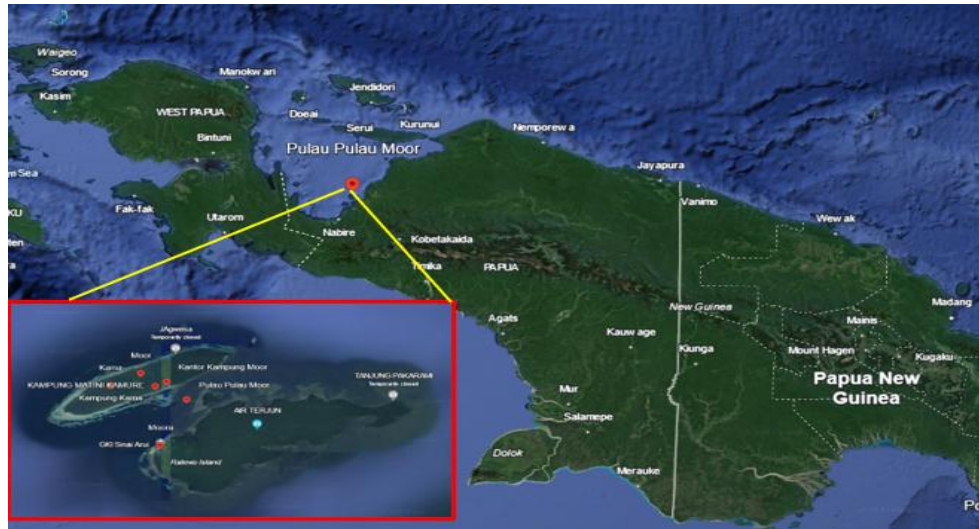


Figure 1. Map of the Moor Islands. Source: Google Earth.

Ethnically, the Moor constitute a relatively small population, both in terms of their numbers and the territory they occupy. They are one of several ethnic groups inhabiting the Moor-Mambror Islands region. Within their social organization, Moor society is divided into six subethnic groups distributed across the Moor Islands, Waboga, and the coastal areas of Nabire. This division reflects the internal diversity of Moor society and plays an important role in shaping social and cultural relations among these groups.

This study focuses on three interrelated dimensions to develop a deeper understanding of Moor society. First, it examines the Moor worldview, particularly their understanding of the relationship between humans and nature and their responses to challenges in a changing world. Second, it explores the kinship system, with particular attention to land inheritance and access to natural resources, both of which are central to Moor social and cultural life. Third, it examines ceremonies and rituals associated with different stages of individual and communal life, which serve as important means of strengthening kinship ties and maintaining social cohesion.

These three dimensions are closely interconnected and constitute a broader social and cultural framework through which the Moor maintain their collective identity and social continuity amid ongoing changes in their region. Accordingly, this study seeks to examine how worldview, kinship relations, and life-cycle rituals collectively shape social life, strengthen relationships among

community members, and sustain the Moor people's relationship with the natural environment.

2. Data Collection and Research Methods

Data were collected through several complementary techniques, including direct observation and participant observation. These approaches enabled the researchers to observe and, where appropriate, participate in a range of local community activities. Informal conversations and discussions with community members were also conducted to obtain contextual information and gain insight into their everyday experiences and perspectives. In-depth interviews were conducted with key informants selected on the basis of their knowledge of and experience with the history of the community, social organization, customary practices, kinship systems, and various rituals. In addition, focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with representatives of different social groups to explore shared perspectives and identify variations in experiences and interpretations among community members.

Another important component of the study was the use of genealogical methods. Genealogical research was employed to trace kinship relations, lineages, origins, kinship terminology, and social roles associated with different family groups. This method was particularly useful for understanding the transmission of rights and responsibilities related to land and natural resources, as well as the roles of individuals and kin groups in ceremonies associated with different stages of life. Genealogical data also provided a basis for examining how kinship relations contribute to the formation, organization, and continuity of Moor society.

A literature review was also conducted to obtain secondary data and relevant references on the history, geography, social organization, and culture of the Moor people, as well as previous studies concerning the Moor community and the wider Moor-Mambor region. Various documents and published sources were used to complement the primary data collected during fieldwork and to provide a broader context for interpreting the research findings.

Overall, the study adopted an ethnographic approach to develop an in-depth understanding of the social and cultural life of the Moor people. The combination of Rapid Ethnographic Assessment, participant observation, interviews, focus group discussions, genealogical research, and literature review enabled the researchers to examine the interrelated dimensions of Moor society. Particular attention was given to worldviews, kinship systems, relationships with land and natural resources, social organization, and ceremonies associated with different stages of life. The integration of these methods provided a comprehensive basis for examining how the Moor people maintain their social and cultural identity, strengthen relationships within the

community, and respond to ongoing social, environmental, and cultural changes in their region.

3. Results

3.1. Moors and Their Expansion

The term “Moor” is derived from the word *moo*, which in the local language means “place.” The word *moo* refers to the location of the first Moor settlement on the island. Over time, the term underwent a phonological change through the addition of the letter “r” at the end, resulting in the form “Moor.” This form was first recorded by the Dutch. According to informants, the change was primarily attributed to the difficulty Dutch speakers experienced in pronouncing the word *moo*, which reportedly led to the emergence and eventual dominance of the “r” sound in its pronunciation. Following the arrival and subsequent colonial occupation of the region by the Dutch, the islands inhabited by the Moor people came to be referred to by Dutch colonists as Harlenrs.

Historically, the Moor people inhabited the interior of the island, where their ancestral settlement was known as Moo, after which the island itself was named. The same term was also used to refer to the ethnic group. Thus, the term “Moor” signifies not only a place of origin but also an ethnic identity and the territorial domain historically associated with the group.

According to ancestral narratives, the Moor people trace their origins to six major communities that once inhabited the interior of the island. In Moor ancestral mythology, these six communities are believed to have descended from a common ancestral lineage. Over time, each community developed into an autonomous social group while retaining genealogical connections through shared ancestral narratives. This process of social differentiation subsequently gave rise to smaller social units, which developed into clans and, more broadly, into kin-based groups that are now recognized as subethnic communities.

Historically, each group within Moor society developed its own social organization, linguistic varieties, and distinctive cultural characteristics that differentiated it from the others. Over time, these differences became important markers of group identity. Some groups subsequently left their ancestral settlements and dispersed toward the coastal areas, while others migrated beyond the island to neighboring islands. Today, their descendants can be found on Mambor, Wapoga, and Boronai, among other locations where Moor communities have settled.

According to information provided by informants, Moor society is currently composed of six subethnic groups distributed across different territories and characterized by distinct linguistic varieties or dialects. These groups are Roroindu, Manantoheri, Minumeri, Horomere, Keuw, and Wanggeri. Each subethnic group possesses a distinctive cultural identity while maintaining

strong historical and genealogical connections to its ancestors and to the broader Moor community. These connections can be traced through territorial divisions, migration histories, genealogical relationships, and differences in language or dialect. The emergence of these subethnic groups should therefore not be understood as the complete separation of originally unrelated communities, but rather as the outcome of a historical process of social differentiation from a common ancestral origin. This process involved the development of distinct communities, the formation of clans and kin groups, migration, and the subsequent dispersal of populations across different territories.

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The Keuw people have long been subject to stigmatizing representations within the cultural framework of Moor society. According to Moor beliefs, the Keuw are associated with supernatural forces that are perceived as having the potential to harm members of other groups. In local historical narratives, the Keuw are associated with practices described as witchcraft or black magic, which are believed to cause harm to others. They are represented as possessing the ability to harness supernatural powers or natural forces for purposes perceived as detrimental to society, including the ability to transform into spirits, animals, or plants and, according to local narratives, to fly through the use of black magic. Within these cultural representations, the Keuw are often associated with evil, witchcraft, or catastrophic events. However, such representations should not be treated as an empirical characterization of the Keuw people. Rather, they constitute a form of cultural classification through which some Moor people interpret danger, difference, and relationships with social groups perceived as unfamiliar or threatening. The persistence of these negative representations suggests the existence of historically constituted social boundaries between groups within Moor society, which are reproduced through narratives, memories, and beliefs across generations.

Negative perceptions of the Keuw appear to be rooted in historical experiences that have generated fear and distrust. Many Moor communities retain memories of a past in which members of their communities were allegedly killed through practices of witchcraft believed to have originated among the Keuw. Whether understood as historical events, culturally interpreted experiences, or forms of collective memory, these narratives have contributed to strained relations between the Keuw and other groups on the Moor Islands. These tensions reportedly contributed to conflict and eventually led the Keuw to migrate to the Waisau Valley. According to local narratives, the migration was triggered by intergroup warfare, specifically conflict between the Keuw and four other groups on Moor Island. The history of the Keuw thus demonstrates that

migration in the Moor region cannot always be explained solely in terms of environmental or economic factors. In such cases, population displacement may also be shaped by processes of social exclusion, conflict, fear, and the construction of collective identities in opposition to groups perceived as threats. Migration, therefore, may function both as a response to conflict and as a means through which social boundaries are reproduced.

