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Kinship System and Customary Government of the Waropen Indigenous Community

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the kinship system and customary government of the Waropen indigenous community. The research method used is empirical by observing the reality that occurs in the field. The results of this study reveal that the Waropen indigenous community recognizes a local kinship group called "da". Almost all villages in Waropen have three to five "da" which oversee several bawa houses (large and long houses). Family members feel bound by kinship ties that are calculated through the male line. Members of the "da" believe that they come from the same ancestors, although they are often unable to explain these kinship relationships concretely. In Waropen society, larger kinship groups are formed by "ruma bawa" which has two meanings, namely: (1) patrilocal extended family and (2) house as a place to live. Waropen society also recognizes local kinship groups. Its members are bound by kinship ties that are calculated through the father's line (patrilineal). In the customary government system of the Waropen indigenous community, several positions are known in the customary structure, which also provide clues about the boundaries of social stratification. These positions are: Sera Bawa, Mosaba, (Pertuan/ruler/King), Eso (Commander), Rubasa (People's Deputy), Manobawa, Sera-Titibi (Pertuan for groups in small circles/keret) Waribo, and Ghoinino.

Keywords: System; Kinship; Customary Government; Waropen Customary Society.

Introduction

Humans as social creatures, always live in groups. Every human being who lives in a group has interests that are individual or group demands that are expected to be fulfilled. By cooperating with other humans, it will be easier to achieve their desires or protect their interests. Moreover, considering that humans are weak creatures in facing threats to themselves or their interests, their position in facing danger will be stronger if they cooperate with other humans in a group or life together.

Society is a group or collection of people. Protection of interests is achieved by creating guidelines or rules of life that determine how humans should behave in society so as not to harm others and themselves. Thus, every group of human life has a benchmark or measure of behavior or attitude in life together, structure and leadership. The groups vary in form which is adjusted to the goals and needs to be achieved. Individuals as members of a group, with other members of the group are intertwined, have relationships or contacts, especially in dealing with disturbances. In group life, togetherness and unity are the main foundations in achieving goals



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or group needs which are realized through group cooperation. Each group has a structure, member positions, division of tasks and obligations in order to carry out group activities.

Developments in a group will determine the future life of the group, which can be seen in changes in the group, members' happiness in remaining in the group, and group disunity (Slamet Santoso, 1983). According to Supomo, humans are not at all isolated individuals, free from all ties and only think of their own benefits. Individuals are considered members of society, a creature that lives first to achieve the goals of society (Soepomo, 1963).

Humans are social beings who can interact with themselves, interpret meanings, objects in their consciousness and decide how they will act meaningfully according to that interpretation. A person does something because of their social role, or because of their social class, or because of their life history. Human behavior has important basic aspects, namely (1) humans always act according to the meaning of the objects (everything they encounter and experience, all elements of life in this world), to the perpetrator; (2) the meaning of an object always arises from the results of interaction between individuals; (3) humans always interpret the meaning of the objects before they act according to the meaning of the objects. Based on these basic aspects, human interaction is not the result of external causes.

The atmosphere of an ethnic group is a manifestation of the activities of the ethnic group members based on social institutions that originate from the culture of the ethnic group concerned. This atmosphere is manifested in family life, community and in kinship relationships as well as in various socio-religious ritual ceremonies. In social interactions, the actors use appropriate identities, which are based on the social classification system and roles that exist in the culture of the ethnic group. A more important problem is how to study these ethnic groups systematically and analytically, especially in relation to understanding the legal conditions of each.

The Waropen community also recognizes local kinship groups. Its members are bound by kinship ties that are calculated through the father's line (patrilineal). Members of the group believe that they come from the same ancestors. Meanwhile, according to tradition, before the Waropen Customary Council was introduced, the Waropen customary community already had a customary government system which traditionally/customarily regulated their communal life.

Literature Review

Soepomo wrote that legal associations in Indonesia can be divided into two large groups according to the basis of their structure, namely: 1) those based on a lineage (genealogical); and 2) those based on the regional environment (territorial). Furthermore, it was also stated that there is also a social structure based on these two factors, namely genealogical factors and territorial factors.

