

# MOKO SYMBOLIZATION AS SOCIO-RELIGIOUS HARMONY OF ALOR SOCIETY IN EAST NUSA TENGGARA

Iswanto<sup>1</sup> and Yudhi Kawangung<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Institut Agama Kristen Negeri (IAKN)  
Kupang  
Cak Doko St. Kupang, Indonesia  
[iswantoyohanes@rocketmail.com](mailto:iswantoyohanes@rocketmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Sekolah Tinggi Agama Kristen Teruna  
Bakti, Yogyakarta, Indonesia  
Ds. Daratan 2, Sendang Arum, Kec.  
Minggir, Kab. Sleman, D.I. Yogyakarta  
55562  
[ykawangung06@gmail.com](mailto:ykawangung06@gmail.com)

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## ABSTRACT

*The understanding of moko is related to the identity of the Alor people. Historically, moko was brought from Vietnam and became a heirloom which was passed down from generation to generation. In practice, moko can be used as a dowry of marriage, clan identity, musical instruments, and several other uses. This study provides novelty on the moko symbolization as a socio-religious harmony of Alor society. The problem to be resolved in this research is "how does the moko symbolize socio-religious harmony in the people of Alor, East Nusa Tenggara?" The theoretical concept used in this article is Geertz's 'religious as the cultural system' which is paired with Epicurus' opinion about the three levels of harmony. This study used the phenomenological method of Edmund Husserl. The results of this study are moko symbolization as a rhythmic leader of musical instruments related with social messages in the ownership it and the function of moko as a dowry of marriage. In addition, the results of the study also show that the symbolization of moko becomes a part of the harmony embodiment in the life of the Alor people. This symbolization process occurs at the level of ideas and manifests in behavior. The novelty in this research is the characteristics of the Alor community as a heterogeneous society place the symbols of a set of conventions. Moko as part of the convention symbol embodies social harmonization. This part becomes an interesting character because moko is not an original object from the Alor community, but it has been adopted as a cultural symbol. Social harmonization occurs at the level of ideas which are adhered to customary law. This really depends on the values held in society.*

**Keywords:** Moko, Alor, Socio-Religious, Symbol

## INTRODUCTION

Socio-religious harmony relates to the condition of the community either in the form of defense efforts or naturally maintaining harmony in social values and religious life (Kawangung 2019). The phenomenon of harmony is a formation of historical events related to the meeting of different groups in one region. Meanwhile, in modern times the social area is not only limited by geological boundaries, but also it can extend to economics, politics and

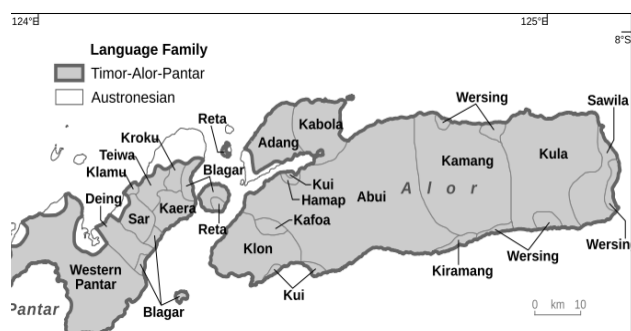
ideology. Plural society is formed from the desire to achieve common goals (Qian 2017: 470).

Socio-religious harmony is a symbol of the cultural diversity owned by community (Zaluchu and Widjaja 2019: 4-5). Furthermore, the Province of East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) is a province with diverse cultural properties. Alor Regency is one of the districts in NTT which is geologically located in the Alor archipelago. Alor Regency is also known as *Nusa Kenari* and also 1000 *Moko*

Islands. The Alor community itself consists of different language groups, more than twenty languages, which indicate dozens of ethnic groups live in Alor-Pantar Regency (Klamer 2017). Cultural diversity mapping based on the language diversity is shown by the figure 1.

**Figure 1.**

Map of Alor community distribution based on language differences, (Areas where the Austronesian language Alorese is spoken are left white.)



Source: (Klamer 2017: 3)

Based on the figure 1, *moko* or bronze *nekara* are cultural objects of prehistoric times. According to archaeologists and historians, the technology for making *moko* came from bronze technology in *Dongson*, northern Vietnam. These *mokos* were brought by Chinese traders in exchange for commodities from spice-producing areas such as the Banda and Maluku islands. However, there was a fleet of merchant ships which were stranded in Alor, and were running out of supplies. The bronze *nekara* they brought as a medium of exchange, were then exchanged for the main food commodities from Alor, such as walnuts and corn. This happened thousand years ago and the walnut and corn trade continues with the largest collection of *moko* until now, although there is no history of the manufacture of items made of bronze in Alor, the use of *moko*, and the preservation of *moko* is still maintained today. Physically, *moko*

are generally oval shaped like small drums, but some are like large drums with a diameter of 40-60 centimetres and a height of 80-100 centimetres and have various shapes, designs and decorative patterns. *Moko* have 4 (four) ears which usually function as handles (Juliawati 2013: 195-196).