Contact with the Keuw community was re-established in 1982 following the arrival of Christian missionaries in the region. At that time, the Keuw were relocated from their former settlement in Waisan to Boronai. Although these events occurred generations ago, fear of the Keuw is still reported to persist among some members of the Moor community. The informants interviewed in this study indicated that, despite various social and religious changes, the Keuw continue to be viewed with suspicion, particularly because beliefs concerning their alleged involvement in black magic practices persist. When the researchers attempted to explore the subject of the Keuw in greater depth, many informants chose to remain silent or were reluctant to provide further information. This silence is itself ethnographically significant. It does not simply indicate an absence of information; rather, it may reflect the sensitivity of the topic and the social boundaries surrounding knowledge about the Keuw. Silence, hesitation, and reluctance to speak can therefore be understood as part of a cultural mechanism through which fear and secrecy are reproduced. The persistence of these attitudes into the present also suggests that historical memories can endure despite significant political, religious, and social changes.

According to informants, the Keuw continue to be associated with a form of black magic known as *suanggi*, a term locally understood in relation to spirits or demons. Informants described *suanggi* as involving various practices, including the use of food for specific purposes, the purported ability to transform into animals or plants, and the manipulation of natural signs to cause harm to others. Within Moor society, such practices are perceived as threatening and therefore contribute to fear and distrust toward the Keuw. At the same time, beliefs concerning *suanggi* are not confined to Moor communities but have also been reported among other communities around Cenderawasih Bay. For example, Michael J. Toy (2020, p. 115) documents a case involving an alleged black magic attack on a young woman: "He recounted that the night before, two men entered the locked house where he and his sister lived alone at 2 a.m. The Suanggi appears to be a dark figure and resembles a shadow in human form, and in a threatening manner forces him to commit suicide." Similar perspectives have also been documented in other societies (Forsyth & Eves, 2015; Humble, 2013; Fernandes, 2017). Such accounts suggest that beliefs concerning *suanggi* form part of a broader regional cultural repertoire for interpreting extraordinary experiences, danger, illness, and misfortune. The significance of *suanggi*, therefore, lies not solely in whether such practices can be empirically verified,

but also in how belief in them organizes perceptions of danger, social difference, and intercommunity relations.

According to informants, black magic is not exclusively associated with harmful purposes. It may also be used for various other functions, including treating illnesses, protecting individuals from attacks by other practitioners of black magic, and warding off supernatural threats. Informants also associated such practices with hunting, harvesting marine resources, navigation, and various other activities. This dimension complicates the tendency to understand supernatural knowledge solely as a source of danger. From the perspective of local cultural logic, supernatural knowledge may constitute a form of practical knowledge whose moral character depends on its purpose and use. In this sense, the same knowledge system may be regarded as harmful when used to attack others, but beneficial when used for protection, healing, meeting subsistence needs, or ensuring safety. This perspective is important because it demonstrates that black magic is not necessarily positioned as an absolute category of evil; rather, its meaning is constituted within a relational moral system that distinguishes between the beneficial and harmful uses of supernatural forces.

In addition to the Keuw, there are other communities that occupy the social and spiritual landscape of Moor Island, namely the Wanggeri. The presence of the Wanggeri in Moor society is distinctive because their existence is not understood in the same physical terms as that of other subethnic groups. According to Moor beliefs, the Wanggeri do not live in the physical world but rather in another dimension that is not directly accessible to ordinary humans. The Wanggeri are believed to exist simultaneously in the past, present, and future, but cannot be seen or physically touched by humans. Although they are not perceived as physically present in the everyday world, the Wanggeri are nevertheless considered part of Moor society. This belief reflects an important characteristic of the Moor worldview: social existence is not necessarily limited to beings or groups that occupy the same physical space. Rather, membership in society may transcend the boundaries between the visible and invisible worlds. In this sense, the Wanggeri challenge a purely material conception of society by demonstrating how spiritual entities can be incorporated into the conceptual boundaries of community and belonging.

As informants explained, the perception of the Wanggeri reflects the belief that their existence transcends the boundaries of the material world accessible to human senses. The Wanggeri are understood as spiritual beings believed to influence the lives of Moor people, even though their existence cannot be empirically observed. This belief reflects a broader conception of the metaphysical world as interconnected with everyday experience. The significance of the Wanggeri, therefore, does not lie primarily in the question of whether they are physically present. Rather, their significance lies in their role within the cognitive and cultural frameworks through which Moor people interpret time, space, human relationships, and events that cannot be explained

solely by visible or material causes. In this context, belief in the Wanggeri forms part of a worldview that does not treat spiritual and material realities as two completely separate realms, but rather understands them as interconnected dimensions of existence.

The contrasting perceptions of the Keuw and Wanggeri reflect the importance of spiritual and social dimensions within Moor society. Although the two groups occupy very different positions within the cultural imagination – the Keuw are associated with danger and supernatural forces, while the Wanggeri are understood as a group whose existence transcends everyday physical reality – both demonstrate the extent to which spiritual concepts influence social classification and collective identity. Beliefs concerning supernatural powers, black magic, invisible beings, and the invisible world are not peripheral elements of Moor culture. Rather, they help define social boundaries, explain experiences of danger and uncertainty, and shape relationships between humans and the wider world. The contrasting representations of the Keuw and Wanggeri suggest that the spiritual realm can simultaneously function as a source of fear, a means of explanation, and a framework for maintaining social order. These beliefs should therefore not be understood as isolated supernatural ideas, but rather as part of a broader cultural system through which Moor people understand their social relationships and the world around them.

"I can no longer continue the story about this tribe because the risk is too great. The risk is for me, for the people of this village, and also for you. They live here with us; they know the purpose of your coming, and they also see when you come, but we cannot see them. We Moors do not believe in this tribe, because they also believe in the Lord Jesus and they are just like us. During the day they catch fish in the east and catch their fish at night, while at night they catch fish in the west and catch their fish during the day. So, their lives are turned upside down."

This informant's statement provides important insights into the complexity of Moor beliefs concerning the Wanggeri. The statement simultaneously acknowledges their humanity, affirms their religious similarity to the Moor people, and emphasizes their radically different relationship to time and space. This apparent contradiction is analytically significant: the Wanggeri are considered "the same as us" in terms of human identity and religion, yet fundamentally different in terms of their mode of existence. These differences do not necessarily place the Wanggeri outside Moor society; rather, they constitute a particular form of social membership in which similarity and difference can coexist. The informant's reluctance to continue the conversation further reinforces the observation that knowledge concerning the Wanggeri is shaped by mechanisms of secrecy, fear, and perceptions of spiritual risk.

The Moor people hold a strong conviction regarding this spiritual order. When the people of Ayombai were asked about the Wanggeri, they firmly stated

that the Wanggeri were part of Moor society and were human beings like themselves. This perspective suggests that, within the Moor cultural understanding, social belonging is not necessarily determined by physical visibility or co-presence in the material world. Although the Wanggeri cannot be seen or physically touched in everyday life, they are nevertheless accepted as an integral part of the cultural and spiritual structure of society. Stories about the Wanggeri, whether openly narrated or conveyed through more implicit forms, continue to circulate within the community. The persistence of these narratives demonstrates how collective knowledge can sustain relationships with beings understood to possess different ontological statuses while nevertheless retaining social significance. In this sense, the Wanggeri represent a form of social presence without physical presence in the conventional sense, revealing a conception of society that extends beyond the boundaries of empirical existence.

To outsiders, particularly those unfamiliar with Moor culture and belief systems, stories about the Wanggeri may appear strange, unusual, or even be interpreted as products of human imagination. From an external perspective, their existence may be difficult to comprehend because it concerns beings and dimensions that cannot be empirically observed. However, the anthropological question is not primarily whether such beliefs appear strange or irrational from an outsider's perspective, but rather how these beliefs operate within the cognitive and cultural frameworks of those who hold them. The task of the researcher is therefore to understand the cultural logic through which Indigenous peoples construct relationships between the visible and invisible worlds. Rather than immediately evaluating such beliefs according to external standards of rationality, researchers should examine the social, moral, psychological, and cosmological functions that these beliefs perform in people's lives. Such an approach enables anthropological inquiry to move beyond a simple opposition between "belief" and "reality" and instead examine how people construct meaningful realities through culturally specific systems of knowledge and interpretation.

