



Analysis of the Conceptual Basis Differences in Gramsci's Perspective: A Case Study of the Kokoda and Ayamaru Tribes

Andi Ahriani

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sorong, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author, Email: andiahriani84@gmail.com

Abstract

The Kokoda and Ayamaru tribes in Sorong City are both Indigenous Papuans (OAP), yet they possess very different and unique characteristics, values, and daily life patterns. This research aims to analyze the differences in the conceptual basis between the Ayamaru and Kokoda tribes using Gramsci's perspective. The study employs a case study approach through participatory observation and in-depth interviews. The collected data were classified and then analyzed using Gramsci's perspective. The informants included community leaders, traditional leaders, and members of the community with a deep understanding of the culture and identity of the Kokoda and Ayamaru tribes. The research findings reveal several conceptual basis differences between the Kokoda tribe, as a dominant tribe, and the Ayamaru tribe, as a dominant tribe. These differences include: Values of Solidarity, Educational Values, Religious Differences, Cultural and Geographic Differences, and Label/Stereotype Differences

Keywords: *Ayamaru Tribe, Conceptual Basis Differences, Gramsci Perspective, Kokoda Tribe.*

INTRODUCTION

Southwest Papua is a region rich in linguistic, ethnic, and cultural diversity. Papua is home to over 250 different ethnic groups (Salehuddin et al., 2023). Among the hundreds of tribes inhabiting this region, particularly in Sorong City, the Kokoda and Ayamaru tribes are highly interesting to study. Despite both being Indigenous Papuans (OAP), they have very different and unique characteristics, values, and daily life patterns. The Kokoda tribe, mostly inhabiting coastal areas, has a culture closely tied to marine life, benefitting from a variety of marine flora and fauna, as well as food sources typical of coastal plants such as sago trees. In contrast, the Ayamaru tribe, residing in mountainous areas, tends to have an agrarian culture focused on gardening and hunting activities (Romdiati et al., 2019).

Analyzing the differences between these two tribes can provide deeper insights into social and cultural dynamics. Through Antonio Gramsci's perspective, we can understand how cultural hegemony and power dominance play roles in shaping the identities and life practices of these tribes (Flynn, S.2019; Racine Louise, 2020; Salem Sara, 2020). This study aims to examine how Gramsci's conceptual basis can be applied to analyze the differences in social, religious, and cultural structures between the Kokoda and Ayamaru tribes in facing the challenges of

modernization and globalization, as well as the advancements in life in Sorong City.

METHODS

The study employs a case study approach to explore the conceptual basis differences in Gramsci's perspective between the Kokoda and Ayamaru tribes in Southwest Papua. The cases were selected purposively, considering the uniqueness and representativeness of the two tribes. Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Participatory observation involved direct interaction with the Kokoda and Ayamaru communities, observing their daily activities and cultural events within their communities. In-depth interviews were conducted using semi-structured interview guides designed to uncover informants' understanding of social realities, education, religion, traditions, and labeling. The informants included community leaders, traditional leaders, and community members with a deep understanding of the culture and identity of the Kokoda and Ayamaru tribes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

People do not fully accept their fate; instead, they are hegemonized due to their low conceptual basis (Gramsci, 1987). Furthermore, Gramsci states that society has low education and institutional levels to understand the realities of life. This research has filled



that gap in Gramsci's theory. The findings reveal several conceptual basis differences between the Kokoda tribe, as a dominant tribe, and the Ayamaru tribe, as a dominant tribe. These include differences in values of solidarity, education, religion, culture, geographic regions, and labeling/stereotypes as detailed below.

Solidarity Values

The tribal bonds of the Kokoda tribe are called upon in times of conflict. For the sake of family or fellow tribesmen, the Kokoda are willing to sacrifice, even to the point of death, to help each other. When facing issues with other communities, they are quick to respond, even if it puts their lives at risk. Unfortunately, the solidarity they build is not directed towards advancing education or economic progress, causing them to experience backwardness collectively. The only thing that is formed is the interaction among themselves, with no learning process involving other community groups. This condition, as stated by Honig, Lauren, et al. (2021), is that repeated interactions within community institutions often reinforce marginalization and internalize collective perceptions of marginalization through shared narratives. The Kokoda are known for their solidarity, but only in conflict situations. Hence, the term "my social life kills me" is associated with the Kokoda, willing to sacrifice even their lives. Due to these conditions, the Kokoda tribe is still polarized as a primitive society.