According to previous researches, *moko* in Alor consist of various types: *lasing tofa*, *salaka*, *fatafa*, *kabala*, *piki*, *tawiatama*, *heekbui*, *tamamia*, *maning mauk*, *fiyai futa*, *kolmale*, *hawataka*, *iyakasing*, *fehawa*, *aimala*, *fuipe*, *makasar*, *java* and *itkira* (Rema and Prihatmoko 2016; Twikromo and Riomandha 2014). In general, the *moko* function as a musical instrument which replace *tambur* ‘the drum’ function. The *moko* instrument is usually paired with or without a *gong* which is usually played to accompany dances. *Moko* as musical instrument have a function of rhythmic harmonization and as a rhythm regulator. Several studies link the existence of this instrument with the perception of socio-religious harmony (Karim 2020: 60). In fact, *Moko* as a musical instrument also functions as a social symbol, namely stating the status of a person’s social position and as a ‘*belis*’ wedding dowry. Social function is defined as “the more *moko* a person has, the higher his social status will be” (Rema and Prihatmoko 2016: 104). The function of *moko* as the dowry is related to the movement of *moko* from one family to another. The man will give a dowry of *belis* in the form of *moko* to the woman’s family, so that the two families will tie themselves together in social status (Juliawati 2013: 196 ; Putra 2019: 42) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs. Popoola’s research states that marriages with different sub-ethnic groups in Nigeria actually trigger violence and disharmony in society (Popoola 2016: 1-2). The concept of cultural attitudes is in contrast to the Alor community.

Previous researches have never linked the function and position of *moko* in the socio-religious realm, even though their existence covers a very

broad social sphere, in fact it is one of the essential social symbols in Alor society. The symbolic function is a function which is maintained in society, binds and regulates people's life. Several studies have positioned dowry as a tool for social, political and economic negotiation (Khanal and Sen 2020: 355; Miguel and Gugerty 2005: 2328-2329)

Another article which closely relates to this research is the harmonization of *Lego-lego* in the Alor community as a cultural and interreligious symbol. The study explains the perceptions of the Alor people as seen in *lego-lego* poetry. These perceptions are (1) cosmology; (2) social; and (3) culture. These three main elements constitute an episodic memory symbolized in a circular form in *lego-lego* dances, fraternal poetry, and culture which transcend religious identity (Iswanto; Hutapea, 2020: 90-91). The methodological paradigm in this research is important. *Lego-lego* is not only seen as a dance but also a symbol of socio-religious harmony in the Alor community. This passage is stated as a phenomenon so that it is possible to interpret the event as a hidden truth. What is visible is only a reference to identify ideas.

Based on the explanation above, the problem in this research is how does the *moko* symbolize socio-religious harmony in the people of Alor, East Nusa Tenggara? The research objective is to analyze and describe the socio-religious harmony study of *moko* symbolization at Alor Society in East Nusa Tenggara. The answer to the research question will be a novelty about how symbols are attached to an object (*moko*) in which there are ideas and rules to organize people's lives. This is even more interesting because *moko* as heirlooms have been adopted as the property of the Alor community.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The concept of social harmony is a broad range of studies. This study is classified as a social

science study. Narrow opinion states that social harmony comes from individuals themselves without intervention from society and the government (Uchida, Norasakkunkit, and Kitayama 2004: 226). This concept is considered inflexible so that it is developed into social harmony in the community. This concept is based on multiculturalism and religious differences. The thing which is emphasized in social harmony in the community is the effort to understand each other (Kamal 2017: 58; Suwanto, Nurdin, and Pitono 2020: 28-29; Valters 2013: 2-4). In addition, in Indonesian context, the concept of harmonization also provides assumptions which enrich existing concepts. The study of tolerance as a form of socio-religious harmonization is defined as the attitude of accepting and understanding shortcomings and differences through togetherness and complementarity (Rantesalu and Iswanto 2018). Socio-religious harmonization is also defined as efforts made by the government. This concept is closely related to differences in beliefs and social conflicts. The government will establish inter-faith communication forums as an effort to reduce conflict in social life (Suwanto et al. 2020: 36-37; Wong 2009). Some of the previous researches can help enriching the concept of socio-religious harmonization. However, it is not the main concept of this research. This study focuses more on socio-religious harmonization in cultural phenomena in the symbolization of *moko*. Furthermore, the concept of social ideology in indigenous communities is associated with symbols which exist from generation to generation (Ardhana 2020: 11-12; Qodim 2019: 144). This study can provide space for discussion about the process of internalizing *moko* to become a sacred object and a cultural symbol. Good internalization will produce multiculturalism and ethical boundaries to live together as a community (Umar and Tumiwa 2020).

On the other hand, if the internalization of the value of diversity is used for narrow socio-polit-

ical interests, it will negate socio-religious harmonization.