As researchers, we must seek to understand the deeper cognitive structures through which Indigenous peoples organize their perceptions of the world. This requires a holistic and empathetic approach that takes local categories seriously without necessarily accepting them as empirically verifiable facts. Understanding a worldview from within does not mean abandoning analytical distance; rather, it requires researchers to suspend premature judgment in order to understand the internal coherence of the cultural system under study. In the context of Moor society, this means examining how concepts of spirituality, supernatural forces, ancestry, danger, time, and space are interconnected. By engaging seriously with these perspectives, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of how cultural knowledge is transmitted, how collective memory is maintained, and how invisible dimensions of existence acquire social significance. The analytical challenge lies in balancing an emic

understanding—that is, an understanding grounded in the perspective of the society itself—with an etic interpretation through which researchers situate these beliefs within broader anthropological discussions of culture, cosmology, and social organization.

The Wanggeri were included in this study to further explore the underlying logic of Moor understandings of culture, society, and nature. The presence of the Wanggeri in Moor thought suggests a close relationship between the physical and spiritual worlds, even when such connections are not directly visible within the material realm. The Wanggeri are understood not merely as entities originating from another world, but also as an integral part of Moor society. Their significance lies precisely in the way they transcend conceptual boundaries between “here” and “there,” between the visible and the invisible, and between everyday human experience and spiritual existence. Studying the Wanggeri therefore provides an opportunity to understand how Moor society constructs a multidimensional social world in which the boundaries of community extend beyond what can be physically observed. The Wanggeri are analytically significant not because their existence can or cannot be empirically proven, but because beliefs concerning their existence have tangible consequences for how Moor people understand themselves, their environment, and their relationships with others.

Therefore, in order to understand Moor culture and belief systems as a whole, researchers must engage with the cognitive frameworks through which Moor people connect the material and spiritual worlds. This perspective requires openness to forms of knowledge that may differ fundamentally from the scientific rationality commonly used to evaluate empirical reality. The Moor worldview demonstrates that people do not construct reality solely through what can be physically seen, measured, or verified; they also construct it through inherited memories, beliefs, narratives, spiritual experiences, and systems of meaning. Thus, understanding the Wanggeri as part of Moor society is not simply an attempt to determine whether they physically exist. More importantly, it involves examining how Moor people construct an understanding of existence itself and how they connect the visible and invisible dimensions of the world within a coherent spiritual order. In a broader sense, the Wanggeri provide an important analytical entry point for examining how culture shapes ontology—that is, how a society determines what kinds of beings are understood to exist, how these beings are interconnected, and how boundaries between the human, natural, and spiritual worlds are constructed and maintained.

3.2. Kinship System

The kinship structure of the Moor people, particularly in the Ayombai and Kama regions, was built through the formation of a nuclear family based on marital relationships. In general, the nuclear family is formed based on the principle of monogamy, namely one husband and one wife with children as a

family unit. However, there is also a nuclear family formed through polygynous marriage, where a man has more than one wife. The formation of a polygynous family generally takes place among individuals who have economic abilities and political positions that allow them to meet the needs of family members in the structure. This suggests that the form of marriage in Moor society is related to a person's capacity to manage resources, build social relationships, and maintain position in the community. Thus, the family structure also has economic and socio-political dimensions that affect the formation and sustainability of the household.

In the social life of the Moor people, kinship relationships are formed through two main types of bonds, namely marital bonds and family bonds that have a political dimension. The bond between husband and wife forms a social relationship with the wife's parents, siblings, and other family members. Meanwhile, the relationship between parents and children forms various kinship bonds that connect the nuclear family to a wider social network. Therefore, kinship encompasses the direct relationship between parent and child as well as relationships with extended families and more complex socio-political networks. This structure shows that marriage serves as a mechanism that connects two family groups and expands the network of social relationships. Through marriage, relationships between families obtain a basis that allows the formation of cooperation, mutual obligations, and social support in people's lives.

In practice, Moor society tends to form extended families consisting of two groups, namely the *orientation family* (older family) and the *progressive family* (younger family). The two families can live together in one house, thus forming a socially dependent structure. There is flexibility in determining where young families live, both with the husband's family (*virilocal*) and with the wife's family (*uxorilocal*). The choice of residence is influenced by two main factors. First, economic factors: young families who do not have the financial ability to build their own households tend to live with extended families. Second, the security and social support factor: older families, especially when they have entered old age and have lost economic independence, need support and social security from younger families. This pattern shows the existence of a reciprocal relationship between generations. In the early stages of home life, young families gain economic support, shelter, and protection from older families. In the next stage, young families take on a role in providing care, economic support, and social security to older family members. Thus, the household functions as a space for the reproduction of kinship relationships as well as a mechanism for resource distribution and social support between generations.

The lineage of the Moor people follows a patrilineal system, which means that every child, whether male or female, follows the paternal lineage. Therefore, the inheritance of land and other natural resources is in principle directed to boys. Nevertheless, girls still receive a share of the inheritance, even though it is a smaller portion than boys. This condition is related to the transfer of lineage

after marriage, when a woman joins her husband's clan and her descendants follow her husband's clan. Consequently, the land and resources inherited to the sons remain in the father's clan, while the woman in her married life will gain access to and use the resources inherited in her husband's clan. This system shows that the patrilineal principle has a direct relationship with the regulation of land rights, natural resources, and the sustainability of a clan. Inheritance serves as a mechanism to maintain territorial and resource continuity from one generation to the next, while marriage becomes the transition point of women's position from one clan network to another. As explained by the Head of Kama Village:

"Here, all children are born following the father's line and use the father's clan name. Meanwhile, the mother's clan name is only followed by the children of the mother's brothers. This does not mean that the mother is not important, but our culture is like this. I believe this practice is followed by almost all tribes in Papua. If a child follows the mother's clan name, the question arises: where will they receive their inheritance from? The mother's family will surely be upset, saying, 'We gave birth to you, and now you are following our clan and taking our inheritance rights?' If this happens, we, the father's side, would feel deeply ashamed. Mothers have worked hard to give birth to children for their husband's clan, but then they would also 'consume' the inherited land from the mother's side. If this happens, we, as Papuans, would feel very ashamed because our clan also has land that is passed down through generations to our children, who will then maintain that land and pass it down to the next generation. Therefore, in our lives, ritual activities that involve both parties, from the husband's family and the wife's family, are very important. We gather together to maintain good and strong relationships, because good relations between the husband and wife's families are of utmost importance in our culture."

The statement of the Kama Village Chief shows that the patrilineal system of the Moor community works through the relationship between lineage, inheritance, family honor, and inter-clan relationships. In the informant's view, clan identity determines the path of inheritance receipt while also assigning responsibility for safeguarding and passing on the land to the next generation. Therefore, the question of the clan in which a child belongs has direct consequences for the distribution of land rights. The statement about shame also shows that violations of the inheritance pattern are understood as moral and social problems, not solely the problem of wealth distribution. Family honor has to do with a clan's ability to defend ancestral lands and ensure its sustainability through descent. At the same time, the informant emphasized the importance of rituals involving the husband's family and the wife's family. Rituals are a social space to maintain family relationships after marriage and manage relationships between two kinship groups that have different rights and interests. Thus, the patrilineal system in Moor society has a social mechanism that allows the

relationship between two families to be maintained even though the lineage and inheritance follow the male's side.

This is closely related to the right of inheritance of land, which has an important meaning for each clan. If a child follows a mother's clan, this condition can cause tension and embarrassment for both families because it has the potential to change the pattern of inheritance distribution that has been established in the culture. This practice also reflects recognition and respect for each clan and serves to maintain order and patterns of life that have been passed down from generation to generation. In this context, land has a much broader position than its economic function as a source of livelihood. Land is part of the genealogical continuity and is a marker of the existence of a clan in the social space. Since land rights follow the lineage, a change in a child's affiliation will have consequences for the sustainability of a clan's rights. Therefore, marriage, birth, inheritance, and ritual form a network of interconnected social institutions in maintaining kinship structures and the domination of resources.

The Moor kinship terminology system uses classification based on generations which facilitates the introduction of family relationships in social life. Each generation has a basic term to refer to a family member, while the term has been modified through the addition of certain words to indicate the difference in sex and age in each generation. One prominent form of terminological differentiation is seen in the terms for mother's *brother* (MB) and father's *sister* (FZ). The term "raroti" is used to refer to the mother's brother, while "amo" is used to refer to the father's sister. This division of terminology shows that kinship relationships in Moor society are distinguished based on genealogical position as well as social roles. The difference in terms suggests that family relationships have certain social categories and expectations attached to each kinship position. Thus, kinship language is one of the important instruments in organizing social relationships because through these terms a person can recognize positions, closeness, and obligations with other family members.

