



## The Role of Bissu in the *Maggiri* Ceremony for the Community in Segeri District (A Historical-Sociological Study)

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### ABSTRACT

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This study examines the role of Bissu in the Maggiri ceremony in the Bugis community in Segeri District. There were three themes of discussion, namely: First, the background of the emergence of the Bissu community in Segeri District, second, the urgency of the maggiri ceremony for the Segeri community, third, the values contained in the maggiri ritual ceremony. This research is a literature study by taking a historical and sociological approach to uncover the role of the Bissu sentar in the maggiri event in Segeri. The study examines the ritual function, communication structure, and social dynamics surrounding Maggiri practice. The findings show that Bissu acts as a mediator between humans and the ancestral world, the leader of purification rites, a symbolic determinant of the time of execution, and the custodian of spiritual values and the sustainability of tradition. This role is manifested through a series of sacred acts such as mantras, Maggiri dances, and the purification procession of heirlooms (sere), which strengthen social cohesion and Bugis cultural identity. However, the study also found a decline in the number of Bissu and a change in function due to the process of modernization, Islamization, and economic pressure—which had an impact on the reduction of sacred authority and the transformation of ritual practices towards cultural adaptation and tourism. The research emphasizes the importance of preservation efforts that are sensitive to local values, including documentation support, cultural education, and participatory policies involving the Bissu community to keep Maggiri traditions meaningful for future generations.

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## INTRODUCTION

Bissu here plays a role as a community that maintains their cultural values until now. The Bugis tribe as an ethnic group in Indonesia has many unique characteristics that other tribes do not have. For example, a unique tradition of the Bugis tribe is a tradition that originated in the time of the ancestors and is still continued to this day, namely the Maggiri tradition which is the Bissu culture and its gender specification does not include male or female. Bissu bugis are a group of people who have connections to the supernatural world or other worlds. Bissu's role in Segeri society is very important and has a higher position.

The Bugis believed that Bissu had supernatural powers and were considered by the community as a person who made intermediaries to the supernatural. The duties and roles of Bissu in every traditional ceremony agenda are as a priest or person who brings the traditional ceremonies of the Segeri community (Cici Aulia, Heriyati Yatim., 2019). Bissu is considered a holy person, derived from the word "bessi" which means holy. The Bissu consider themselves to be more holy and better in dignity than calabai in general. Their style, appearance, and special features signify their special position in society. Bissu are revered for their spiritual power and the important role they play in every traditional ceremony or ceremony. Bissu in Segeri District, Pangkep Regency is called Bissu Eka Supposedly Bissu was once a protector and advisor to the Bissu kingdom, also used to perform

various traditional ceremonies and the people believed in determining good days. To become a Bissu also requires a bit of a process. Bissu who have existed have an inspiration or dream about the birth of a Bissu.

Next, the Bissu communicate with their ancestors, after which the Bissu must go through the process of forming their identity until they become a true Bissu. Bissu is considered to be a priest of the ancient Bugis religion before converting to Islam, a form of interest and uniqueness to see the relationship between bissu in performing Maggiri religious ceremonies. The Maggiri ritual is known as a dance that shows the endurance of the Bissu with the help of badi'. Maggiri dance is a movement that is full of aesthetic value and full of spiritual content in it. The local people view the Maggiri dance as a dance that glorifies the gods. Where Bissu sings prayers and expressions of gratitude to the gods in his dance. Bissu is a priest of the ancient Bugis religion before Islam came who dressed like a woman in everyday life.

This kind of reality makes the bissu considered not to accept the creator's provisions because they are originally male but look as if they resemble a woman's appearance. And Bissu is also believed to be not in harmony with Islam so this community was destroyed in the 1950s by the Islamic group DI/TII Kahar Muzakkar (Aulia, 2018). Focus on the ethnography of Bissu communication from the Maggiri ritual carried out in Segeri District, Pangkep Regency. Based on initial observations, there are some people who consider the Maggiri Dance to be a bad thing, and get a bad view from the community. Some people consider that the Maggiri dance is a dance that has a polytheistic meaning. Of course, there are people who agree with their culture and there are those who don't, regardless of who judges it.