Other studies related to *moko* are discussing *moko* as a symbol of the identity of the Alor people and their defense (Twikromo and Riomantha 2014: 24-25) and their functions and roles in Alor society (Gede 2013: 181; Rema and Prihatmoko 2016: 103). *Moko's* function is to provide an 'entry point' for an in-depth interpretation of this study. Historical approach of several previous studies was used to build a theoretical framework. On the other hand, research on the function of *moko* cannot be used completely because fundamental differences are associated with different sciences. Previous research was in cultural studies, while the research was based on the grand theory of religious harmonization, socio-cultural studies of religion

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The theory related to this research comes from Geertz's thoughts about religion and culture (Koehrsen 2017: 3-6; Xygalatas and McCorkle 2012: 176-178).

The thing we seem least able to tolerate is a threat to our powers of conception, a suggestion that our ability to create, grasp, and use symbols may fail us, for were this to happen, we would be more helpless, as I have already pointed out, than the beavers. The extreme generality, difference, uselessness, and variability of man's innate (that is, genetically programmed) response capacities means that without the assistance of cultural patterns he would be functionally incomplete, not merely a talented ape who had, like some underprivileged child, unfortunately been prevented from realizing his full potentialities, but a kind of formless monster with neither sense of direction nor power of self-control, a chaos of spasmodic impulses and vague emotions. (Geertz 1973: 99)

Geertz focused his opinion on another approach to religious studies that differed from

Freud's theory of sexual identity and maturity status, and Durkheim with his theory of the sacredness of society. Geertz offers an approach to the cultural dimension of religious analysis. A new approach in anthropological studies, especially regarding religion (Hidayah 2018: 2).

This approach is described in a complex definition of religion, namely: (1) a system of symbols that acts to (2) create feelings and motivation in humans by (3) formulating a conception of general rules of existence and (4) formulating a conception of rules generality of existence and (5) those feelings and motivations appear uniquely realistic

Cultural patterns (symbol systems) have the characteristic of being an external source of information. It exists outside the organism and can provide internally definable conceptions. Humans need conceptions that enter internally through external symbols. Without it, humans are like beavers unable to make checkers (Laila 2017: 3).

Sometimes, cultural patterns are seen as a model. The model itself has two meanings, namely "from" and "for". In the meaning of "from", it means manipulating the symbol structure according to the internal conception of symbols. While in the sense of "for", it means that internal conceptions are manipulated in relation to symbols.

In the second part, it is said that religion creates strong and lasting feelings and motivations in humans. Religious symbols are able to express the world's climate and shape it. These symbols shape them by internalizing the dispositions to the devotee which characterize his activities and the quality of his experience. This disposition itself is actually a pattern of activities or events, not just one particular event or activity (Beyers 2017: 3).

In the third part, it is emphasized on the conception of the order of existence that is present by the religious symbol system. Chaos will occur when humans are unable to formulate a conception

of the structure or order of existence. Thus, symbols always provide orientation or guidance for humans on all phenomena that occur in themselves and in nature.

Humans will always seek to understand the phenomena occur, and they will not leave it without answers. They will find the answer no matter how limited their analytical capacity is. Without that answer, even though the answer itself is inconsistent and tends to be inaccurate, chaos in humans occurs. Religion gives its role here as a conception of phenomena that cannot be understood by humans as a whole (Mirza 2016: 9-10).

The fourth part, it is said that the conception is attributed with a factual nuance. This can show how the figure of authority who is trusted in religion is able to make humans obey because they attribute the conceptions embodied in that symbol with convincing facts. Here, religion differs from other symbolic systems. Religion assures that there is something that is really real which is considered more important than anything (Wicaksono 2018: 4-5).

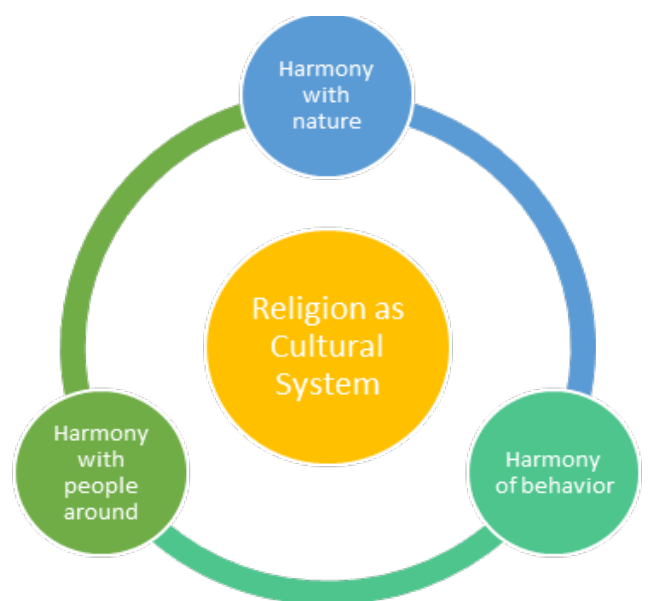
Through religious rituals in which there is always an ethos and worldview, Geertz explains the dynamics that occur in human motivation and feelings. He took the example of the story of Rangda and Barong in Bali. The ritual involved many people and involved deep feelings. This shows that the feelings generated by the facts presented in the ritual are so believed by Balinese people. They are motivated to continue doing the ritual. The trend of tradition (ethos) is seen here while the world view is seen from the representation of the figures in the ritual. Moreover, the values in the ritual are poured into people's daily lives. Religious events are different from everyday events. It has been said before that the motivations and feelings in religious rituals will be consistent with his view of the world (Hovland 2018: 425).

