

## Analysis of the “Menre’ Bola Baru” Tradition in Bugis Society

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### ABSTRACT

*This research was conducted to examine the main issue, namely the meaning and values found in the Menre’ Bola Baru tradition in Kelurahan Lancirang to collect the data. The researcher used a qualitative descriptive method as the research methodology. The subjects of this study were religious leaders and community elders. To address the main issues, the researcher used two instruments: observation and interview.*

*The findings of this study revealed that the Menre’ Bola Baru tradition in the Lancirang community holds two key aspects: its meaning and the values it contains. In terms of meaning, the tradition serves as an expression of gratitude to the Creator, as well as a prayer for safety and peace for the new homeowners. Additionally, the ritual functions as a formal sign that the house construction is complete and acts as a significant social moment where family, neighbors, and relatives gather in a sacred event. Regarding its values, Menre’ Bola Baru reflects several social and cultural principles, including religiosity, deliberation, friendship, and mutual cooperation. The religious value is evident in the prayers and spiritual symbols used, while deliberation is reflected in the collective process of selecting an auspicious day for the ritual. The values of friendship and mutual cooperation are demonstrated through the active involvement of the community in supporting and ensuring the success of the ceremony, thereby strengthening solidarity and preserving local wisdom as a cultural heritage passed down through generations.*



## **INTRODUCTION**

The rapid development of modernization has brought significant transformations to human lifestyles, particularly among the younger generation. Cultural values and traditions that were once regarded as noble heritage are increasingly considered outdated and irrelevant in today's context. Modernization, like a "time machine," not only alters behavioral patterns but also influences the sustainability of local traditions. This phenomenon poses challenges to the preservation of ancestral values, especially as foreign influences dominate social life in many parts of Indonesia.

Globalization has accelerated the shift from local cultural practices to Western-oriented lifestyles. Among Indonesian youth, the adoption of foreign culture often occurs without adequate reflection on its long-term impact on local wisdom. As a result, values such as respect for elders, politeness, mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), and unity—which were once strong pillars of Indonesian society—are gradually eroding. Nevertheless, this cultural shift does not occur uniformly across all communities. In several rural areas, traditional practices continue to thrive, offering a counterbalance to the homogenizing effects of globalization.

The community of Lancirang, in particular, demonstrates a remarkable commitment to preserving its ancestral traditions. Despite the strong influence of modernization, the people of Lancirang consistently uphold cultural rituals that are deeply rooted in their identity. For them, tradition is not merely a ceremonial practice but also a spiritual necessity that ensures balance, safety, and blessings in daily life. This aligns with Herkovits' (1940) notion of culture as "superorganic," passed down across generations despite continuous changes in society.

One of the most significant traditions in Lancirang is *Menre' Bola Baru*. For the Bugis people, the house (*bola*) is considered the center of life, functioning as the "first school" where family members develop character and values. The *Menre' Bola Baru* tradition, performed when a family moves into a new house, is not only a religious and spiritual act of gratitude but also a symbolic expression of social solidarity. It conveys hope for peace, prosperity, and harmony within the household, while simultaneously reinforcing community ties.

The *Menre' Bola Baru* ritual is rich in philosophical meaning and encompasses moral values such as religiosity, deliberation, cooperation, and friendship. Each stage of the ceremony carries symbolic messages that reflect the Bugis worldview and philosophy of life. More than a ritual, it is a medium through which ancestral wisdom is transmitted across generations. Its relevance in today's era underscores the importance of maintaining cultural identity while navigating the pressures of modernization.

Furthermore, this tradition embodies both spiritual and social functions. Spiritually, it represents gratitude to the Creator and the seeking of blessings for safety in the new home. Socially, it strengthens relationships among relatives, neighbors, and the wider community through collective participation. In this sense, *Menre' Bola Baru* serves not only as a cultural marker but also as a living testament to the Bugis community's resilience in preserving its heritage.

However, challenges remain, particularly with regard to the younger generation. Many young people tend to participate in the tradition only as a matter of habit, without

fully understanding its deeper meanings and values. This limited awareness could eventually threaten the sustainability of the tradition if not accompanied by educational efforts to transmit its philosophical foundations. Thus, there is a growing need to reintroduce the symbolic significance of *Menre' Bola Baru* to ensure its continuity as both cultural practice and social philosophy.