Legal associations based on genealogical ties are legal associations whose membership is based on descent. This type of legal association is divided into 3 groups, namely blood ties according to the father's line (patrilineal), blood ties according to the mother's line (matrilineal) and blood ties according to the father and mother's lines (parental). While legal associations



based on the regional environment are legal associations whose membership depends on whether or not they live in the regional environment of the association. Legal associations based on the regional environment also consist of 3 groups, namely village associations, regional associations and associations of several villages.

The kinship term used by Waropen people to refer to relatives in the Ego generation and several generations above Ego. In Waropen language, to introduce oneself, the word Ya (I) is used. To distinguish gender, the term Mano is used to refer to men, while for women the term Bino is used.

Method

This study employs an empirical research method, specifically utilizing field research to gather data directly from the source. The primary focus is on the Waropen indigenous community, where data collection is conducted through direct observations and interviews. This approach allows the researcher to obtain firsthand information that accurately reflects the realities and issues experienced by the community, ensuring that the data is relevant and closely aligned with the research problems.

Field research involves systematically observing the social, cultural, and legal practices of the Waropen indigenous people related to the study's focus. Through these observations, the researcher gains deeper insights into the community's behaviors, customs, and interactions concerning the legal matters being examined. In addition to observation, semi-structured or open-ended interviews are conducted with key informants such as community leaders, elders, and other relevant members. These interviews provide rich qualitative data, capturing personal experiences, opinions, and interpretations that enhance understanding beyond what is available in written sources.

Complementing the empirical data, the study also applies a normative approach by reviewing secondary data sources. This includes collecting and analyzing relevant books, academic journals, and applicable laws and regulations that govern the subject matter. These materials provide the theoretical and legal framework necessary to contextualize the empirical findings within the broader legal system.

By combining empirical field data with normative legal materials, this study aims to offer a comprehensive and well-rounded analysis. The empirical data grounds the research in real-world conditions, while the normative review ensures that findings are aligned with existing legal principles and frameworks.

Result and Discussion

Waropen Regency as part of Papua Province which was formed based on Law Number 26 of 2002 is a region that was split off from Yapen Waropen Regency as the parent regency. Waropen consists of 9 districts, 61 villages (not including villages in Kirihi District).

The Waropen indigenous community recognizes a local kinship group called "da". Almost all villages in Waropen have three to five "da" which oversee several bawa houses (large



and long houses). Family members feel bound by a kinship relationship that is calculated through the male line. Members of the "da" believe that they come from the same ancestor, although they are often unable to explain the kinship relationship in concrete terms.

In Waropen society, a larger kinship group is formed by the "ruma bawa" which has two meanings, namely: (1) patrilocal extended family and (2) house as a place to live. These two meanings must be separated, because two or more people living in one house (ruma) can come from two houses (extended families). Conversely, members of one house can occupy five houses. The Waropen community also recognizes local kinship groups. Its members are bound by kinship relationships that are calculated through the father's line (patrilineal). Members of the group believe that they come from the same ancestor. Although they can no longer explain the kinship relationship concretely, in sacred tales or myths the ancestors are sometimes imagined as animals. Therefore, some clans still have totem symbols in the form of animals, for example "dia pede" and "da Nuwuri". Like in Nubuai Village which has a crocodile as their totem symbol. Awareness of the same ancestors has two to five "da" whose houses are usually grouped in a certain area of the village and are exogamous. For example: Nubuai village which has five "da" consists of 111 houses.

Each 'da' considers itself to have rights or monopolies over several things. For example, the Kai da monopolizes the making and use of nets, sero, and can only use the nets with permission from the Kai or by paying. Likewise, the Kai has a monopoly over its own customary rights.

As explained above, in the Waropen area, only longhouses are known, in which one house lives, but the Dutch government recommended the elimination of longhouses for health reasons and to reflect house groups into nuclear families. In addition, separation between residents in the house often occurs because of quarrels between a member of the house (extended family) and another member of the house. As a result, he will separate and build another house. It often happens that such new branches gradually become separate kinship groups. On the other hand, there are also parts of the "da" of one kinship group that have separated themselves seeking protection from other groups, then continuously becoming the core group. Likewise, the house (extended family) that has become too large not only experiences processes of division, but also experiences a process of monitoring.