The purpose of this article is to take a closer look at how culture shapes social values and norms in Segeri Pangkep Regency. The noble values of a national culture can be used as a means to build the character of individuals and the common people. However, until now, the existence and diversity of noble cultural values owned by the Indonesian people is still not optimal in reviving traditional arts as an effort to develop the character of citizens (Apta Hafiz Sampurno et al., 2022).

## RESEARCH METHODS

This type of research is a literature review. The data collection method used is to study books or research results in libraries that are related to the topic being studied. This research aims to objectively and truly describe the subject matter of the research in accordance with the facts found. This research is related to the role of Bissu in the maggiri ceremony which takes place every year in Segeri District, Pangkep Regency.

## DISCUSSION

### History of Bissu's Emergence in Segeri

Bissu comes from the word "Bhiksu" which means a Buddhist priest or leader. In pre-Islamic beliefs, Bissu was a priest who acted as an intermediary between humans and gods. They hold a high social status and are respected for their role in preserving the traditions and culture of the Bugis community. In principle, Bissu is actually a combination of five different groups, namely: Man (Concern), woman (Makunrai), a woman who looks like a man (Calalai), a man who looks like a woman (Calabai), Bissu (the head of the Bugis Society Association).

The existence of cultural values in traditions, both normative aspects and ritual practices, can be seen in the Bissu people in areas such as Luwu, Segeri, Bone, Wajo, and Soppeng who still maintain their culture and heritage to this day. The Bissu are a community of Bugis people who have a gender identity that is considered a mixture of men and women in Bugis culture, and they are considered saints who are the link between humans and their creators.

Culture is the essence of a life because it influences every aspect of human life. According to Koentjaraningrat, cultural values are abstract concepts related to something that is considered important and valuable in life. Cultural values are disseminated by the community through the process of socialization, both verbally and in writing. Each group of people can have and form a culture as a result of agreement in the social processes that prevail in a particular place.

The existence of a nation depends on the existence of its national culture. Therefore, learning local cultural values means supporting the survival of the nation. The culmination of national culture is the accumulation and adaptation of various noble values of local culture that are ultimately recognized as forming the national culture. However, cultural values have limitations. Not all cultural values are universal. There are certain cultural values that are considered good by one group, but not necessarily good by another.

### The Urgency of the Maggiri Ceremony for the Segeri Community

Rituals are actions carried out by all members of society. In other words, ritual is a way to communicate because ritual involves symbolic action in a social situation. Ritual is a way of conveying meaning that cannot be expressed in words. The awareness that there is a way of communicating in the ritual explains the circumstances that occurred. In the definition of ritual, communication is associated with words such as sharing, participating, uniting, community, and shared belief. Ritual ceremonies in this context should be seen as a means of communication that explains a condition by translating the meaning of ritual symbols.

In the Maggiri Bissu ritual there are several symbols that contain important meanings about the person who performs them. These symbols are seen in the form of objects, sequences of activities, and words, in which beliefs, religions, and social systems are seen to be closely related.

In the Maggiri Bissu ceremony, it can be seen that this ceremony plays an important role in maintaining mutual trust and care in the people of the Segeri Region. The ritual in this offering phenomenon has an aspect of experiential beauty and cultural meaning. In fact, rituals have been studied from various scientific perspectives, and have even developed into a separate field of research, namely research on rituals. Rituals have been studied from the perspective of anthropology, research on oral traditions and folklore, comparative religions, and sociology. For example, studying rituals can result in different descriptions, analyses, and interpretations.

Based on this, this study tries to interpret the Maggiri Bissu ritual as a cultural phenomenon that can be explained through descriptive analysis. Rituals are cultural practices that are performed for religious purposes, such as devotion, prayer, or traditional ceremonies. Social rituals are rituals performed for social purposes, such as parties, festivals, or weddings. Cultural rituals are rituals that are performed for cultural purposes, such as traditional ceremonies, celebrations, or art performances. Therefore, ritual culture refers to a set of practices or symbolic actions that people perform as part of their belief systems, traditions, and values. Rituals are often associated with important moments in human life, such as religious events, changes in seasons, or individual life stages.