In contrast, the Ayamaru tribe builds solidarity in positive ways, such as helping each other for educational advancement, marriage, politics, and other social interests. The Ayamaru have long had a mindset of being a progressive society, one that wants to change. They possess a strong work ethic, an indomitable spirit, a fighting spirit, a sense of shame if uneducated, and maintain their collectiveness. When one of them continues their education, the entire family helps collect money to support those in need. The Ayamaru philosophy of life is "Who else if not us, I am already". The motto "*Awiyau jioke mefi*" underpins the Ayamaru tribe's principles. Therefore, it is not surprising that many Ayamaru people hold strategic positions in the City and Regency of Sorong, both as Regents and Mayors.

The Kokoda tribe, on the other hand, seems mesmerized by the hegemony created by the dominant group. According to Gramsci, this agreement has

historical roots in the prestige and self-confidence possessed by the dominant group due to its position and function in the world of production (Patria & Arief, 2016). This is reflected in the value differences built by the Ayamaru tribe as a dominant tribe. These differences in life values create a significant mental divide between the two tribes. The Kokoda become less confident, excluded from public services, and confined within their community, while the Ayamaru thrive and dominate all spheres of production.

Educational Values

The research findings show a disparity in knowledge and education between the Kokoda and Ayamaru tribes. The level of knowledge, education, and awareness of the importance of schooling among Kokoda children is very low. Historically, their ancestors valued education highly, but this view has changed, and the awareness of the importance of schooling has weakened. Education is the most crucial step toward change. The special autonomy intended to build education for all Papuans has, in reality, been controlled by elite groups (Malak, 2014). The control of resources by dominant groups adversely affects the underdeveloped tribes. The Ayamaru tribe is known for its educational achievements because education is a symbol of pride. They help each other in education, ensuring that everyone goes to school. They pursue education in Java and even abroad.

The abundance of special autonomy funds in Papua does not correlate with the living conditions of the Kokoda tribe. Poverty and low education levels remain major problems. The number of school-aged Kokoda children attending school is very low. Researchers often find them working as parking attendants, sniffing glue, and frequently involved in conflicts from morning to night. According to Paulo Freire (Suryawan, 2017), the poor will remain marginalized because they are victims of oppression. Other research also indicates that people can become poor due to the marginalization of economic status (Benner & Wang, 2014); physical marginalization (Starus & Pollack, 2020); and social and cultural exclusion (Gilmour, S, et al., 2003). Gramsci identified education and institutions as the root causes of the backwardness experienced by dominated groups (Patria & Arif, 2016). Dominant groups continue to nurture a primordial hierarchy, thinking only of themselves and their tribal surroundings.



On the other hand, the education system introduced since the missionary era in Papua generally, and Kokoda specifically, is vastly different from the local culture. Freire mentions that schools have been a means of domestication, driving students toward silent obedience, and forcing them to understand their reality and world as the oppressed. Education that does not accommodate the local sociocultural context is unjust, contradicts the holistic development of children, and hinders national development (Matengu, Marika et al. 2018). Education should stimulate people's awareness to face life's realities (Suryawan, 2017). Thus, Freire's view on education aims to liberate and direct individuals to think as masters of their thoughts. However, this has not occurred in the Kokoda tribe, where weak education further weakens their position as a dominant tribe. Gramsci noted that the existing education system never provides the possibility to develop the ability to think critically and systematically (Gramsci, 1987).

Many people need to be convinced that learning is a form of labor, a tiring job with specific results that involve muscles and nerves like intellectuals. Learning is an adaptation process, a habit acquired through effort, sacrifice, and possibly suffering (Gramsci, 1987). This understanding, as conveyed by Gramsci, needs to be instilled in the Kokoda community. Education is not easy and thus requires extraordinary effort. Gramsci considered education to be a complex issue. He further pointed out the difference between the education of urban workers' children and that of farmers' children, where urban workers' children feel the hardship of going to work compared to farmers' children who are shaped by nature. This is similar to the Kokoda tribe, who are pampered by nature and find it difficult to work hard in education.