Kinship terms used by Waropen people to refer to relatives in the Ego generation and several generations above Ego. In Waropen language to introduce oneself, the word Ya (I) is used. To distinguish gender, the term Mano is used to refer to men, while the term Bino is used for women. While to distinguish age, the terms bawa (big) and kuboma which means small are used. The term Watea is used to refer to children.

The term for relatives three generations down and up is Gori, which is the term for all male and female grandfathers three generations above and below the Ego. At this gori level, people usually call gori without distinguishing between gender differences. Gori is the highest and lowest level in the kinship system. The term for relatives two generations down and up is:

- a) Fofa Mano: this term is used to refer to all male grandfathers two generations above the ego.
- b) Fofa Bino: the term for all female grandmothers two generations above the ego.



- c) Fofu: the term for male and female grandchildren two generations below the ego. Especially at the fofu level, especially two generations above the ego, it clearly shows the difference in gender, namely Mano and Bino, while the two generations below the ego are not distinguished.

The terms for relatives of the same generation above are:

- a) Daida (Bawa = big/old, Kuboma = small/young); used to refer to the father of the father's brother and also the mother's brother.
- b) Naina (bawa big/old, Kuboma = small/young); used to refer to the mother and the mother's sisters and also the father's sisters.

At this level, namely daida and naina, the terms that differentiate them are age. If the father has an older sibling, he is called Daida Bawa, while the father's younger sibling is called Daida Kuboma. This term is also used to refer to the mother's brother. The terms for relatives of the same generation as the ego are:

- a) Bino: wife.
- b) Yondagi/Amay: a term for all husbands and sisters and also all wives of the ego's brothers.
- c) Bingga: used to refer to the ego's brothers.

Specifically for Bingga and Mambo, the terms bawa (big) and Kuboma (small) can be used to distinguish the oldest and youngest siblings. The terms for relatives of the same generation below the ego are:

- a) Waitea (Warima = male, Waima = female); used to refer to the sons and daughters of the ego's siblings.
- b) Noman: a term for all husbands and daughters and brothers of the ego.
- c) Nowin: a term for all wives and sons of the ego's siblings.

In this section, the term Waitea (child) is used to refer to siblings (male and female) of the ego and to differentiate them, Warima and Wiama are used to differentiate between males and females. In addition, there are still several terms that are often used by Waropen people, namely: Mano (Husband), Noman (Male-in-law), Nowino (Female-in-law), Firumi (Prospective fiancé).

Traditionally, before the introduction of the Waropen Traditional Council, the Waropen indigenous people already had a customary government system which traditionally/customarily regulated their life together. In the traditional government system of the Waropen indigenous community, several positions are known in the traditional structure, which also provide guidance as to the boundaries of social stratification. These positions are: Sera Bawa, Mosaba, (Pertuan/ruler/King), Eso (Commander), Rubasa (Deputy of the People), Manobawa, Sera-Titibi (Pertuan for a group in a small circle/keret) Waribo, and Ghoinino.

- a) Sera Bawa; Sera (King) and Bawa (Big) or Great King, namely old or young people who are recognized by the Waropen customary law community as descendants of honorable people in the customary (social) structure considered the oldest and as the founder of the village (da). Sera means the one who is ruled by the assessment of the customary community, because of the courage and openness to appreciate and respect the aspirations of his community. This means that Sera sacrifices and loves the community and has noble character



and becomes a role model. Sera in the Waropen language is likened to a banyan tree as a place of support that protects everyone, both those who go and come without distinction. The banyan tree or "RAGHAMBO" is considered sacred by the Waropen people, among the local community it has been believed that there are stories/myths of their customary community. A person who is chosen as the customary head is the oldest member of the family and is seen as a descendant of the ancestor 'da'. He is called Sera Bawa. Sera bawa has great power and influence among his customary members. In carrying out daily tasks, a sera bawa is always assisted by a body called Mano bawa. Mano Bawa is a body whose members consist of elderly people who are entrusted to assist Sera Bawa in carrying out their duties. To achieve the position of Sera Bawa, usually the person is considered to have good knowledge of customs, has led headhunting expeditions, and is authoritative and responsible to the community. If we look closely, since the arrival of the Dutch Government and the current government, it seems that the power of Sera Bawa has decreased, so that the power of Sera Bawa is increasingly limited in handling problems related to customs.