### **Spiritual Values in the Maggiri Ceremony in Segeri**

Maggiri dance is a ritual performed in traditional events, such as birthdays, as a form of respect for a certain kingdom or culture. In the Bretton Woods system, currencies such as the British pound (GBP), Indonesian rupiah (IDR), and other European currencies are pegged to gold. Maggiri dances can be performed individually or in groups by Bissu. This ritual states that iron and humans are actually one and the same. In this ritual, iron (kris) and humans are considered to be able to unite, so that if iron is used by humans, it will not hurt its use.

The Maggiri ritual is considered a dance that shows the steadfastness and toughness of Bissu. This dance is full of aesthetic value and spiritual meaning. The community considers this dance to be a form of respect for the gods. In the dance, Bissu sings prayers and expresses gratitude to God. The Maggiri ceremony is carried out by piercing Bissu's body using heirloom kris from the hands, abdomen, chest, to neck. While dancing, Bissu moves to wave while accompanied by traditional music from the drum. Sometimes Bissu also stomped his feet. No one was injured in this ceremony because Bissu had performed a spell ceremony. Maggiri rituals are usually performed in traditional celebrations and events. Only Bissu or recipients of knowledge from Bissu can perform this ritual.

Before starting the dance, Bissu first changed their clothes to golden yellow clothes that were usually complemented by accessories that women often wore. They also prepared various equipment such as containers filled with water, leaves, drums, and daggers. The movements in the Maggiri dance begin with Bissu dressing up and performing the initial ritual, which is to recite prayers (mantras). After that, Bissu is ready to start the dance, which begins with the sound of drums being beaten by the drummer as a sign of the beginning. Bissu brought a dance instrument (alus) into the performance area while stepping on the stretched white cloth.

Abbissungeng (related to Bissu) has always been associated with the sound of the drum. In celebration, the sound of the drum is beaten with various notes, some slow and some fast, adjusted to the needs of the ritual.

### **Spiritual Value of Believer's Spirituality**

The Maggiri Bissu dance has a deep spiritual meaning, as part of a religious ritual related to animist beliefs and dynamism. This dance is considered a means of communication with the spiritual and religious world, and is a symbol of purification and respect for the Gods in the religious beliefs and practices of the Bugis people, especially in Pangkep Regency. The Maggiri ritual is not only carried out as a certain way, but as a form of respect for the Gods who have given blessings to the south and abundant harvests, according to bissu Puang Matoa Nani. When the Gods are well entertained, the blessings given will also be the best, so that the requests made will be granted by the Gods (Puang Matoa Bissu Nani, 2024).

Based on this information, the Theory of Symbolic Interaction, pioneered by George Herbert Mead and developed by Herbert Blumer, emphasizes on the meanings produced through social interaction and how individuals give meaning to their world through symbols (Nurdin, Ali, 2020). Such as values and norms produced through rituals, namely: a. Values and Norms, values such as courage, purity, and respect are inherited through the norms enforced in the Maggiri rituals. Each member of the community learns about these values through participation in rituals and interactions with Bissu.

These meanings and values are created and nurtured through symbolic interaction. For example, acts of respect for Bissu during rituals reinforce social norms about the importance of Bissu's role and the value of spirituality in the community. The Maggiri Bissu dance tradition, both complex and simple, has several cultural values that are interrelated and form a system.

This system is an ideal concept guide in a culture that provides a strong encouragement to the direction of life of community members (Yunus Winoto, 2021). Likewise, it is reflected in the Maggiri Bissu dance in Segi,

Pangkep Regency. This dance symbolizes the continuity of the traditions and cultural heritage of the Bugis people. As part of cultural identity, Maggiri Bissu dance helps to maintain and introduce traditional values to the younger generation and the outside community.

The Maggiri Bissu dance is how we appreciate the Gods who have given blessings for the harvest done earlier. Maggiri is carried out so that the people remember that the success of the harvest from the previous year is inseparable from the role of the Gods in protecting their rice crops from evil or other things that can affect the amount of harvest they get.