The Ayamaru tribe, on the other hand, has been shaped by nature, which requires them to persevere continuously to improve their circumstances. This aligns with Gramsci's view that nothing is achieved without sacrifice, including creating a new intellectual stratum (Gramsci, 1987). In terms of education, the ancestors of the Ayamaru tribe had a traditional educational system known as *wiyon-wofle*, which includes the following stages:

1. Family Environment: The family plays the primary role in shaping a child's character. The family

consists of the child as the student, with the father and mother serving as teachers.

2. Educational Environment: The educational environment plays a secondary role in shaping the child into a wise and responsible member of society, with faith and awareness of life's impermanence. Children are prepared to become great leaders.
3. Community Environment: The community environment plays a tertiary role in shaping the child. The community serves as the place where all the knowledge acquired is put into practice (Suryawan, 2017).

These stages were practiced by the Ayamaru tribe before the arrival of the Dutch colonialists, who introduced the modern education system.

Religious Differences

The Kokoda and Ayamaru tribes adhere to different religions. The majority of the Kokoda tribe are Muslim, while most of the Ayamaru tribe are Christian. Over time, many members of the Kokoda tribe converted to Christianity due to missionary influence. Education and religion are inseparable in the Kokoda tribe, as education was initially a gateway for missionaries to spread Christianity. This missionary process led to a decline in religious quality among the Kokoda tribe due to a lack of Islamic educators. Rubawati (2019) refers to this phenomenon as "Islam Identity. In contrast, the Ayamaru tribe is known for being highly religious, with their religious fervor reflected in a strong work ethic, aligning with the Protestant Ethic theory. This theory posits that the Protestant ethical system contributes to a culture of hard work and frugality (Adam, R. 2021).

The research indicates periods of religious education gaps in several Papuan tribes, including the Kokoda tribe. These gaps occurred after the Tidore Kingdom's rule ended in Papua and was replaced by Dutch colonialism. During this transition, there was no one to teach prayer, Quran recitation, or deepen religious knowledge, leading to a decline in Islamic development among the Kokoda tribe. In contrast, Christianity grew rapidly due to missionary efforts. The Ayamaru tribe's strong religious spirit permeates their entire lives. They consider their land to be blessed, a belief that drives them to work hard and to protect, support, and uplift their fellow tribesmen.



Religious diversity is not a source of conflict but a driver of progress in Papua (Asyhar-Afwan, 2015). The extensive influence of missionaries in Papua, reaching the mountains and remote areas, resulted in almost the entire population of Papua being Christian. Meanwhile, the influence of Islam remained confined to urban areas and coastal regions, making Islam the majority religion among the Kokoda tribe (Mashad, 2020). However, some Kokoda people are Christian, and there are even instances of households with members of different religions, referred to as family religion. This leads to the common perception that Papuans are predominantly Christian. Religious issues have significantly impacted the social, economic, and cultural life of Papuan society from the past to the present (Ashraf-Afwan, 2015). In terms of religion, even though they are different, they still respect each other. Religion is a potential threat to any political or social order because it claims a higher authority than that which exists in this world (Aziz, Selina, 2020).

Cultural and Geographical Differences

The differing living areas of the Kokoda and Ayamaru tribes result in several cultural differences. Firstly, the differences are evident in their daily livelihoods. The Kokoda tribe, residing in coastal areas, has a culture centered around fishing, benefitting from the rich marine fauna and an abundance of sago trees. Secondly, the distinct geographical locations expose them to varying influences. The Kokoda tribe, living by the coast, interacted earlier with outsiders and received considerable influence from Sultan Tidore. Sultan Tidore implemented a royal system, appointing tribal chiefs, clan leaders, or village heads as kings, and some individuals as war commanders, although with very limited authority (Sinaga, 2013). This early formation relegated the Kokoda tribe to subordinate classes, making them compliant with orders but struggling with initiative.

