

# The Role of Tradition and Culture on Population Patterns in Gonda Baru Village

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## A B S T R A C T

This study discusses the limited understanding of the role of tradition and culture in shaping the population pattern of the community in Gonda Baru Village, Sorawolio District, Baubau City. Local traditions and culture are believed to have a significant influence on the pattern of marriage, birth, death, and population mobility, but scientific studies on this matter are still rare. This study aims to find out the extent to which tradition and culture play a role in determining the population pattern of the people in the region. The method used is qualitative research with data collection techniques through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Respondents consisted of traditional leaders, village officials, and communities selected by purposive sampling. The results of the study show that local traditions, such as marriage customs, kinship systems, birth rituals, and death ceremonies, are still very influential in regulating population patterns. This tradition has an impact on the high rate of young marriages, limited control over the number of births, and strong social ties in managing migration and population mobility. In addition, the available infrastructure also affects people's mobility patterns, but cultural values remain the dominant factor. Tradition and culture play an important role in shaping the population pattern in Gonda Baru Village, both in terms of marriage, birth, death, and mobility. Therefore, development policies and population planning in this region need to consider local wisdom so that the programs designed can run effectively and in accordance with the cultural values of the community.

**Keywords:** *Tradition, Culture, Population Patterns, and New Gonda*

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## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country rich in cultural diversity, traditions, and customs spread from Sabang to Merauke. This diversity is the result of a long journey of history and social relations that have occurred between various ethnic groups that inhabit the archipelago. Historically, the culture and traditions owned by Indonesian people have played an important role in shaping the social, economic, and political systems in various regions. Sedia (2024), emphasizes that customary norms and traditions provide a framework for local political practices, the regulation of access to resources, and sometimes influence policy direction at the regional level, especially when customary law is recognized institutionally or when there is pressure to protect local wisdom. This shows the relationship between local culture and political/state aspects.

Culture and tradition are not only an identity for some community groups, but also a guideline in living daily life. The various values, norms, and beliefs contained in the culture and traditions of the community often influence the way members of the community think, behave, and act in various categories of life, including in terms of population.

Every society and ethnic group has cultural characteristics that are believed and practiced by its inhabitants. The culture in question is the guidelines and way of life (*the way of life*) of human groups that are carried out together. In culture, there are patterns (systems) of reference that are at various levels of human knowledge and conversion. This system of reference is used by humans to face and adapt to the environment, humans, and nature because it contains values and identities. The characteristics of values and identities include

norms, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of certain groups that are based on traditions and cultures passed down from generation to generation. The form of cultural values and identity is usually derived in the form of language, traditional clothing, traditional food, customs, and rituals or traditions carried out by the people (Kaplan & Manners, 1999: 124-131).

Anthropology and demography have long recognized the existence of a strong relationship between culture and population patterns. Studies have shown that cultural values and traditions can influence individual and group decisions in areas such as reproduction, migration, and settlement patterns. Understanding this relationship is important in planning development policies that are compatible with the local context.

In Indonesia, the influence of culture and tradition on population patterns can be seen in various types. For example, the tradition of migrating in the Minangkabau community that affects migration patterns, the patrilineal kinship system in the Batak community that affects the family structure, or the tradition of marriage at a young age in some areas that affects the birth rate. Chandradewi (2024), migration causes changes in inheritance customs in the Batak community. Traditional norms are adjusted to urban conditions, which has an impact on family structure and population patterns of the next generation.

Southeast Sulawesi as one of the provinces in Indonesia also has a unique cultural diversity and tradition. This province is inhabited by various ethnic groups such as Buton, Muna, Tolaki, Bugis, and others who each have a distinctive culture. This cultural diversity interferes in the formation of different population characteristics in each region in Southeast Sulawesi.

Sorawolio District is one of the sub-districts in Baubau City that has its own uniqueness. This area is located in the highlands and has different geographical characteristics from other sub-districts in Baubau City. This geographical situation also affects the pattern of population settlement and cultural adjustment that develops in the region.

Gonda Baru Village located in Sorawolio District is an interesting place to study regarding the relationship between traditions, culture, and population patterns. Part of the area that has a long history related to the Sultanate of Buton, Gonda Baru Village has a variety of traditions and cultures that have been inherited from generation to generation and are still practiced today.

Table 1.1 Number of Population in Gonda Baru Village in 2010, 2015, 2020, and 2023.

Yes	Year			
	2010	2015	2020	2023
1	1616	1.821	2.024	2.093

Source : BPS Baubau City.

Based on table 1.1, the number of residents in Gonda Baru Village from 2010 – 2023 has increased. In 2010 there were 1616 people, in 2015 there were 1,821 people, in 2020 there were 2,024 people, and in 2023 there were 2,093 people. There was a significant increase in 2010 – 2020, in contrast to what happened in 2020 – 2023.

The people in Gonda Baru Village are still firmly guided by various traditions and traditional rituals related to the life cycle such as birth, marriage, and death. These traditions are not only part of cultural identity, but also affect the demographic behavior of the community such as marriage, birth, and migration.