The theory of religion as a cultural system was also sharpened by the Helanistic philosophical view of Epicurus (341-270 BC). In his view, the harmony of life is divided into three criteria, namely (1) harmony with nature (natural and seasonal rhythm); (2) harmony of behavior and conscience; (3) make peace with those around you (Cooper and Annas 1994: 8; Euler 2019: 131-133; Long 1974: 64-65).

Furthermore, Epicurus views harmony as happiness which is not obtained from external material elements but self-management, social harmony, and harmony in nature. The simplicity of life or social continuity will shape life circle of society which places the internalization of self-values and culture above the external material. The concept of self and man becomes a middle theory within the framework of harmony theory (Epicurus), Culture and Religion (Gertz) (Delanty 2006: 143). The reasoning of the texts of these two concepts is bridged by hermeneutic anthropology (Schuster 2013: 197). The theoretical framework is depicted by the figure 2.

**Figure 2.**

Theoretical Framework of Epicurus and Geertz



Anthropological hermeneutics deals with cultural texts. The interpretation of cultural texts is influenced by context and history (Matei 2016: 8-10). Context is defined as behavior, all material forms related to behavior, and anything that can provide a supporting image for the text. While history is related to specific events that can be obtained from documentation of research results, and prosodic memory. Anthropology means placing humans at the center and matter outside of humans as objects (Schneider 2015: 26). In other words, hermeneutic anthropology will use various points of view to describe a cultural behavior and a broader perception of that behavior (Allen 2020: 303).

Anthropological hermeneutics also involves assessing signs. This sign system is known as semiotic science. This study uses a semiotic rationale to analyze the meaning of symbols, the intermediary of symbols and symbols in society (Kemple 2019: 262).

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research is a qualitative descriptive study with a phenomenological paradigm. The character of phenomenological research emphasizes on the naturalness of data sources by taking the assumption that what appears on the surface, including the pattern of everyday human behavior, is only a symptom or phenomenon of what is hidden in the "head" (Gallagher and Zahavi 2007: 6-8). Any behavior which appears at the surface level can only be understood or explained when the researcher is able to uncover what is hidden in the world of consciousness or the world of knowledge of the human actor (Zlatev 2012: 1-2). In contrast, the positivism view must maintain a distance between the researcher and the one being studied. In fact, phenomenological research between the researcher and the one being studied must be integrated with the object of his research (Umanilo 2019: 1-2).

Edmund Husserl explains that phenomenology is an object of study which emphasizes the subject's perception, thought, will, and belief about something outside the subject that is transcendent, in addition to aposteriorics. In this case, phenomenology is in line with rationalism, namely seeing objects in their context and using logical thinking more than just causal linear (Iparraguirre, 2016: 618; Ives & Kidwell, 2019: 1357).

This research was conducted in 2019. However, the development of narratives and hypotheses is still being carried out until 2020. This research is part of the topic of socio-religious symbolization at Alor Society in East Nusa Tenggara. This research is a progress qualitative research, the results of which are published in several journals with a focus on social, cultural and religious sciences. The research was conducted in several areas: Mataru Districts, Teluk Mutiara, Blagar, and some other places in Alor Regency.

In order to get data, the researcher interviewed some informants who could be classified into two: main informant and supporting informants. The main informant was Daniel S. Laopada, a cultural observer who lives in Mataru Village, Alor Regency. He was supported by two other spokesmen, M. Manilehi, Kamaifui Village, Alor Regency, and Imanuel Letma, who live in Kupang City, East Nusa Tenggara Province. This method and determination of interviewees is aimed at obtaining holistic ethnographic research data (Berner-Rodoreda et al. 2020: 292) and the role of interviewer and interviewee are key determinants across styles, which range from doxastic (focused on understanding interviewees' experiences or behaviors).

The data in this study are classified into two: primary and secondary. The primary data were data obtained directly in the field (results of interviews and observations), while the secondary data in the form of supporting documentation

were obtained from libraries and google scholar (Frechette et al. 2020: 6-8; Sweet and Parker 2019: 65-69) freshmen through graduate students, enrolled in vocal music education or vocal performance programs within two large universities in the United States completed written responses to an open set of questions that were then discussed during a corresponding in-depth interview. Our analysis revealed four themes: (a. The data collection method uses in-depth interviews and continuous observation. The techniques used are listening, engaging, competent and eliciting.