Additionally, Sultan Tidore introduced Islam to the Kokoda tribe, resulting in a predominantly Muslim population, with some Christian communities. Historically, Kokoda ancestors practiced ancestral traditions, worshipping deities, but these practices acculturated with Islamic traditions, such as Mandi Safar, Maulid celebrations, Pattar, and arts involving the tifa syawat and terubi instruments (Rubawati, 2019). These traditions are preserved to maintain ancestral heritage and Islamic identity.

Conversely, the Ayamaru tribe, dwelling in the mountainous interior, did not experience a royal system like the Kokoda tribe due to Tidore's influence being confined to urban areas and coastal regions bordering Raja Ampat and Fakfak. The Ayamaru's rugged, karstic terrain forced them to be resilient. Generally, Ayamaru people work as stone sellers and farmers, successfully cultivating crops like cassava, vegetables, and peanuts despite the challenging soil conditions.

The Ayamaru tribe's culture is heavily influenced by Christianity due to missionary efforts (Way et al., 2023). Coastal residents obey their traditional leaders, bearing Tidorean titles like Kapitan Laut, Jójau, Gimalaha, and Sangaji, appointed by the Sultan with restricted authority (Sinaga, 2013). In contrast, highland Papuans recognize family elders as leaders but are not strictly bound by their decisions. This hierarchical difference shapes the mental framework of the Kokoda and Ayamaru tribes. The Kokoda tribe, from the outset, was conditioned into subordinate classes with a system of obedience, while the Ayamaru tribe was less rigid and not tightly bound to their leaders.

Despite their different cultural backgrounds, both tribes, as indigenous Papuans, share common attitudes reflected in one cultural aspect. Indigenous Papuans are known for their high empathy and strong sense of brotherhood. Empathy and brotherhood are crucial for Papuans, who will consider outsiders as a family once they establish close ties and are willing to protect and support them. However, recent policies like *OTSUS* and regional division have seemingly fostered a pragmatic attitude among Papuans, prioritizing self-interest (Suryawan, 2017), leading to further fragmentation.

Ideally, culture should be a fundamental basis for community independence and dignity. However, in Papua, the spirit of cultural diversity expression is underdeveloped. Although some institutions claim to represent traditional or cultural forums, they are not fully functional. In social life, marginalization will occur when there is no cultural maintenance and no interaction between the two (Berry, 2006). Instead, fragmentation among tribes is evident. Economic, governmental, and global penetration, along with regional divisions, only benefit tribes with access to the offered resources. Consequently, Papuans increasingly foster ethnocentrism, undermining other tribes for



personal and group gain. Inter-tribal conflicts, though not always visible, occur frequently.

The emergence of dominant and dominated tribes highlights that cultural diversity in Papua becomes a medium for subjugation rather than a rich social capital. Instead of leveraging their extraordinary cultural and tribal diversity for social capital, the differences suppress the expression of the dominated tribes. Papuan cultural and ethnic heterogeneity could serve as social capital for community independence if the government committed to developing all communities based on shared cultural roots. Fundamentally, Papuans share a high sense of brotherhood. However, instead of the government fostering the expression of cultural diversity from a shared background, tribal arrogance is evident among dominant groups asserting their tribal identities. Therefore, research results have proven that the process of discrimination contributes to poor educational levels, alienation, low self-esteem, and weak motivation (Sharma, J. Anupan & Subramanyam, A. Malavika, 2020; Brady, Bernadine, 2020; Ampumuza, et al., 2020).

Label/Stereotype Differences

Long before the present day, differing views emerged between coastal and highland communities. The Kokoda tribe, residing in coastal areas, were perceived as more adaptive to change due to early interactions with newcomers. In contrast, the Ayamaru tribe, living in the highlands, was seen as slower to adapt because of geographical access limitations. This led to a symbolic divide among Indigenous Papuans (OAP) themselves, with coastal people considered more advanced, having quicker access to information and civilization compared to highland dwellers.