### **The Spiritual Value of the Maggiri Ceremony for the Farming Community in Segeri**

The Bugis tribe as one of the ethnicities in Indonesia has unique characteristics that other tribes do not have. One of the unique traditions of the Bugis tribe is a tradition that originated from the era of ignorance that is still maintained today, namely the Maggiri tradition. This tradition involves Bissu culture, and the specification does not include men or women. Bissu are a group of people who have a connection to the mystical world. The role of Bissu in the Bugis society is very important and has a high position. The Bugis believed that Bissu had supernatural powers and were considered supernatural beings.

The Bugis people at the beginning of history had a belief system that worshipped the supreme god, namely Ke Palanroe. This belief system is called actorolang, which means "following the path of the ancestors". Actorolang encompasses the values, directions, rules and norms inherited in human life. Until now, there are still Bugis people who maintain this belief. In attoriolong, Bissu acts as an intermediary between heaven and earth, because Bissu controls Basa Torilangi or the language of heaven that only Bissu and God understand. Therefore, further research on the ethnography of Bissu communication in Maggiri rituals is needed to preserve and preserve the dance offerings. Written sources as well as special research are needed to understand more deeply the ethnography of Bissu communication in the celebration of Maggiri culture.

In Maggiri ritual culture, Bissu communication ethnography tends to feature symbols created together by communities with a common understanding of the symbol. Communication in this ritual occurs naturally, based on human mindsets and behaviors that have their own messages and meanings. In conveying their message to their community, Bissu di Segeri not only communicate verbally, but also use non-verbal means such as the typical language in Maggiri dance ceremonies. This dance performance involves certain songs accompanied by the sound of drums. This ritual is actually a medium to convey information and explanations to the audience. Since culture is the soul of a society or organization, this phrase reflects an important understanding of the role of culture in shaping and guiding a group or entity, so culture must be preserved intact.

Farmers will not plant rice before the bissu ritual is held because the community believes that planting rice without following the ritual can bring disaster or disaster. There are also those who are just waiting to appreciate the cultural heritage that has existed in the Segeri community for a long time. If the bissu ritual has not been carried out, farmers will not plant rice because they are afraid that if they do not wait for the event of rejecting the mappalili, there will be crop failure or crop yields will decrease.

Some people consider this ritual to be a form of vain deeds because they worship Arajang, which is a rice field troop. In fact, we do not worship these idols, but there are only those who consider Arajang to have more value than anything else. Arajang is considered the word male'bbi, because it is considered a link so that humans can communicate with the gods in the sky (Puang Matoa Bissu Nani, 2024).

The purification value for the peasant also involves an understanding of how Bissu creates meaning through social interaction and symbolic action in Maggiri rituals. The language of the torilangi, ritual movements, hierarchical structure, and ritual execution are all elements of symbolic interaction that reinforce the role of Bissu as a liaison between humans and the gods. The meaning resulting from this interaction not only strengthened Bissu's spiritual status, but also strengthened the values and norms in Bugis culture in Segeri District, Pangkep Regency.

## **CONCLUSION**

The history of the emergence of the Maggiri tradition in Segeri dates back to the time of the ancestors and is still continued to this day, namely the Maggiri tradition which is the Bissu culture and its gender specification does not include men or women. Bissu bugis are a group of people who have connections to the supernatural world or other worlds.

The Bugis people in Segeri believe that the Maggiri ceremony by Bissu has spiritual values, namely Bissu has supernatural powers and is considered by the community as a person who makes an intermediary to the supernatural realm. The duties and roles of Bissu in every traditional ceremony agenda are as a pastor or person who carries the traditional ceremonies of the Segeri community.

The maggiri ceremony by Bissu received a positive response for farmers in Segeri. Farmers will not plant rice before the bissu ritual is held because the community believes that planting rice without following the ritual can bring disaster or disaster. There are also those who are just waiting to appreciate the cultural heritage that has existed in the Segeri community for a long time. If the bissu ritual has not been carried out, farmers will

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