The kinship structure of Moor societies exhibits a complex and interdependent pattern of social relations between individuals, families, clans, and communities. The basic principles in the formation of families and lineages show how the culture and social system of the Moor people relate marital relationships, genealogical structures, inheritance of land, natural resources, family honor, and intergenerational obligations. The system creates order in determining who belongs to a lineage, who has rights to resources, and how social responsibilities are distributed among family members. At the same time, the existence of extended families and rituals involving both sides of the family show that the kinship system also provides a mechanism for maintaining social relations among groups connected through marriage. Thus, kinship in Moor society can be understood as a social system that integrates family reproduction, clan sustainability, control of territory and resources, and the maintenance of intergenerational social relationships.

These terms can be described in the following table:

G+2	1	FF	kama karina	father of father ego
	2	FM	kama wurana	mother of mother ego
	3	MF	kama karina	father of father ego
	4	MM	kama wurana	mother of mother ego
G+1	5	F	ate	father
	6	M	ina	mother
	7	FB	ate ebau, ate udi	older father brother younger father brother
	8	FZ	amo	father sister
	9	MB	raroti	mother brother
	10	MZ	ina ebau, ina udi	older mother sister, younger mother sister
G 0	11	B	murae	brother
	12	Z	amo	sister
	13	W	wabina	wife
		H	wurana	husband
G-1	14	S	nauna burana	son
	15	D	nauna bhabina	daughter
G-2	16	SS	ahuti	sons of son ego
	17	SD	ahuti	daughter of son ego
	18	DS	ahuti	sons of daughter ego
	19	DD	ahuti	daughters of daughter ego
G-3	20	SSS	kowuta	son of son of son ego
	21	SSD	kowuta	daughter of son of son ego
	22	SDS	kowuta	son of daughter of son ego
	23	SDD	kowuta	daughter of daughters of son ego
	24	DSS	kowuta	sons of sons of daughter ego
	25	DSD	kowuta	daughter of son of daughter ego
	26	DDS	kowuta	son of daughter of daughter ego
	27	DDD	kowuta	daughter of daughter of daughter ego.

Table 1: List of Moor kinship terminologies.

For more details on the Moor kinship terminology system, see the following chart.

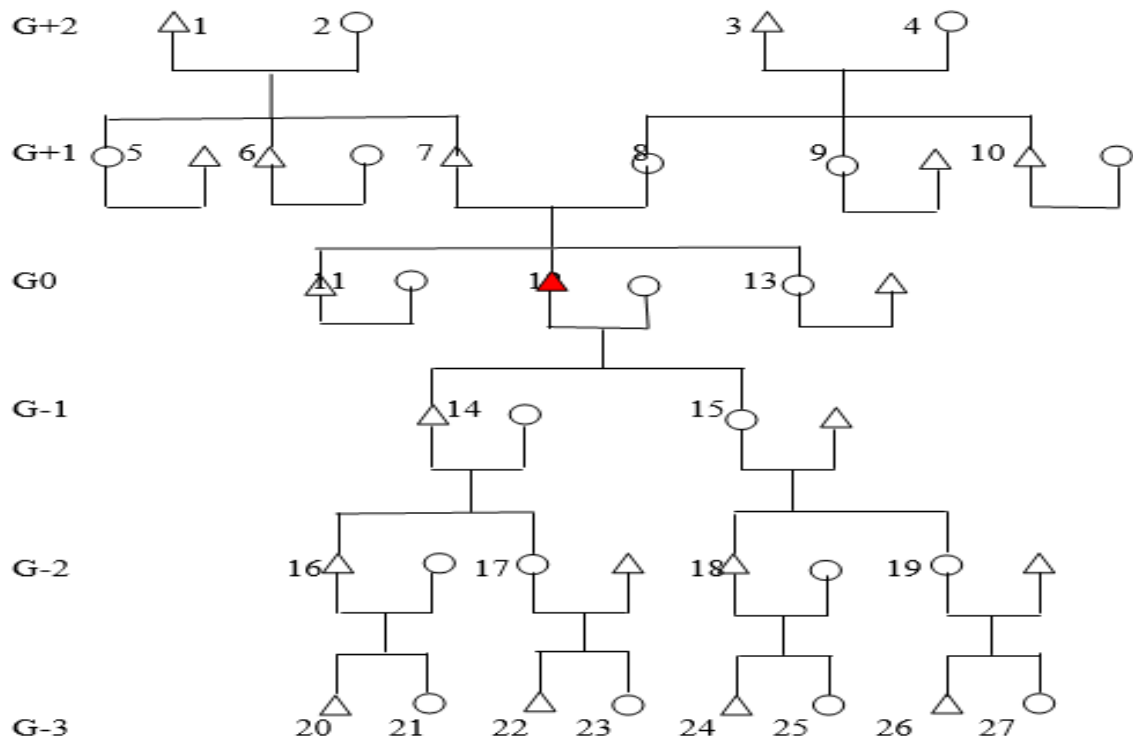


Diagram 1. The Moor kinship terminology. (G = generation)

The chart of kinship terminology above shows that the kinship system of the Moor people is arranged in a generational and classifiable manner, namely the grouping of relatives based on generational position, gender, age, and genealogical relationship, with the ego as a reference point in determining the position of each relative. At the G+2 level, the four positions of grandparents are classified by gender, even though they come from both the paternal and maternal lines. The father of the ego father (FF) and the father of the ego mother (MF) are called by one term, namely *kama karina*, while the mother of the ego mother (MM) and the mother of the ego father (FM) are called *kama wurana*. In this terminology, *kama* indicates the category of generation, while *karina* and *wurana* indicate gender differences. Thus, in the G+2 generation, the genealogical relationship through the paternal line and the maternal line is placed in the same terminological category as long as they have the same gender. This pattern shows that generational position and gender are the main basis for grouping relatives at this level.

At G+1, the terminology system becomes more detailed. The ego father is called *ate* and the mother is called *ina*. Father's brothers are differentiated by age through *ate ebau* for older paternal brothers and younger ones are called *ate udi*. The father's sister is called *amo*, while the mother's brother is called *raroti*.

Mother's sisters are differentiated into *ina ebau* and *ina udi*, also based on relative age. This pattern suggests that the position of relatives is not understood only on the basis of genealogical relationships, but also on the basis of social position, gender, and age in the kinship network. Interestingly, the term *amo* is used for the father's sister (FZ) and also the ego's sister (Z). The similarity of the terms indicates the existence of a certain terminological grouping that allows a single term to encompass more than one genealogical category. In the ego generation (G0), *murae* are used for brothers and *amo* for sisters, while marital relationships are distinguished through *wabina* for wives and *wurana* for husbands. In this structure, *cross-cousin* and *parallel cousin* relatives can also be distinguished based on the category of kinship relationship and gender. Thus, in G+1 and G0 there is a higher degree of terminological differentiation because certain categories of relatives are related to genealogical paths, sex, and relative age.

In the generation of descendants, there is a tendency to simplify terminology. In G-1, boys are called *nauna burana*, while girls are called *nauna bhabina*, so the difference in terminology is based on gender. In G-2, all grandchildren, both boys and girls, and through both boys and girls, use one common term, *ahuti*. This grouping became more widespread in G-3, when all great-grandchildren went through various genealogical paths – *SSS*, *SSD*, *SDS*, *SDD*, *DSS*, *DSD*, *DDS*, and *DDD* – called *kowuta*. Thus, the farther the generational distance from the ego, the stronger the tendency to group relatives into the same terminological category. This shows differences in the level of terminological accuracy between generations: relatives who are closer to the ego, especially in G+1 and G0, are classified more specifically by gender, age, and genealogical position, while descendants in G-2 and G-3 are classified more generally by their generational level.

Based on these overall patterns, the Moor terminology system shows a combination of generational classification, gender, relative age, and genealogical paths. This is in line with Lewis Henry Morgan's (1871) classification of the generational system, which is a system of kinship terminology that groups a number of relatives into categories based on a certain level of generation. In the Moor context, the generational principle appears through the use of the same term for a number of relatives within a single generational level, while differentiation is maintained when it comes to specific sex, age, or genealogical relationships. Anthropologically, this pattern suggests that the terminology of Moor kinship serves as a device for organizing social relationships and determining one's position in the family network. When associated with the patrilineal system described earlier, the genealogical structure and terminology of kinship work as two complementary devices: lineage regulates clan continuity and rights to land and resources, while kinship terminology provides social categories for recognizing relationships and positions between family members. As such, the chart represents the way in which Moor societies organized complex genealogical relationships into categories of kinship used in social life.