Verbatim data from the interview results were transcribed, coded, and displayed as material for interpretation. The research data were also triangulated by interviewing the main informants. The data management method uses the corpus method of cultural research data (Davies 2007: 36; Mcenery et al. 2019: 76-77).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The etymology of Alor is first mentioned in the voyage notes of *Antonio Lombardo Pigafetta*, one of the members of the ocean exploration voyage led by *Magellan* (and later *Elcano*) made a map and a brief description of Alor. While *Elcano* himself visited Alor on 9-25 January 1522. The Alor people consist of different sub-cultures. This is shown by several recent studies on dialectics of differences in languages in West and East Alor, which reached 17 (seventeen) regional languages found in West Alor and East Alor. The languages are Alurung, Adang, Kabola, Kui, Hamaf, Klou, Panea, Abui, Bulman, Papunawala, Bunawala, Kamang, Molimpui, Kula, Kailesa, Sawila, and Wersing and three dialects, namely the May dialect: Buil, Pante Deere dialect, and Buyungta dialect. The homogeneity of religion which consists of three religions, namely Christianity (68.05%), Islam (28.79%), Catholicism (3.09%) and Hindu/Buddhist

(0.06%) as well as making these two religions a religion with the least adherent of the total population in Alor Regency. The regency has 645 worship houses for the people to carry out their religious worship.

**Table 1.** Percentage of population according to their religion in Alor Regency 2014 – 2018

Year	Islam	Catholic	Christian	Hindu/ Buddhist	Other
2014	28,21	3,25	68,46	0,07	0
2015	30,28	3,16	66,49	0,07	0
2016	30,47	3,24	66,26	0,08	0
2017	30,13	3,24	66,56	0,07	0
2018	28,79	3,09	68,05	0,06	0

source: <http://alorkab.go.id/new/index.php/kondisi-umum/keagamaan>

Based on the table 1, we can see that there are differences between the people of Alor in terms of religion. The people of Alor have significant role in their socio-religious life. Regulations on tolerance are not in the form of writing, but are embodied in symbols at the level of ideas. This can be seen from the researcher's observations of the life and cultural events of the Alor people. Togetherness and cooperation are highly respected. Prudence in speech is also a characteristic of this society. Homogeneous society, creating social harmony based on historical events that they have gone through. War between groups and infighting led these groups to establish cultural symbols of peace. The cultural harmonization of the Alor people can also be seen in several other symbols, such as *lago-lego*, and the slogan *taramiti tominuku* 'different but still one'. In this article, *moko* will be discussed as a function of socio-religious harmony among the Alor community.

In this regard, the people of Alor are known for their harmony in socio-religious life. Social and cultural life is so strong in synergy with religious

values. This kind of social construction has a unique value and is difficult to find in other societies around the world. In this section, we will describe the three functions of the *moko* and the symbols behind it. The results of these studies will then be discussed based on several previous studies as presented in the introduction. The results and discussion will show the novelty of this research. The explanation is presented in sub-chapters as below.

### The *Moko* Musicality as a Symbol of Socio-Religious Harmony

In traditional societies, art is not only seen as a pure aesthetic act. Arts, including music and dance, are ritual activities related to the life circle. In other words, this activity is about how humans live in harmony with each other and the environment. Harmonization of music in *moko* is not interpreted as merely an artistic activity, but rather as a religious ritual that must be carried out.

The *moko* organology consists of several parts, namely *foking ba he ara hey, hey karoki wal yeting buti* with a size of 29 centimetres, *foking hawei upi buti, hey, karoki* with a size of 10 centimetres, *foking ba hadama miya hey, hey, karoki wal oki* with a size of 12 centimetres, *foking ba he ira hey, hey karoki wal yeting buti* with a size of 29 centimetres, and *foking* which looks like *karyeting suo* with a size of 80 centimetres. In general, the shape of the *moko* is oval like a small drum, but some are like a large drum with a diameter of 40-60 centimetres, a height of 80-100 centimetres and have various shapes, designs and decorative patterns with a narrow center. The existence of this narrowing becomes the benchmark for dividing the *moko* into three parts, namely the top, middle, and bottom. The *moko* have 4 ears which usually function as handles. The explanation of each part is described by figure 3.

**Figure 3.**  
*Moko (Foking) Itikira* in Mataru, Alor Regency  
Source: Result of Observation dan Photo at Mataru  
Districts-July 2020



A deeper discussion focused on the role of *moko* through the sound structure in the dance accompaniment. For logical understanding, *moko* is a sacred object which is only played by certain people. The *moko* sound is impressed as a rhythmic determinant of the *gongs*. Based on the structure of the music (sound), the existence of *moko* becomes a rhythmic guide for other sounds. This logical understanding can be observed comprehensively that the rhythmic harmony of the *moko* is present as a form of social-religious harmony for the people who follow these traditional dances and events.

*Moko* is classified as a type of rhythmic musical instrument and is usually played together with the *gongs*. Talking about the function of *moko* as an accompaniment to dances, such as the *cakalele* and *lego-lego* war dances, the dancers and the people who follow the *lego-lego* dance feel that the sounds produced from *moko* and *gong* are 'sacred' which 'ask' them for dancing in groups and become a whole.