However, this perception has shifted over time. Currently, the Kokoda tribe tends to nostalgically reminisce about their ancestors' past achievements, which doesn't motivate them to maintain or develop their tribe. Consequently, a reversed stigma has formed: the Ayamaru tribe, initially seen as backward, is now recognized for their strong motivation to improve their quality of life, mastering available resources. Ayamaru seems to understand the concept that culture itself is flexible and always changing (Yoo Changmin, 2021). Ultimately, besides that, they also seem to understand that adapting to cultural changes is a necessary means to acquire political, economic, or

social capital (Baah, O. Foster, 2018). Consequently, the stigma that has emerged is that the Kokoda tribe is primitive, mentally fragile, backward, ignorant, lazy, criminal, and a burden to the government (Ramada, R. Muhammad, 2019; Ahriani et al., 2023).

Persistently constructing negative narratives about the Kokoda tribe weakens their mental resilience, creating a form of subtle intimidation. Discourse practices become a social practice producing and consuming power ideologies, further oppressing the weak (Honig, Lauren. At. Al.2021). language contains ideological and political hegemony, suggesting that stereotypes place the subaltern or Kokoda tribe in a state of hegemony and oppression. The Kokoda tribe, with their fragile mentality, is easily provoked by power holders. According to Gramsci (1987), the quest for power and the achievement of a new production world are inseparable. Propaganda by one side is also propaganda by another, revealing a unity among the dominant political and economic classes.

The long-standing stigma between highland and coastal people perpetuates conflicts between the Kokoda and Ayamaru tribes. Government policies have only fueled claims of being "native sons," leading to complex horizontal conflicts among tribes and a lack of commitment to mutual support among Indigenous Papuans. This conflict is exacerbated by various interests within Papua, vying for control over newly created regions. This is also one of the weaknesses among the many advantages of the shift from a centralized system to decentralization, which has been entrusted to less responsible authorities (Killian, B., 2020). The social division is expressed through hegemony or the treatment received by the Kokoda tribe, ultimately sustaining the concept of dominant tribe hegemony over the dominated tribe.

CONCLUSION

The research results can conclude that the reality of the Kokoda Tribe's life as a dominant tribe and the Ayamaru Tribe's life as a dominant tribe is not only influenced by differences in education and low institutional structures, as suggested by Gramsci's theory. There are several conceptual basis differences between the two tribes. These are differences in solidarity values, educational values, religion, culture, geographical area, and labels/stereotypes. These differences in conceptual bases are what result in the



emergence of a Dominant Tribe and a Dominated Tribe. The Dominant Tribe controls all aspects of production, namely human resources and natural resources, in Sorong City, Southwest Papua.