The Moor kinship system lies in the combination of generational principles and genealogical differentiation that takes place selectively. This system groups relatives by generational level, but in certain positions maintains distinctions based on gender, relative age, and relationship paths, as seen in the distinctions of *ate ebau* and *ate udi*, *ina ebau* and *ina udi*, and *raroti* and *amo*. Conversely, the further the generational relationship from *the ego*, the wider the scope of the term used, such as *ahuti* which includes all grandchildren in G-2 and *kowuta* which includes all great-grandchildren in G-3 without distinction between lineage or gender. This feature suggests that the Moor kinship system had a logic of grouping that was asymmetrical according to generational distance: close relatives were classified in more detail because they had more specific positions and social relationships, while relatives of more distant generations were consolidated into broader categories. In the context of a society that adheres to patrilineal lineages, the pattern shows that kinship terminology serves as a mechanism to link genealogical structure to the arrangement of social relations, clan continuity, and inheritance of land and resource rights. Thus, the main finding of the Moor kinship system is the existence of a combination of strong differentiation in close relatives and generalization in relatives across more distant generations.

3.3. Life-Cycle Ceremonies

Life-cycle ceremonies constitute an important part of the cultural heritage of Moor society. These ceremonies mark significant stages in an individual's life while simultaneously connecting the individual to family and community. Differences between past and present practices are primarily evident in the process of acculturation, through which new cultural elements have been incorporated into existing traditions. Life-cycle ceremonies that continue to be practiced by the Moor people encompass several important stages of human life, including pregnancy, birth, ear piercing, hair cutting, marriage, and death. By contrast, ceremonies associated with certain religious initiations and rituals are no longer practiced, largely due to the growing influence of Christianity. These changes demonstrate that the continuity of ritual practices is closely related to transformations in the belief systems and social structures that previously provided the basis for their performance.

The loss and transformation of cultural practices resulting from Christianization and the expansion of state presence have been widely discussed by anthropologists and other scholars who have conducted research in the region, both specifically in West Papua and more broadly in Melanesia. Among the works that examine in detail the processes of Christianization, cultural loss and transformation, and the responses of Indigenous peoples in the Cenderawasih Bay region are those of Kamma (1972; 1981; 1982; 1994). More broadly, processes of cultural erasure and transformation associated with Christianization have also been examined by scholars working in New Guinea, including Dutton (1992) and Macdonald (2013). Christianization subsequently

emerged as a new social force in West Papua and played an important role in the formation of new social and political orders (Dale, 2024). In the context of Moor society, these transformations are particularly significant because life-cycle rituals are closely connected to systems of belief, kinship relations, social obligations, and the ways in which relationships among individuals, families, and communities are organized.

Christianization did not always proceed smoothly, as Indigenous peoples in various parts of West Papua resisted the process. In some contexts, Christianization was perceived as disrupting existing social and cultural orders and undermining Indigenous belief systems. The process also occurred within contexts of violence; in several cases, Indigenous peoples who resisted Christianization were subjected to punishment, threats, and even killings through operations involving state authorities. Examples of resistance have been reported in Ubahak, Pronggoli, Pondeng, Habie, and Landikma (Peyon, 2015; Ambolon, 2023). Within this broader historical context, changes in Moor ritual practices should be understood as part of a wider process of social and cultural transformation. The discontinuation of particular rituals may reflect shifts in the sources of legitimacy, authority, and systems of knowledge that previously underpinned their performance.

According to the informants, one of the major challenges is that the sequence of life-cycle ceremonies, from pregnancy to death, is no longer performed in the same manner as in the past. This represents an ongoing process of cultural change within Moor society. Interviews with community leaders indicate that many ceremonies that were once performed and respected by the community are no longer practiced in their former forms. Although some rituals have changed both form and meaning, several important ceremonies continue to be performed and maintained, particularly those associated with birth, growth, maturation, marriage, and death. These findings suggest that the continuity of ritual practices involves a process of cultural selection: rituals that continue to serve significant social and kinship functions tend to be maintained, whereas rituals that are more closely associated with former belief systems are more susceptible to discontinuation or transformation.

Theoretically, life-cycle rituals can be understood through the concept of rites of passage developed by Arnold van Gennep. Van Gennep conceptualizes human life as a series of transitions from one social status to another, including birth, puberty, marriage, parenthood, old age, and death. Each transition can be analyzed through three principal stages: separation, transition or liminality, and incorporation. This framework is particularly relevant to the analysis of Moor rituals because each stage of life marked by ceremonial practices entails a transformation in an individual's social status as well as in their relationships with family and the wider community. Thus, rituals associated with pregnancy, birth, growth, maturation, marriage, and death can be understood as social

mechanisms through which changes in an individual's status are recognized, regulated, and incorporated into the broader social structure of Moor society.

To understand the changes in the continuity of the ritual, the *life cycle theory* model developed by Cady et al. (2019) can be used as an additional analytical framework. Cady et al. developed five stages, namely *emergence*, *development*, *maturity*, *decline*, and *death or reemergence*, to analyze the development of a theory. In this study, the model was adapted to read the historical changes of a ritual practice, not to explain the stages of human life. With this framework, Moor rituals can be seen as practices that experience emergence, development, strengthening in social life, weakening due to religious and social changes, and the possibility of surviving or reappearing in different forms. The use of these two frameworks results in readings on two levels: *rites of passage* explain the function of ritual in the transfer of individual status, while *the life-cycle model* of Cady et al. helps explain the changing continuity of rituals as cultural practices.

Our theory life cycle model was developed to assist scholars and practitioners in reflecting on the work of those who have come before them and, in doing so, encourage the continuous improvement of theory while providing for a more robust knowledge base. Specifically, we propose a five-stage framework of theory development: (1) emergence, (2) development, (3) maturity, (4) decline toward, (5) death or reemergence. We then test the theory life cycle model by analyzing the work motivation literature through the lens of the proposed framework. (Cady, et al., 2019 : 429).

The life-cycle model can help this study examine changes in a cultural practice from the perspectives of continuity and transformation. In Moor society, several rituals have persisted because they continue to serve functions in regulating social relationships, kinship, and stages of individual status. Conversely, certain rituals have weakened or been discontinued due to changes in belief systems and the introduction of new institutions. The Moor community is one that still maintains customary practices in several aspects of life. This is evident in the way its members interpret the stages of life through a series of traditional ceremonies inherited from their ancestors. However, Moor society is currently experiencing shifts in values associated with modernization and cultural interaction, which have introduced new values. These conditions have affected the form, implementation, and meaning of a number of life-cycle rituals.

One of the important ceremonies in the life cycle of Moor society is the pregnancy ritual, which marks the beginning of a baby's life as well as a phase of maturity for the mother. The purpose of this ceremony is to ensure the safety of both the mother and the baby from external disturbances and evil spirits. In traditional practice, the family of the pregnant woman and her husband's family would gather to conduct a communal worship service. Informants explained that this ritual is no longer performed because it is considered incompatible with the

teachings of Christianity, which is the dominant religion. When examined through the framework of *rites of passage*, the pregnancy ritual places women in a transitional condition that requires special rules, supervision by relatives, and symbolic protection. The change in religion subsequently altered the basis of legitimacy for this practice and led to the discontinuation of some ritual elements.

During pregnancy, there are no specific ceremonies performed for pregnant women. However, they are required to observe a number of prohibitions, such as avoiding certain foods, including octopus and turtles, as well as tree-dwelling animals such as kangaroos and birds. These foods are believed to make the delivery process more difficult. Pregnant women are also prohibited from performing heavy work and from leaving the house at night. During this period, the mother of the pregnant woman also provides particular knowledge concerning childcare. These rules demonstrate that pregnancy is understood as a condition with social and spiritual consequences, and therefore the behavior of the mother and family members is subject to specific regulations.

The pregnancy and childbirth ritual in this culture is referred to as "kibaya armo seka." During this period, the activities of pregnant women are highly restricted and are subject to the supervision of their husbands and close relatives, such as their mothers and siblings. At this time, pregnant women are encouraged to consume certain fruits, such as unripe mangoes and lime, to help reduce nausea. Husbands are expected to pay close attention to their wives' cravings because their desire for particular foods during pregnancy often differs from their usual preferences. Fulfilling and respecting these cravings is considered important for maintaining the mother's psychological well-being, which ultimately provides comfort for both the mother and the unborn baby. These unusual food cravings are referred to as "mengidam," which in some cases are characterized by a desire to consume fruits with a sour taste.

In addition, husbands are also required to observe a number of prohibitions while their wives are pregnant. These prohibitions include refraining from fishing or hunting using sharp objects, such as machetes, spears, bows and arrows, or other implements. If these prohibitions are violated, the community believes that the child may be born with physical disabilities, such as a cleft lip or abnormalities in other parts of the body. The prohibition was explained by an informant as follows.