Socio-cultural changes caused by modernization and globalization also affect the population dynamics in Gonda Baru Village. The transformation of traditional values, especially among the younger generation, has also had an impact on the patterns of marriage, birth, and migration that have occurred in recent decades. Utomo et al (2022), the development of *ideational change* (value shift) related to modernization and globalization shows the existence of symptoms of second *demographic transition* in various regions in Indonesia such as an increase in the age of first marriage, variations in household shapes, and a tendency to decrease births in some regions, and career aspirations, encouraging the younger generation to postpone marriage and reduce the desire to have many children. thus affecting fertility rates at the local and regional levels.

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The interaction between local traditions and government policies in the field of population is also interesting to study. How do the people in Gonda Baru Village interpret and respond to various government programs such as Family Planning, transmigration, or resettlement programs in the context of the cultural values they believe in.

Traditional values related to the role of gender in the community of Gonda Baru Village also affect population patterns. The division of roles between men and women in the family and society has an impact on work participation, education, and ultimately influences reproductive and migration decisions.

The dynamics of inter-ethnic relations in Gonda Baru Village also affect the population pattern in the area. Interactions between indigenous peoples and immigrants from various ethnic backgrounds resulted in cultural exchanges that ultimately influenced demographic practices such as marriage, birth, and even migration.

Population patterns are one of the important aspects in understanding the characteristics of a region. Population patterns include various dimensions such as population distribution, age structure, gender, birth rate, death rate, marriage, divorce, and migration. All of these dimensions are inseparable from the influence of socio-cultural factors that apply in society. The global fertility transition cannot be explained by economic change alone, it is essentially driven by cultural transformations in family values and the flow of wealth between generations (Caldwell, 1997:805).

In the context of regional development, a deep understanding of the relationship between traditions, cultures, and population patterns in Gonda Baru Village is important to formulate sustainable development policies that are in accordance with the local context. Development approaches that ignore the cultural dimension often experience various obstacles to implementation at the community level.

Previous research in Indonesia and internationally emphasizes that cultural values and traditions can influence individual and group decisions related to reproduction, migration, and settlement patterns (Chandradewi, 2024; Utomo et al., 2022). However, empirical studies that specifically examine the role of tradition and culture in shaping population patterns in Gonda Baru Village are still limited. In addition, the interaction between local traditions, modernization, and government policies has also not been studied systematically.

Based on this gap, this study aims to analyze the role of tradition and culture in shaping the population pattern of the people of Gonda Baru Village. Key research questions include: how local traditions influence patterns of marriage, birth, and migration; and how the interaction between culture and government policies shapes the dynamics of the population in the region.

## METHOD

The method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative method. Sugiyono (2019:18), qualitative research is a research method used to research on the condition of natural objects, where the researcher is a key instrument, data collection techniques are carried out in a triangulation (combined) manner, data analysis is inductive, and the results of the research emphasize meaning rather than generalization. In other words, qualitative research aims to understand social phenomena from the perspective of participants in depth and contextual. Researchers in this approach not only collect data, but also become part of the process of direct observation of the social life being studied. The data generated is in the form of words, descriptions, and narratives that are rich in meaning, not numbers or statistics.

### Data Collection Techniques

This study uses instruments to obtain relevant data and in accordance with the research. The instruments of this research are as follows: Interviews, Observations and Documentation

### Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis technique used in this research is a descriptive qualitative analysis technique. Sugiyono (2013; 234), descriptive qualitative data analysis is the process of

processing data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation into a series of meaningful information. This process is carried out through three stages, namely data reduction (filtering and simplifying important data), data presentation (systematically arranging data so that it is easy to understand), and drawing conclusions.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Birth Pattern Analysis

The pattern of births in Gonda Baru Village is still influenced by cultural values that place children as family assets and successors to the lineage. The results of the interviews show that people tend to have a desire to have more than two children, even though government programs such as Family Planning (KB) have been introduced for a long time. This view is in line with the theory of Michael Todaro (2006:42-60) who emphasizes that socio-cultural factors are one of the main determinants in people's fertility decisions, in addition to economic factors.

In Buton culture, having many children is considered a symbol of welfare and security in old age, because children are expected to help parents in managing agricultural land. However, there is a change in mindset among the younger generation who are beginning to adopt a modern view of the ideal number of children. This shows that there is a process of demographic transition in which traditional values are still strong, but are slowly adapting to national policies and economic demands. Thus, tradition plays a role as a factor in reinforcing high fertility, but the influence of modernization has begun to provide variations in birth patterns.

### Analysis of Mortality Patterns

Deaths in Gonda Baru Village are not only seen as a biological phenomenon, but also have a strong cultural dimension. The death procession is carried out through a series of traditional rituals, such as joint prayers, recitations, and certain prohibitions for families left behind. Based on interviews with traditional leaders, death is still perceived as a sacred moment that must be respected through structured traditional ceremonies.