- b) Mosaba; or Queen, in the social structure of the Waropen indigenous community is a woman who has a position one level below Sera.
- c) Sera Titibi; In addition to the position of Sera Bawa, in the structure of the Waropen traditional community, there is also the position of Sera Titibi (consisting of two words, namely 'sera' and 'titibi') Sera means the one who is ruled by the assessment of the traditional community, because of the courage and openness to appreciate and respect the aspirations of the community, in the sense of daring to sacrifice and love the community and having noble character and being a role model. While titibi is a small part or part of a whole if it is said to be not half or half. Or it can also be said to be a quarter of a whole. In the view of the Waropen traditional community, titibi is a small part of the territory of Sera and Mosaba, which is entrusted to be governed. And that power can be taken over at any time if there is no longer trust from the local traditional community (keret). Thus, "Sera Titibi" means a person who is a lord in government but his rights are very small, specific and limited to an environment or clan group in a small indigenous community (keret). Therefore, Sera Titibi does not control the customary rights completely, because he only controls and regulates the customary rights that have been divided by Sera Bawa for the welfare of the indigenous community in the keret he leads. But also "Sera Titibi" is seen in the structure of indigenous society because of the lineage of a marriage between a Mosaba and a man or man who does not have a direct line of Sera rights.
- d) Eso ; or Commander, has the role of cultivating courage, agility and training indigenous peoples so that they are not afraid to face opponents. He was on the front line before his community was threatened, he sacrificed first.
- e) Rubasa is a position in the traditional community structure according to its function and position. Rubasa in his position has power and rules in a (customary community environment that is still within the territory of the Sera, Mosaba and Eso rights. The position of Rubasa only has the right to order or control several eyes of houses/marga in a small environment that is entrusted. If it is recognized by Sera, the environment can be called "keret" and not



the entire customary community that is ordered by a Sera or Mosaba. The function of Mosaba is to provide direction in his environment and always submit to the authority of the ruler. Rubasa is also a title given for an event, or assessment. This title is welcomed in a traditional ceremony/traditional party. This Rubasa title can be used by someone in his position and function for life.

- f) Mano Bawa: Mano bawa means mighty men. Generally, these men mostly consist of adult men who have been selected, chosen and entrusted to help Sera Bawa in taking care of the 'da' (house) and other houses in the village.
- g) Waribo; or young men who have been following initiation ceremonies when they reach adolescence between 12 - 18 years old. In the structure of their traditional society, they are considered a potential group in activities to fight for the socio-economic rights of the community and accompany Sera's journey in traditional activities. Until now, the Waribo status is still used among the Waropen community to determine a person's social status that the person concerned has reached adulthood or as a young person.
- h) Ghoinino; are people who are captured and held captive who are then made slaves and can be exchanged or bought by other tribes. In the past, the Ghoinino group was considered the lowest social group in the social structure of the Waropen traditional society.

Conclusion

The Waropen indigenous community recognizes a local kinship group called “da”. Almost all villages in Waropen have three to five “da” who oversee several rumah bawa (large and long houses). Family members feel bound by kinship ties that are calculated through the male line. Members of the “da” believe that they come from the same ancestors, although they are often unable to explain this kinship relationship concretely. In Waropen society, a larger kinship group is formed by the “ruma bawa” which has two meanings, namely: (1) a patrilocal extended family and (2) a house as a place to live. Waropen society also recognizes local kinship groups. Its members are bound by kinship ties that are calculated through the father's line (patrilineal). In the customary government system of the Waropen indigenous community, several positions are known in the customary structure, which also provide clues about the boundaries of social stratification. These positions are: Sera Bawa, Mosaba, (Pertuan/ruler/King), Eso (Commander), Rubasa (People's Deputy), Manobawa, Sera-Titibi (Pertuan for small groups/keret) Waribo, and Ghoinino

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