"When a wife is about to give birth, the husband must stay at home and not go fishing or hunting, because when a cuscus gets caught in a snare and broken hand or leg, when the child is born, the hand can be broken, like the wound of the animal. Therefore, when my wife is to give birth, I don't fishing and hunting."

The data reveal a symbolic relationship between the father's behavior, natural conditions, and the physical condition of the baby to be born. The prohibitions against hunting and fishing indicate that responsibility for the

pregnancy is placed on the couple as a social unit. From the perspective of *rites of passage*, these rules function to safeguard the condition of individuals undergoing a transitional phase, while from the perspective of social structure, the prohibitions extend responsibility for the pregnancy from the woman to her husband and relatives.

In the past, the Moor community practiced a distinctive form of childbirth, namely an intervention involving an incision in the mother's abdomen to remove the baby from the womb. The abdominal incision was made using a special type of bamboo called *sembilu*, which had to be clean, smooth, and shaped like a knife. The bamboo was also used to cut the baby's umbilical cord. In Moor culture, childbirth was assisted by women who possessed experience and knowledge of childbirth, known as *dukun beranak* or traditional midwives. This data indicates that reproductive knowledge in Moor society is embedded in women's practices and experiences and is transmitted through intergenerational relationships.

During the childbirth process, male and female relatives were invited to provide moral and material support. The men waited outside the house while talking with other relatives, whereas the women remained inside the house to assist with the delivery. Childbirth was carried out using simple equipment, such as warm water placed in a basin, soft cloth or bark, special herbal preparations made from roots and leaves to reduce pain, prevent infection, and minimize bleeding, as well as a bamboo knife for cutting the baby's umbilical cord. After being cut, the umbilical cord was hung from a post in front of the house, facing toward the sea. The spatial arrangement of men and women during childbirth demonstrates a clear division of roles in the birth ritual. The house served as a space of reproduction and protection, while relatives outside performed functions of support and guarding.

Throughout the childbirth process, the women also recited special prayers for the safety of the mother and baby. Meanwhile, the men kept watch outside the house while burning a particular type of wood called *manemiu*. This practice was intended to drive away evil spirits believed to interfere with the childbirth process. In addition, the husband was prohibited from entering the house or seeing his wife during childbirth. According to Moor beliefs, if the husband witnessed the childbirth process, the mother's breast milk would decrease or even disappear, potentially endangering the baby. This set of rules demonstrates that birth is understood as an event requiring collective protection. Women, men, relatives, domestic space, natural materials, and prayers all perform interconnected functions in ensuring the safety of the mother and baby.

After the baby was born, the person entitled to introduce the baby to the extended family was the baby's cousin, specifically the eldest son of the father's brother. Once the baby had been introduced to the extended family, the child was officially recognized as a member of the family. This provision is significant within the Moor kinship structure because biological birth acquires social

recognition through the act of introducing the baby to the extended family. Thus, birth is both a biological and a social process through which the baby is incorporated into the kinship network.

In this tradition, the father is responsible for giving gifts and food to his wife after childbirth. These gifts may include the finest sago, coconut, or other foods with symbolic meanings. The foods are selected according to particular meanings; sago and coconut, for example, symbolize prosperity. This tradition reflects the hope that the newborn baby will bring prosperity and well-being to the family and the village community. As stated by the informants during the focus group discussion.

The gift given to the wife's family is not proportionate to the birth of a child, especially a son. We must pay a high price to the wife's family as a sign of respect for the mother. The mother risks her life during pregnancy, childbirth, and in raising the child. The birth of children is about strengthening the husband's clan, not the mother's clan. This child grows up, takes on the husband's clan name, inherits the husband's clan, and strengthens the husband's clan. If this child grows up to become a leader, they bring honor to the family name, the clan, and the tribe. Therefore, we must pay a high price to our wife's family.

The informant's statement shows a direct link between birth, recognition of maternal sacrifice, and paternal clan continuity. A child born is understood as part of the husband's clan continuity because he uses the father's clan name and later inherits the rights and responsibilities related to the clan. The giving of objects to the mother's family serves as a reciprocity mechanism that connects two kinship groups. The value of giving is a measure of respect for the mother's contribution as well as a means of maintaining the relationship between the husband's family and the wife's family.

In Moor society, pregnancy and birth ceremonies have an important role in welcoming the birth of a child. It also pays tribute to the mother who has risked her life during the process. After the birth, the husband's family gives valuable objects to the wife's family as a form of respect. This principle is found in various cultures in New Guinea. The community gives appreciation to mothers by giving objects to their close relatives. Some groups, such as the Sentani ethnic group, the Hubula in the Baliem Valley, and the Yali ethnic group in the mountainous region, have various practices of honoring mothers. In addition to giving objects to the mother's relatives after birth, as the Moor people and other groups do. There is also a tradition that when a person dies, both children and adults, their families and patrilineal relatives must give valuable objects to relatives of the deceased's mother (Peyon, 2012; 2019; Numberi, 2018; Sokoi and Idris, 2025). The practice of giving objects to the mother's family in the event of birth and death shows the importance of respecting the position of the mother. This practice forms the principle of reciprocity that strengthens social relationships between families. The giving of objects is a form of recognition of the role of mothers in

the social and spiritual structure of society. The obligation to give objects after death shows that respect for the mother has an important position at various stages of life. In the context of Moor patrilineal kinship, the mechanism also serves to maintain a balance between the continuity of the paternal clan and the social contribution of the maternal family.

In Moor culture, rituals continue at various stages of life, from growth to adulthood marked by marriage. One of the important rituals in this stage is the ear piercing ceremony called *ute inati*, as well as the haircutting ritual called *kibaya orare*. In both rituals, the main role is held by the uncle from the mother's side called *the raroti*. Before entering the mating cycle, a young person is taught a variety of knowledge, including farming techniques, fishing, taboos, and seasons related to agriculture and fishing. They also gain religious knowledge, the types of plants and fruits used in fishing activities, as well as various important knowledge about gardening, land ownership, clan land boundaries, boat building, and other customary knowledge. The position of *the raroti* in both rituals shows that the relationship with the mother's family still has an important function in the formation of the individual. Despite this, the lineage of the Moor people follows a patrilineal system. The growth stage becomes a space for knowledge transmission as well as strengthening relationships across kinship lines.

Thus, the process of life in Moor society is valued through a series of ceremonies and rituals that are passed down from one generation to the next. The ritual marks a change in a person's status throughout the stages of life while maintaining the continuity of social relations, indigenous knowledge, and community welfare. Data on *ute inati*, *kibaya orare*, the role of *raroti*, and the process of learning traditional knowledge show that ritual functions as a social education mechanism. Knowledge of agriculture, the sea, land, clan boundaries, boatbuilding, and taboos is transmitted along with changes in individual status. In this sense, rituals are part of the process of forming members of society who have knowledge and social responsibility.

The process of marriage in Moor society is carried out by individuals who have reached maturity according to local cultural norms, generally between the ages of 17 and 23. The marriage process begins with the engagement stage, when the man submits a proposal to the woman and both parties reach an agreement. The next stage is a joint smoking ceremony called *soap*. In this activity, the couple who are about to get married is officially recognized by the clan leaders from both parties. The bond between the two parties is characterized by smoking together, with tobacco rolled using special leaves. Meanwhile, men hand over signs of marriage as a symbol of agreement. These stages show that marriage is a process of changing status that gains legitimacy through families, clans, and traditional leaders. In Van Gennep's perspective, engagement and *soap* can be understood as part of the process of separation from the previous status to the new marital status.

The next stage is the marriage ceremony called *sawau moora tiu*. At this stage, the groom brings a larger amount of objects according to the agreement between the groom's and bride's families. The event was held at the bride's house and was attended by both families. Valuable objects given as dowry include large and small jars called *moles*. Large and small ceramic plates reflect the acculturation of the Lapita culture in the area (Sand, Chiu, & Hogg, 2015). As well as large shell bracelets, boats made of red wood, and gardens, land, and sago hamlets as symbols of wealth given by men to women. The composition of the given objects shows that marriage is closely related to material exchange, economic recognition, and the arrangement of relationships between two family groups. Land, gardens, and sago hamlets have a different position from consumer goods because they are related to resources that support household sustainability and intergenerational relationships.

The marriage ceremony was carried out by inviting clan leaders and villagers. Clan leaders grant certain customary authority to the groom of the married couple. After the ceremony was over, the parents of both parties returned to smoking together as a symbol of strengthening the kinship relationship between the two families. After the entire series of ceremonies was completed, the process of moving the woman from the woman's house to the man's house took place. Within the framework of *rites of passage*, the transfer is an important stage in the formation of a new social status as individuals move from one social position to another and gain recognition from both family groups. In addition to the formal marriage, in some cases there is an intimate relationship outside the formal marriage bond, such as taking the future wife to flee to another place. Thus, forcing the couple to marry with certain consequences according to the applicable norms.