“The sound of the *moko* is not as loud as the eight gongs, but we can hear it as a call to dance *lego-lego*. With the sound of *moko*, we must respect each other, without differentiating, must help each other without looking for who is better than the other. People who play the *moko* must also lead the *gong* so that together they produce a regular sound. When the sound is regular, we can dance *lego-lego* together (Interview: Daniel S. Laoepada, Mataru Districts, Juli 12, 2020). “

In addition to being an accompaniment to dances, *moko* sounds also have another function, namely as a sign that an activity will be held such as a construction activity or a grief event is taking place. Until 1990, the tradition of *moko* and *gong* musical instruments to commemorate a mourning event was still carried out by the bereaved families as a sign to call girls. The bereaved family rung the *gong* and *moko* for a week. However, starting from 1991 until now this tradition has no longer practiced because they began thinking that the activity was only a waste of time and requiring a lot of money. Nevertheless, the sounds of gongs and *moko* for construction activities are still being carried out today. The purpose of making sound of a musical instrument is to summon girls to the place immediately. As soon as the girls summoned were all present, the activity of making sound of these musical instruments was stopped because their goal had been achieved. (Interview with Daniel S. Laoepada, Mataru Districts, July 15, 2020).

Each tribe in Alor has its own story about the *moko* musical instrument, some consider *moko* as a sacred object so they have an oral story which says *moko* cannot be held or even played by a woman, because it has fatal consequences for the woman. In the village of Mataru Utara, there are no penalties or sanctions when women play the *moko* instrument. It is a myth that women, let alone playing a musical instrument, just holding is a *pemali* which will have fatal consequences for

women and have no children. If men or women play *moko* together with *gong*, as long as they are well-trained the *moko* musical instrument will be heard. (Interview with Benyamin Lauata, Mataru Districts, July 16, 2021)

In playing a musical instrument, there are usually musical elements which musical instrument players must pay attention to, because these musical elements are very influential in playing musical instrument.

**Figure 4.**

*Moko (Foking) Itkira* Mataru District  
(music transcription by Dina Laupada)

The figure displays a musical score for 'Moko (Foking) Itkira' from the Mataru District. The score is divided into two systems, each starting at measure 7. The first system includes staves for Gong 1 dan 2, Gong 3, Gong 4 dan 5, Gong 6 dan 7, Gong 8, and Moko. The second system repeats the same instruments. The Gong parts feature rhythmic patterns of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the Moko part has a distinct, lower-pitched rhythmic pattern. The notation uses treble clefs for the Gong parts and a bass clef for the Moko part.

Based on the figure 4, the *moko* is combined with other eight gong musical instrument. This structure means (1) the sound of *moko* is different when it is compared to the *gong*; (2) such a structure places *moko* as the direction of the rhythm or the softness of the musical ensemble. If a *moko* player beats *moko* loudly, the sound of the *gong* will be beaten loudly and vice versa. (3) *Moko* is not only a complementary musical instrument but it leads other musical instruments. (4) *Moko* is perceived as an heirloom, its presence in accompanying dances with the *gong* is considered to have magical powers which lead the ongoing activities. Respect will be seen once the *moko* is sounded. This respect is

described as a cultural symbol reference. Oral rules such as ending conflict and respecting *moko* as a cultural symbol must be embodied in this event. Based on observation, people coming from different language backgrounds can unite in dance to the accompaniment of *moko* and gongs. In addition, harvest thanksgiving activities also involve *gongs* and *moko*. The social structure has an idea attribute that is a behavior indicator. In other words, symbol is a set of verbal rules in community. Symbolic religiosity, manifested in objects that are considered cult. Socio-religious harmony must come from the desire to live together which is regulated in a value order. The symbolic interaction of the Alor people is seen by placing an order of values to be obeyed together.

The function of musicality also describes cosmology. The definition of cosmology does not mean physical astrology, but rather how society views nature. Through this world view society lives in harmony. Harmonization can be defined as an effort to achieve happiness by living in harmony with nature. The expression of musicality can be interpreted as a form of natural rhythm.

“The whole rhythm is in *moko*, from beating with a slow, medium to fast rhythm. Sometimes a slow rhythm is used in the *lego-lego* dance to remind the war that has occurred in the past. Sometimes *moko* is also used for togetherness. *Moko* is placed on a stone altar and all the people dance *lego-lego*. Everyone does not think that the person next to him is of a different language or from another village, but all of them are in one feeling and thought. That’s a power that’s hard to explain but exists in Alor (Interview: Daniel S. Laoepada, Mataru Districts, July 15, 2020).”

### ***Moko* as Determinant of Social Status**

The function of *moko* as a determinant of social status is related to ownership of *moko*. Based on the results of the interview, the *moko* as

a musical instrument also functions as a determinant of social status. Each clan having a large number of *moko* and living in a traditional house, is considered to have high social status. In this case, social status is not interpreted as caste, but rather the ownership of heirlooms that govern the ownership of the family dowry in the clan.

Further discussion led to the symbolization of *moko* culture. In fact, based on historical commentary *moko* did not originate from Alor, but it was later converted as a cultural symbol. An informant stated that the Alor community consisted of a number of groups, they inhabit the islands of Alor and Pantar. Sociological conditions like this need symbols of unity so that conflicts do not occur. For example, the slogan of *taramiti, tominuku* “different, but one heart”, *lego-lego* cultural dance, and traditional house which also has different names but leads to one symbol, respect for life together. *Moko* is considered to have sacred values which are respected, and the value of cultural education that the Alor community is one.