Given this context, the present study seeks to analyze the meanings and values embedded in the *Menre' Bola Baru* tradition within Bugis society, specifically in the Lancirang community. By documenting and interpreting its cultural and social dimensions, this research aims to contribute to intercultural communication studies and enrich the understanding of Indonesian cultural heritage. Ultimately, it also seeks to raise awareness among the younger generation about the importance of safeguarding traditional wisdom as a vital component of identity and social harmony.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Culture is a fundamental concept in understanding human life because it encompasses values, norms, beliefs, and practices that are passed down from generation to generation. According to Edward B. Tylor (1871), culture is a system of knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs, and other capabilities acquired by humans as members of society. Culture not only reflects collective identity but also influences communication, behavior, and worldview. In the context of intercultural communication, Tubbs and Moss argue that communication cannot be separated from culture since culture determines who speaks, what is communicated, and how messages are interpreted. Therefore, understanding cultural traditions is essential for examining how communities preserve identity and navigate social interactions.

One important aspect of culture is its dynamic nature. Hall (1976) explains that culture is never static but is continuously shaped by diffusion and acculturation processes. Through interaction between groups, cultural elements can be exchanged, adopted, or adapted while still maintaining their original identity. This dynamic allows traditions to survive even in the face of modernization and globalization. For example, in Bugis society, rituals such as *Menre' Bola Baru* are preserved not merely as habits but as practices rooted in deep philosophical and spiritual values. Thus, cultural continuity depends on the balance between adaptation and preservation.

The concept of meaning is also crucial in cultural practices. Blumer (1969) highlights that meaning is not inherent in words or symbols but arises from social interactions and shared interpretations. This perspective suggests that rituals such as *Menre' Bola Baru* gain their significance not only from the physical acts performed but from the collective understanding of their symbolic functions. Symbols such as coconuts, rice, and traditional cakes used in the ritual are interpreted as signs of prosperity, peace, and gratitude. Hence, the meaning embedded in these cultural symbols reflects the worldview and moral system of the community.

Rituals themselves are understood as sacred activities embedded within cultural and religious frameworks. Turner (1969) defines ritual as a structured sequence of actions associated with particular events, usually performed to maintain harmony with spiritual or social orders. Rituals, according to Turner, can serve multiple purposes: as technology (agricultural or hunting rituals), therapy (healing ceremonies), ideology (initiation rites), salvation (mystical experiences), or revitalization (community renewal).

The *Menre' Bola Baru* ritual clearly functions as both an ideological and revitalization practice, as it strengthens social solidarity and revitalizes communal values while expressing gratitude to the Creator.

The tradition of *Menre' Bola Baru* in Bugis society carries symbolic meanings tied to life itself. Yahya (2018) emphasizes that the Bugis traditional house (*bola*) represents a cultural artifact rich with philosophical values. The house is divided into symbolic sections—the roof (*rakkeang*), the body (*ale bola*), the middle (*posi bola*), and the base (*yawa bola*)—each reflecting the cosmological view of harmony between humans, nature, and the divine. Entering a new house through the *Menre' Bola Baru* ritual, therefore, is not merely a physical relocation but a symbolic passage into a new stage of life, accompanied by prayers and blessings to ensure prosperity and safety.

From a sociological perspective, Durkheim (1893) views society as more than a collection of individuals; it is a structured entity bound by shared norms and values. He distinguishes between mechanical solidarity in traditional societies and organic solidarity in modern ones. The *Menre' Bola Baru* tradition exemplifies mechanical solidarity, as the collective participation of relatives, neighbors, and religious leaders reinforces social cohesion and emphasizes communal interdependence. Thus, the ritual is not only a religious expression but also a mechanism for strengthening community bonds.

Tradition, by definition, is a cultural inheritance that links past and present. Bastomi (1998) and Syam (2005) argue that traditions persist through repetition, transmission, and reconstruction. While some traditions are inherited intact, others are adapted or even reinvented to suit contemporary contexts. In the case of *Menre' Bola Baru*, although influenced by animistic beliefs in the past, the tradition has been adapted to align with Islamic teachings. This transformation ensures its sustainability, as it remains relevant both spiritually and socially within the modern Bugis community.