Moore societies view death as a journey to another life that has meaning for each individual. In their traditional culture, death ceremonies and funeral processes are carried out based on custom. The deceased are placed in a pouch made of bark and then undergo a certain procession led by a clan head called *a korano*. The bodies were then taken to the coral islands around the Moors Island and placed in the crevices of the reef. According to their beliefs, bodies buried or placed in residential areas are considered to be able to bring havoc to the community. In the framework of *rites of passage*, death is a transitional stage that changes the individual status of a living member of society to a part of the world of the dead. Therefore, the location of the cemetery and the manner in which the body is treated have an important function in regulating the relationship between the deceased and the living community.

"The deceased are not disconnected from us who are still alive. They are physically dead, but their spirits remain here, with us who are living. After they die, their spirits go to the land of the dead, but often they come to visit us. They can bring both good and bad things into our lives. If we bury the body near the village, the spirit will always be around us and may disturb us."

Therefore, we must bury the body further away from the village so that they do not disturb us who live in the village."

The informant's statement suggests that death in the understanding of Moor society involves an ongoing relationship between the deceased and the living. The body experiences physical death, while the existence of the spirit is still understood to have a connection with community life. Therefore, the separation of space between settlements and mortuaries has a social and cosmological function. Funerals in locations far from settlements are a mechanism to regulate the boundaries between the living space of the living person and the space of the existence of the deceased.

The informants explained that a person who was in a dying state but had not yet died physically would be considered spiritually dead when the clan leaders declared that there was no longer any hope of survival. The decision was made by traditional leaders together with a figure who was believed to have supernatural knowledge. Once the decision was made, the dying person was moved and placed on a coral island that had previously been used as a burial ground. The person will live alone on the island in a state of suffering and then die slowly. This tradition changed after the entry of Christianity to the island in 1927, when the church and the Dutch government banned the practice of placing bodies on coral islands and advocated burials in designated locations around settlements.

The data show a very clear change in the ritual of death due to changes in institutions and belief systems. If read using the framework of Cady et al. (2019), the practice can be understood through the process of emergence, development, maturity, decline, and the possibility of death or reemergence as an analytical model of changing the sustainability of a practice. The practice of burial on coral islands previously had legitimacy in the Moor belief system and served to regulate the relationship between the dead, spirits, and communities. After Christianity and the colonial government introduced new rules, the legitimacy weakened, and the practice declined until it was stopped. However, the cessation of the practice does not mean the loss of the entire structure of meaning related to death. Beliefs about the existence of spirits, the relationship between the dead and the living, and the importance of spatial arrangement between settlements and places of death remain part of the way people understand death.

A series of Moor life-cycle ceremonies shows that rituals work through the relationship between changes in individual status, kinship, social exchange, customary knowledge, and belief systems. Pregnancy and childbirth link biological reproduction to clan continuity; growth rituals transmit knowledge and strengthen relationships with relatives on the mother's side; marriage connects two groups of families through the exchange of property, customary recognition, and the transfer of residence; while death regulates the changing relationship between individuals, communities, and the world of the dead. The

framework of rites of passage helps explain the ritual function in the transfer of status, while the model of Cady et al. helps explain why some practices survive, undergo changes, or stop in the course of history. Thus, the findings regarding Moor society suggest that the continuity of rituals depends on the relationship between the ritual's social function and the historical conditions that determine its legitimacy and practice.

5. Life Cycle Ceremony as a Medium for Strengthening Kinship Bonds

The life cycle in Moor society, as described above, serves as a series of ceremonies that mark important stages in an individual's life as well as a medium to strengthen kinship bonds within the community. Ceremonies related to birth, growth, adulthood, marriage, and death become important social spaces for individuals and families to reaffirm their relationships. Although these rituals have undergone changes due to modernization and the influence of Christianity, their social function in maintaining relationships between individuals, families, and clans remains important. Through these various ceremonies, the emotional bonds between family members are strengthened, social responsibilities are reaffirmed, and one's position in a wider network of kinship is recognized.

The life-cycle rituals practiced by the Moor people became an important mechanism in establishing and maintaining kinship relationships across generations. Each stage, from pregnancy to death, creates opportunities for extended family members to come together, acknowledge a person's changing social status, and provide moral and material support. For example, at birth, family members and close relatives gather to provide support to the mother and welcome the newborn into the extended family. Similarly, marriage ceremonies bring together families and clans from both sides through joint activities, agreements, exchange of valuables, and ritual meetings. These practices show that life-cycle ceremonies provide a social space that takes place repeatedly for the exercise and maintenance of kinship obligations. Regarding this, the informants explained as follows.

"Our kinship relationship is more important than anything else. When we face problems or difficulties, our close relatives are always there to help us overcome various problems in life. Therefore, we must always maintain kinship ties. This is done through gathering together, sharing food, helping each other, giving gifts, and providing various other forms of assistance. In activities such as marriages, births, birthdays, and deaths, all family members and clans are present and help each other. This is how we nurture and strengthen family relationships and kinship."

Furthermore, the rituals strengthen the relationship between relatives who come from different clans. When an infant is introduced to an extended family, as practiced in Moor society, the child is officially recognized as part of a wider kinship collective. Thus, each life-cycle ceremony marks a change in the status of an individual while also reaffirming the relationships formed through lineage, marriage, and mutual obligations. In this context, ceremonies work through repeated interactions between family members and clans, thus creating opportunities to build cooperation, exchange, and mutual aid. Its meaning lies in its ability to connect individual life events with the continuity of relationships within a wider kinship network.

The life cycle in Moor society also plays an important role in transmitting and reaffirming the principles underlying the kinship system. Moor kinship is structured on the basis of patrilineal lineage, which places inheritance of land, resources, and social status primarily in relation to male lineages. Ceremonies such as ear piercings (*ute inati*) and haircuts (*kibaya orare*) mark important stages in individual development as well as relate to the mastery of knowledge and social responsibility. Through such rituals, individuals are placed more firmly in a set of social expectations related to their position in the family and clan. Thus, the ceremony provides a social context for the inheritance of knowledge, obligations, and intergenerational relationships, while strengthening the continuity of the kinship system.

Although the modernization and acculturation of Christianity have changed the form and implementation of a number of life-cycle ceremonies, kinship relationships have been maintained through various practices that have undergone adjustments. Some elements of ritual have disappeared or undergone changes, especially practices that are seen as incompatible with Christian teachings, while activities involving family gatherings, exchanges, mutual aid, marriage, birth, and death remain important spaces for the maintenance of social relationships. These changes show that cultural change in Moor society took place through the rearrangement of ritual practices, while kinship obligations were maintained through new forms of collective practice. Thus, life-cycle ceremonies remain relevant because their social functions can be realized through forms that undergo changes.

Ethnographic evidence suggests that life-cycle ceremonies are a repetitive mechanism that transforms kinship principles into social actions. Kinship in Moor society was manifested through concrete practices – gathering, exchange, aid, recognition, and the performance of obligations – so that genealogical relationships took shape in social life. Birth activates the relationship between the child's family and relatives on the mother's side; marriage establishes and formalizes the relationship between two family networks; the ritual of maturity transmits knowledge and responsibility; Meanwhile, death reactivates the reciprocal obligation between the surviving relatives and the relatives of the

deceased. The life cycle provides a series of social momentum that allows kinship to continue to be reproduced and negotiated in people's lives.

The integration of kinship, rituals, material exchange, and social continuity in the series of life cycles is an important characteristic. The exchange of valuables, collective participation, and recognition of new social status suggest that rituals have an organizational function in addition to their ceremonial function. This pattern is important in the patrilineal system because the sustainability of the male clan goes hand in hand with obligations to the wife's family and maternal relatives. Thus, life-cycle ceremonies create a space of reciprocal relationships between kinship groups: lineage determines the continuity of clan membership and inheritance, while ritual exchanges and collective participation maintain the relationship between groups connected through marriage and birth. Through this mechanism, the life cycle ceremony became one of the main tools of the Moor community in maintaining social cohesion while responding to religious, economic, and social changes.

4. Analysis and Discussion

This research reveals the Moor people's view of subclans based on the phratry system, which is rooted in the lineage of a specific mythological ancestor. The system can be seen through ancestral figures in mythology as well as the structure of village settlements scattered in the interior of the Moor Islands. The island was originally known as *Moo*, which later changed to Moor after a recording by the Dutch government. The term *Moo* denotes the close relationship between humans and the land on which they live. In this context, humans are represented through the names of tribes, i.e. Moor people, while the name of the region is related to the names of the villages and islands where they live. Human relations with the region also include various natural elements, such as flora, fauna, and water sources. Thus, the name Moor can be understood as an identity marker that connects humans with their living space along with the natural elements that support the continuity of life. The naming shows that the social identity of the Moor people is formed in the close relationship between people, their territory, and their ecological environment.