*Moko* is often referred to by the term *Rai foking Moko*. It has a name and a value. The size and origin affect the *moko* value. Table 2 shows the name of the *moko* and the comparison.

**Table 2.** List of *Moko* Names, Based on Research Data

No	<i>Moko</i> Names	Comparison
1	<i>Malaitana</i>	2 <i>kolmalai</i>
2	<i>Kolmalai</i>	2 jawa
3	<i>Jawa</i>	2 makasar
4	<i>Makasar</i>	2 tumirang
5	<i>Tumirang</i>	2 vegawa
6	<i>Vegawa</i>	2 Eya kesing
7	<i>Eye kasing</i>	1 namoling+1 tena
8	<i>Makau</i>	1 namoling+ 1 foking
9	<i>Namoling/ malaisirani</i>	2 manemat

10	<i>Gawei mayesing suwa</i>	2 manemat + satu kabal
11	<i>Ulmalai siva</i>	Dua manemat
12	<i>Nang Sei</i>	1 manemat+1 foking
13	<i>Yavegawa</i>	1 manemat+1 tena
14	<i>Manemat/maksar siva</i>	2 tena
15	<i>Foking Bata</i>	1 tena + 1 kabal
16	<i>Tena</i>	2 kabal
17	<i>Kabal</i>	2 kiding
18	<i>Kidding</i>	2 fasal
19	<i>Fasal</i>	Fasal

Based on the table 2, it is known that the people of Alor have made names and values for *moko*. This has been going on for a long time until now. The system regulates *moko* ownership from one clan to another. Furthermore, it forms a standard social structure within one clan. The more *moko* a clan has the higher the social position will be. Any activity requiring *moko* as a symbol and customary giving involves an elder and has rights over a number of *moko*.

This standardized social structure will result in a) the position of the *moko* as a unifying symbol which must be respected by every clan in Alor; b) respect for the owner of the *moko* as the elder in society. The results of the interview stated that “the people of Alor regard *moko* as a high sacred ancestral heritage. This can also be interpreted as respect for parents and ancestors who have fought for peace and harmony for the people of Alor. It is not easy to unite Alor, because the Alor consist of various languages and cultures. For Alor people, *moko*, traditional house, and lego-lego are unifying symbols that must be upheld as long as these communities still exist.

*Moko*'s function as a determinant of social status is not defined as the status of ordinates and subordinates, or patrons and clients, but rather as a regulator of values in society. This arrangement can also be interpreted as a way of communicating

in a homogeneous group. A customary elder who owns a *moko* can convey messages within the scope of his family (clan) or to people in other villages. The message conveyed is interpreted as a communal voice or an opinion to solve problems.

Communication systems like this are effective in solving various problems. Material symbolization (*moko*) is an intermediary to state the presence of groups and social messages that are mutually agreed upon in customary law. Social messages are immaterial and co-exist with social values. This cannot be separated from the historical factors that formed the community of Alor.

### ***Moko* as a Dowry of Marriage**

*Moko* is a dowry of marriage symbol. Culturally, this is defined as the status of women who are brought into another clan. The message conveyed is that the woman cannot return to her original clan if she has bought it in full. A woman who has been confiscated cannot return to her family because she is already part of her husband's clan. Based on the interview, if the husband of the woman dies, the woman can return to her original clan. Based on customary rules, the woman can also remarry with the older brother or younger brother of the deceased husband. Based on the results of interview the informant gave the term 'arisan *moko*'. 'Arisan *moko*' event is held by the male clan who will give the *moko* to the woman. The implementation of the wedding ceremony must be carried out properly. The problem of missing a *moko* must be resolved within that clan. The informant said “arisan *moko*” is like a mutual cooperation to build a village (surname) so that problems, distress and even calamity are avoided.

Inability to pay dowry is considered as a disaster in the clan. With this perception, the people of Alor build a strong clan community. This will automatically form an individual attitude which is inseparable from social circle. In this

way, *moko* can be said as a socio-religious symbol which is still preserved until now.

At the wedding ceremony a customary leader has prominent role. The traditional leader is the eldest son in the tribe or village who will invite every tribe in the village and even outside to join '*mol bel batat*', a traditional party to pay dowry to the women. This event was attended by males and females. Some males will sit and hear traditional talks and some others will provide betel nut and accessories for weddings. Meanwhile, the young females will help mothers cook and peel the betel nuts and serve the speaking men.

The implementation of the marriage does not only involve one village. In the Alor community, the term *afeng*, which means 'helps each other', is well known. Marriage for the people of Alor is part of a symbol of 'the integrity of the community circle' which must be maintained. This symbolization is a very interesting focus in research on society, culture, and humanization. Not only in *moko* dowry, but also several symbols such as *lego-lego* dances, traditional houses, and the *tominuku taramiti* slogan become a symbolic part which are inseparable from the people of Alor.