REFERENCES

- Adam, R. (2021). *Antara Protestantisme dan Kapitalisme: Membaca Ulang Weber*. The Center for Religious and LHD Cross-cultural Studies (CRCS) at the Graduate School, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta.
- Ahriani, A., Agustang, A. Syukur, M., Upe, A. (2023). The Vicious Circle of Marginalization of the Kokoda Tribe in Sorong, Southwest Papua. *Revista De Gestão Social E Ambiental*, 17 (4), e03380-e03380.
- Ampuza, C. (2020). *The most marginalized people in Uganda? Alternative realities of Batwa at Bwindi Impenetrable National Park*. World Development Perspectives, Vol. 20, 2020.
- Asyhar-Afwan. (2015). *Mutiara Terpendam Papua "Potensi Kearifan Lokal Untuk Perdamaian di Tanah Papua"*. CRCS. Universitas Gadjah Mada.
- Aziz, S. (2020). Religious Marginalization: A Comparative Analysis Of Bhagat's The Three Mistakes Of My Life And Javed's Ashes, Wine And Dust. *Hamdard Islamicus*, 43 (2).
- Baah FO, Teitelman AM, Riegel B. (2019). Marginalization: Conceptualizing patient vulnerabilities in the framework of social determinants of health-An integrative review. *Nurs Inq.*, 26(1), e12268.
- Benner & Wang. (2014). Demographic Marginalization, Social Integration, and Adolescents' Educational Success. *Springer Science Business Media New York*, (43), 1611-1627.
- Berry. W. John. (2006). *Immigrant Youth: Acculturation, Identity, and Adaptation*. Applied Psychology: An International Review, 2006, 55 (3), 303-332.
- Brady, B. (2020). Promoting civic and political engagement among marginalized urban youth in three cities: Strategies and challenges. *Children and Youth Services Review*, (116), 2020.
- Flynn, S. (2019). Revisiting hegemony: A Gramscian analysis for contemporary social work. *Irish Journal of Sociology*, 0-20.
- Gilmour, S. (2020). Progress Towards Health for All: Time to End Discrimination and Marginalization. *Internal Journal of Environment Research and Public Health*.
- Gramsci, A. (1987). *Prison Notebooks Catatan-Catatan Dari penjara*. Diterjemahkan dari Selection From the Prison Notebooks oleh Teguh Wahyu Utomo. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Gramsci, A. (1987). *Sejarah dan Budaya*. Diterjemahkan dari Buku Selection From The Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci. Surabaya: Pustaka Prometheus.
- Honig, L. (2021). What Stymies Action on Climate Change? Religious Institutions, Marginalization, and Efficacy in Kenya. *Perspectives on Politics*, 21 (2).
- Killian, B. (2020). Women's marginalization in participatory forest management: Impacts of responsabilization in Tanzania. *Forest Policy and Economics*, (118), 20.
- Malak, S. (2014). *Transformasi Kepemimpinan di Papua*. Bandung: Bina Profesi Mandiri.
- Mashad, D. (2020). *Muslim Papua: Membangun Harmoni Berdasar Sejarah Agama di Bumi Cendrawasih*. Pusaka Al-Kautsar: Jakarta.
- Matengu, M. (2018). Keeping the national standard? Contextual dilemmas of educational marginalization in Namibia. *International Journal of Educational Development*, (62).
- Patria, N., & Arief, A. (2016). *Antonio Gramsci Negara & Hegemoni*. Pustaka Pelajar: Yogyakarta.
- Racine, L. (2020). Racialization in nursing: Rediscovering Antonio Gramsci's concepts of hegemony and subalternity. *Nursing Inquiry*. (28), e12398.
- Ramada. R. M. (2019). *Stereotip Masyarakat Transmigran Jawa Kepada Masyarakat Suku Kokoda. (Studi Kasus di Jalur III, Kelurahan Makbusun, Kabupaten Sorong, Papua Barat 2016-2018)*. Skripsi.
- Romdiati. H. (2019). *Orang Asli papua "Kondisi Sosial Demografi dan perubahannya"*. Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia: LIPI.



- Rubawati, E. (2019). *Suku Minoritas Papua Dan Identitas Agama (Studi Etnografi Komunikasi Pada Suku Kokoda di Maibo, Kabupaten Sorong – Papua Barat)*. Tesis 220
- Salehuddin. (2023). *Inklusi Pendidikan Dan Dinamika Kebudayaan Lokal di Papua*. Edu Sociata : Jurnal Pendidikan Sosiologi, 6(2).
- Salem Sara. (2020). *Gramsci in the Postcolony: Hegemony and Anticolonialism in Nasserist Egypt*. Theory, Culture & Society 0(0) 1–21.
- Sharma. J. Anupan & Malavika Ambale. (2020). Psychological responses to reservation-based discrimination: A qualitative study of socially marginalized youth at a premier Indian university. *International Journal of Educational Development*, (79).
- Sinaga. (2013). *Masa Kuasa Belanda di Papua 1898-1962*. Komunitas Bambu: Depok.
- Straus. S. R. & Pollack. A. H. (2003). Social Marginalization of Overweight Children. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med*, 157, 746-752.
- Suryawan, I. N. (2017). *Papua Versus Papua Perubahan dan perpecahan Budaya*. Labirin: Yogyakarta.
- Wahid. B. (2021). Pendampingan Sosial Masyarakat Kokoda Tentang Makna “Torang Basodara” Antar Etnis Di Kota Sorong Dalam Perspektif Pendidikan Multikulturalisme. *Abdimas Papua Journal of Community Service*, 1(1), 15.
- Way. M. Maria, Basri, La. (2023). Stratifikasi Sosial Pada Suku Ayamaru di Distrik Aitinyo Tengah. *Papua Jurnal of Sociology*, 1 (1), 11-22.
- Yoo, C. (2021). Acculturation strategies of multicultural family adolescents in South Korea: Marginalization, separation, assimilation, and integration. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, (81), 9–19.