In the kinship system, the clans that are members of each subclan have a clear relationship structure. Each subclan consists of four to five clans that have the same mythological ancestors, the same place of origin, and an interrelated migration history. The relationship between clans forms kinship ties that include social, political, economic, and cooperative aspects in daily life. They also share living spaces within the same territory, thus strengthening social and cultural ties between the groups. This pattern of relationships shows a genealogical character in the *phratry* system, whose scope goes beyond the core family relationship and regulates the various social relationships in common life. Thus, inter-clan relationships in Moor society serve as a mechanism that organizes collective life

through genealogical relationships, social obligations, cooperation, and the use of shared living spaces.

The Moor people's perspective on subclans and group identity reveals a conceptual distinction between the visible dimension of life and the spiritual dimension. These two dimensions are reflected in the division into six sub-ethnic groups: Roroindu, Manantoheri, Minumeri, Horomere, Keuw, and Wanggeri. The first four sub-ethnic groups have a physical presence on Moor Island and the surrounding areas, whereas the Wanggeri occupy a different position. The Moor people believe that the Wanggeri do not physically inhabit the world visible to humans but instead exist in another dimension. According to Moor belief, the Wanggeri reside in the realm of spirits, the realm of the deceased, and the world of animals and forests, interacting with ancestral spirits and various other beings within that dimension. Although their existence is understood as distinct from that of the living, the Wanggeri are still regarded as part of the human kinship network. This perspective reveals a cosmological structure that places humans, ancestors, spirits, animals, forests, and the natural environment within an interconnected web of relationships. Thus, the natural world is understood as an integral part of their social and spiritual living space.

The view of the relationship between humans, spirits, and nature is also found in other cultures in Papua, such as the Sentani people (Peyon, 2022). This shows that the understanding of nature as part of a relationship that must be maintained in balance is a value found in various cultures in Papua. Modest Eligi Sangia (2020) explains that the Melanesian people had a strong belief in the spiritual world and God that had developed before the arrival of Christian missionaries. They view the universe as a harmonious whole, with the existence of God and supernatural beings accepted as a reality that requires no proof. Bernard Narokobi asserts that Melanesian spirituality is not shaped solely by religious structures of external origin, but is rooted in man's natural relationship with the Divine. "As Melanesians, we are a spiritual people. Even before Christians came onto our shores, we felt and knew the forces of a source greater than ourselves." (Narokobi, 1980: 4). In the context of Moor society, this view helps to explain that the relationship with nature and the spiritual world is part of the way societies organize social experiences and understand their existence in a broader order of life.

The structural differences between people who live physically and those who are understood to be in a spiritual dimension can also be seen in the existence of the Keuw community. The Keuw sub-ethnic are physically categorized as a group that lives in the real world, but in the view of the Moor people, they have strong supernatural knowledge, including the ability to use black magic as well as the ability to transform into spirits, plants, animals, or other forms. These characteristics have certain similarities with the attributes of Wanggeri who are placed in the spiritual world. Both groups exhibit two categories of existence in Moor cosmology, namely physically observable human

life and existence placed in the spiritual dimension. In the construction of this understanding, Keuw occupies a distinctive position because his existence is in the visible realm of man, while the supernatural abilities attached to him connect him to the spiritual dimension. This position suggests that the boundaries between the human world and the spiritual world in Moor thought are relational and can be penetrated through certain knowledge, abilities, and practices.

The Moor kinship system is maintained and strengthened through various ceremonies and forms of social communication. Relationships between relatives are seen as very important and are reflected in various social and political activities. The Moor kinship terminology system shows a generational pattern, with the grouping of relatives based on generational position and specific distinctions based on gender, age, and genealogical line. At some level, several relative positions use the same terms despite having different genealogical relationships. This terminological pattern shows that the classification of relatives is the way in which the Moor society organizes a person's social position in the family network. The term kinship serves as a social category that helps determine a person's relationships, position, and obligations to other relatives.

These kinship relationships are manifested through concrete actions in various life-cycle ceremonies, such as pregnancy, birth, marriage, and death. In these various ceremonies, the extended family of the husband and wife, along with other relatives, are actively involved. The involvement of various members of the family shows that solidarity and social relations are important foundations in the life of the Moor people. In a marriage ceremony, for example, family members, including relatives who have a further genealogical relationship, work together to ensure that the entire process runs smoothly and in accordance with applicable regulations. This involvement shows that kinship relationships take concrete forms through cooperation, giving, ritual participation, and fulfillment of social obligations. Thus, kinship in Moor society is a network of relationships that continue to be produced and maintained through social actions at various stages of life.

This research shows that the Moor view of subethnicity, subclans, kinship relations, and the spiritual world forms a structured system of thought. The system shows how they place humans as part of a genealogical, social, spiritual, and ecological order of life. The relationship between humans, ancestors, nature, and the spiritual world is maintained through kinship structures, group divisions, rituals, and social interactions involving families and communities. These findings suggest that Moor kinship is wide-ranging: it regulates human relationships through lineage and marriage, while providing a framework for understanding human relationships with ancestors, nature, and spiritual existence. Therefore, the continuity of Moor society can be understood through the interconnection between genealogical structures, social obligations, living spaces, rituals, and cosmology that are inherited between generations.

5. Conclusion

This research shows that the Moor people are a socially and culturally integrated community, with an identity formed through relationships between ancestors, territories, kinship, rituals, and cosmology. The Moor people are made up of six ethnic subgroups, namely the Roroindu, Manantoheri, Minumeri, Horomere, Keuw, and Wanggeri, each of which has a history of origin, migration, territorial distribution, and clan organization. Five groups have a physical presence in the Moor Islands and the surrounding region, while the Wanggeri occupy a special position in Moor cosmology as a community believed to be in a spiritual dimension. This suggests that the social identity of the Moor people is not only determined by physical existence, but also by ancestral relationships, genealogical, territorial, and cosmological relationships.

Territory is an important element in the formation of the identity and social organization of the Moor people. The concept of Moo, which relates to places, ancestral settlements, and island names, reflects the close relationship between humans, ancestors, and territories. Land, water, forests, animals, and other natural resources not only have material functions, but also have social and cultural significance because access to them relates to kinship, clan membership, inheritance, and customary obligations. The history of migration and settlement also connects ancestral origins with specific regions, making them an important basis for the collective identity and social relations of the Moor people.

Kinship is an important mechanism in maintaining the social sustainability of Moor societies. Patrilineal principles govern lineage, clan membership, and inheritance of rights to land and natural resources, while marriage establishes relationships between family and clan. The term kinship classifies relationships based on generation, gender, age, and genealogical position, while also helping to determine the individual's position and obligations within social networks. These relationships are actively reproduced through life-cycle ceremonies, such as birth, marriage, and death, which provide space for cooperation, exchange, recognition, and reaffirmation of family and clan relationships. Thus, kinship is not only based on genealogical relationships, but is also manifested through repetitive social practices.

Moor societies also underwent significant social and cultural changes as a result of Christianization, government intervention, modernization, and broader cultural interactions. A number of customary rituals, particularly those related to spiritual initiation and practice, have been reduced or altered. The treatment of the dead, for example, changed after conversion to Christianity in 1927, when the practice of placing bodies on coral islands was banned, and burials around settlements began to be encouraged. However, such changes in the form of rituals did not eliminate the underlying social principles. Kinship, relationships with ancestors, collective responsibility, and social cooperation continued through customized rituals, family interactions, exchanges, and community participation.

Beliefs in Keuw and Wanggeri also suggest that social existence in the view of Moor peoples includes both physical and spiritual dimensions. Ancestors and spiritual entities are part of a broader social and cosmological order. Wanggeri's position specifically suggests that a group can be recognized as part of Moor society even if it does not occupy the same physical space as other groups. Thus, the boundaries of Moor society are determined not only by genealogy, region, and social relations, but also by a cosmological understanding of the relationship between humans, ancestors, and the spiritual world.

The findings of the study show that the social identity of the Moor people is relational, territorial, and dynamic. Territory connects communities with ancestors and resources; clan organization and patrilineal systems govern descent, membership, and inheritance; the term kinship determines social positions and obligations; rituals reproduce family and clan relationships; while cosmology extends social existence into a spiritual dimension. The sustainability of Moor society does not depend on the preservation of each tradition in its original form, but on the ability to maintain and adapt those fundamental relationships in the face of historical change. Thus, Moor identity can be understood as a cultural process that is continuously reproduced through relationships between humans, kinship, ancestry, territory, rituals, and the spiritual world.

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