*Moko*'s function as a dowry of marriage is not only related to marriage activities. The social aspect as described is closely related to the individual. This study provides a description of social symbols as determinants of individual attitudes. Individual behavior is influenced by the values in the socio-cultural symbol. In other words, *moko* is influential in shaping individual attitudes and behavior. When a marriage is going to be carried out, every individual feel they are responsible for the success of the activities. The success of an activity is not determined personally, but how the community group completes it.

*Moko*'s function as a dowry of marriage is not only seen as a gift and fulfillment of the

requirements of a man's family, but it also has a deeper value. In weddings with *moko* as dowry, there is community obedience to the rules that have been agreed upon. The value of social obedience is higher than the dowry of marriage. The understanding of the determination of *moko* as a dowry of marriage explains the context of socio-religious harmony in the Alor community. Together, fulfilling the requested number of *moko* illustrates harmony and a sense of empathy. Thus, social harmony can be maintained and irreplaceable values.

### Follow-up Discussion

This section is further discussion with the regard of the research results. Three aspects of harmonization originate from oneself, namely harmonization with behavior, people, and nature. These three aspects are an endeavor of individuals not from social groups (Hadot, Kotva, and Sellars 2020). The opinion of Hadot (2020) is different from the concept of socio-religious harmony, which is a form of social psychology and the individual is not the subject but the object of this harmonization (Euler 2019). This study also found that socio-religious harmony exists in the social structure, not in the realm of individuals. Social groups as subjects form a strong social perception of nature, community, self-value.

Epicurus' theoretical framework on socio-religious harmony in Alor community can be explained in the table 3.

**Tabel 3.** *Moko* as a Socio-Religious Symbol in the Alor Community (Based on the Three Levels of Epikurus Harmony)

Religion as Cultural System in <i>Moko</i>	
Harmony with nature	Symbolization of the function of the <i>moko</i> as a rhythmic leader of the <i>gong</i> musical instrument. Certain <i>moko</i> which are considered as sacred are used in <i>lego-lego</i> rituals and dances as a sign of peace, tribal authority, and togetherness

Harmony with people	Ownership of <i>moko</i> in the 15 <sup>th</sup> century was the social status of the tribe. The chief of the tribe is the person who has the most <i>moko</i> . This <i>moko</i> is kept as a dowry of marriage and a ritual symbol. In this way, social harmony in the pluralistic community of Alor is maintained.
Harmony with behavior	Depends on the social order. <i>Moko</i> is considered more as belonging to the community, so that individuals involve themselves in traditional activities, ceremonies and events. The attitude of obeying and working together as a community is the main forming element of the behavior.

Furthermore, the term socio-religious harmony described by Kawangung (2019), namely the condition of the community either in the form of defense efforts or naturally maintaining harmony in social values and religious life, can be enriched in meaning based on research results. The phenomenon of the Alor community in this study places culture as an aspect that is upheld while religion is an inseparable part. Therefore, the term socio-religious can be interpreted as a social phenomenon that is inseparable from religious life. In this study, the religion of the Alor community varies according to the explanation in table 1. However, the influence of social values strongly affects religious boundaries. Some of the most relevant studies also explain the same thing, the people of Alor maintain social harmony by not leaving the life of their respective religious cults (Iswanto and Hutapea 2020; Juliawati 2013) library research and interviews. This is a qualitative research. Data were analyzed with depth descriptive analysis and subsequently accommodated in the form of narrative. From the analysis, it is known that until this day, *moko* is still used as *belis* in which the bride groom's family has to give *moko*(s).

The concept of social harmony is enriched by the findings of this study. Social messages as discussed in the section on the function of *moko* as a determinant of social status, explain that the symbolization of material (*moko*) becomes social messages. This concept must of course be tested in a comprehensive and in-depth manner

in research in several communities. Social harmonization occurs at the level of ideas that are adhered to in customary law. This really depends on the values held in society. Social activities involving the heterogeneous community will also form togetherness and understanding.

## CONCLUSION

The symbolization of *moko* explains the socio-religious harmonization of the Alor people. This is explained in *Moko* as a musical instrument, determinant of social status, and dowry of marriage. The three functions are symbols that are rich in meaning and value.

This study provides differences in the concept of the three levels of happiness by Epicurus. In the social system of the Alor community, harmony is determined at the social level and is not cultivated by individuals. At this level, *moko* as a symbol of material carries a social message to families or communities in other villages. This concept also wants to state that customary law that contains social values can synergize with religious values held by the community.

The people of Alor place *moko* as a symbol. This idea becomes a reference in people's lives. Customary laws exist at the oral level and are respected from one generation to generation. The culture of speech plays a role in this section. The phenomenon that occurs is that the heterogeneous Alor people obey the same oral customary law. At least there is uniformity in placing *moko* as a symbol of regulating socio-religious life. This strong desire can be seen as being manifested in cultural music by placing *moko* as the leader of the eight *gongs* used. Of course, the *moko* here is an heirloom *moko* whose existence is placed in a traditional house. Another phenomenon, the existence of a large number of *moko* in one traditional parent is considered good because it can

regulate social life such as maintaining relations between clans and as a regulator of dowry.

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