If associated with the theory of Soerjono Soekanto (2002:130), population patterns are influenced by socio-cultural factors, including in the management of deaths. The tradition that accompanies death provides a social function in strengthening solidarity between citizens, as well as being a medium for inheriting moral values for the younger generation. Although the mortality rate is relatively low due to the dominance of the large productive age, the tradition inherent in the death procession shows that culture remains a determinant in the governance of people's lives, including the aspect of mortality.

### Marriage Pattern Analysis

Weddings in Gonda Baru are still carried out based on strict customs. The series of processions such as pingitan (kasuo), between areca nuts, and between rings until the determination of the good day is an inseparable part. Customs also stipulate rules regarding dowry, which is a popolo as many as seven bhoka of two tribes, which is different from religious dowry. This shows the dualism of values: customs and religion, which complement each other.

In addition, there is a prohibition on marriage between close relatives (one-time cousin to three-time cousin), which is called pomali. This prohibition serves to maintain the purity of the lineage and avoid social conflict. On the other hand, the community is open to marriage with people outside the region or outside the tribe, as long as customary procedures are still observed. According to Geertz (1973:5), culture is a system of meaning that is inherited and shapes behavior. Thus, the pattern of marriage in Gonda Baru reflects how local culture becomes a social regulatory mechanism that influences demographic structure, particularly in terms of family formation and inter-community relationships.

### Population Mobility Analysis

The mobility of the population in Gonda Baru Village is relatively low because the kinship ties and sense of attachment to ancestral land are still strong. Most people choose to settle down and continue their livelihood in the agricultural sector. However, there is a

phenomenon of the young generation migrating to the city for education and work, although in the end some return to their home areas.

Cultural factors play an important role in these migration decisions. As explained by Yudas Sabaggalet et al. (2021), customary values can be a binder that reduces the horizontal and vertical mobility of the community. The same thing can be seen in Gonda Baru, where the tradition of mutual cooperation, family ties, and the obligation to protect heritage land make the community prefer to survive rather than migrate permanently. This confirms that culture functions as a *retaining factor* in migration theory.

### **Analysis of General Population Patterns**

In general, the population pattern in Gonda Baru Village shows the characteristics of an agrarian society that is still strongly influenced by tradition. The high proportion of the productive age population (63.81%) provides great potential for development, but the relatively high fertility pattern has implications for increasing the burden of dependence. The distribution of the population concentrated around agricultural land also reflects the close relationship between agrarian culture and settlement patterns.

If it is associated with the theory of demographic transition, New Gonda is still in its early stages, where the birth rate is quite high while the mortality rate is relatively low. However, local traditions give this pattern its own color, for example by setting the age of marriage, the number of children, and certain marriage prohibitions. Thus, the population pattern of Gonda Baru is the result of the interaction between biological, economic, and inherited cultural factors.

### **The Relationship between Tradition and Culture and Population Patterns**

A thorough analysis shows that tradition and culture have a significant role in shaping population patterns in Gonda Baru Village. First, marriage traditions determine the age, conditions, and prohibitions of marriage that have an impact on the birth rate. Second, the cultural view of children as family assets has an effect on high fertility. Third, the tradition of funerals strengthens social solidarity while maintaining the continuity of moral values. Fourth, the customary values that bind heritage land reduce migration rates and encourage people to settle in their home areas.

Thus, the role of tradition and culture in population patterns in Gonda Baru Village can be answered that culture and tradition function as the main determinants in shaping patterns of marriage, birth, death, mobility, and population distribution. This is in line with the research framework that places tradition and culture as key variables in shaping population dynamics. Therefore, it can be concluded that the population pattern in Gonda Baru Village is not only the result of economic and geographical factors, but is very closely related to the local cultural system that is still maintained today.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the results of research on the Role of Tradition and Culture on Population Patterns in Gonda Baru Village, Sorawolio District, Baubau City, it can be concluded that tradition and culture have a very central role in shaping the population pattern of the local community, where traditional values inherited from generation to generation are the main guidelines in making important decisions related to birth, marriage, death, and population mobility. Birth patterns still show a strong traditional influence, as people tend to have more than two children with the view that the child is a family asset and a successor to the offspring, so although government programs regarding birth control have been introduced, cultural factors remain the main determinants in fertility decisions. In addition, the pattern of marriage is regulated through strict customary arrangements that include certain processions, conditions, and prohibitions, such as the prohibition of intertribal marriage, so that marriage is not only interpreted as a personal bond, but also as a social event that ensures the continuity of customs and affects the family structure and the formation of new households. The pattern of death is also loaded with cultural dimensions, where the death procession is understood not just as a biological event, but as a traditional ritual that strengthens social solidarity and

shows the role of culture in regulating the life cycle of the community from birth to death. Furthermore, the mobility of the population is relatively low due to strong customary and kinship ties, attachment to heritage land, customary obligations, and the value of mutual cooperation that encourages people to stay in their home areas, even the young generation who migrate generally return to their hometowns due to these strong cultural ties.

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