Several previous studies have examined the *Menre' Bola Baru* tradition. Rasmi Dewi (2023) explored its Islamic educational values, such as faith (*aqidah*), worship (*ibadah*), and morality (*akhlak*). Ambo Angka (2018) focused on its symbolic meanings in Lajokka, highlighting themes of hope, prayers, and social solidarity. Meanwhile, Rosmida (2021) provided a descriptive account of the stages and practices of the ritual, emphasizing the role of the *pabbaca bola*. These studies highlight both the similarities and differences in interpretation across regions, revealing research gaps regarding comparative analyses, modernization influences, and intergenerational perspectives. Addressing these gaps will contribute to a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of how traditions like *Menre' Bola Baru* function within evolving Bugis society.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the meanings and values embedded in the *Menre' Bola Baru* tradition of the Bugis society in Lancirang. According to Sugiyono (2017), qualitative research emphasizes understanding cultural phenomena holistically by examining values, norms, and practices that develop within a community. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to investigate the ritual in depth, not only as a symbolic ceremony but also as a lived cultural experience that reflects the worldview of the community.

The focus of this research was directed at analyzing the *Menre' Bola Baru* tradition, particularly its meanings and values. This focus was established to ensure that the study remained within the boundaries of cultural anthropology, where traditions and rituals serve as important sources for understanding identity and collective behavior. By limiting the research scope, the study avoids overgeneralization and instead highlights the unique cultural characteristics of the Lancirang Bugis community.

The research informants consisted of religious leaders and community elders, who were considered the most knowledgeable and experienced in conducting the *Menre' Bola Baru* ritual. As suggested by Faisal in Sugiyono (2008), purposive sampling was applied, meaning the researcher intentionally selected participants who were most relevant to the research objectives. This method ensured that the data gathered represented authentic perspectives from individuals who had both practical involvement and cultural authority regarding the tradition.

In terms of instruments, the researcher functioned as the primary instrument of data collection. Additional tools such as observation sheets, interview protocols, and documentation notes supported the process of gathering valid and comprehensive data. The researcher's role was to engage directly with the community, building trust and maintaining cultural sensitivity, which is essential when investigating local traditions and rituals that hold sacred value for the community.

The data collection techniques consisted of three main methods: observation, interview, and documentation. Observation allowed the researcher to witness the performance of the ritual directly and record details of the symbolic acts and community participation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with religious leaders, elders, and other community members to gain insight into their interpretations of the ritual's meaning and values. Documentation, including photographs, written records, and related literature, complemented the primary data by providing additional contextual information.

Data analysis was carried out through the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman in Sugiyono (1984), consisting of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the reduction stage, data were selected, simplified, and organized into relevant themes. The display stage involved presenting the information in descriptive form to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn and verified through continuous comparison with the data to ensure validity and reliability.

To ensure the credibility of the findings, triangulation was applied. This involved cross-checking data obtained from different sources (religious leaders, elders, and observations) and methods (interviews, observations, and documentation). Creswell (2013) emphasizes that triangulation enhances the trustworthiness of qualitative research by confirming the consistency of interpretations. In this study, triangulation was essential to validate the meanings and values identified in the ritual.

Overall, the methodology of this research was designed to capture the *Menre' Bola Baru* tradition in its cultural and social complexity. By combining observation, interviews, and documentation within a qualitative framework, the study sought to present a holistic account of the ritual. The methodological approach ensured that the findings were not merely descriptive but also interpretive, shedding light on how the Bugis people of

Lancirang preserve their ancestral wisdom through ritual practice in the midst of modernization and cultural change.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The findings of this research were obtained through observations, interviews, and documentation in the Lancirang community. The Menre' Bola Baru ritual was found to consist of a series of symbolic acts that hold both spiritual and social meanings. Observations confirmed that the ritual begins with prayers led by religious leaders, followed by symbolic offerings and a communal meal. These elements collectively demonstrate the integration of religiosity, cultural symbolism, and social participation.

Interviews with community elders revealed that the ritual is believed to have existed long before the arrival of Islam in South Sulawesi. Initially associated with animistic practices, it later adapted to Islamic values by incorporating recitations from the Qur'an and prayers for safety. This transformation has ensured its continuity, making it acceptable to religious leaders while retaining its cultural essence.

The process of implementing the ritual involves several stages: determining an auspicious day, preparing ritual materials, inviting relatives and neighbors, and carrying out the symbolic "ascending to the new house." Each stage reflects values such as deliberation, cooperation, and gratitude. The role of traditional leaders (panrita bola) remains central, as they are responsible for guiding the ritual and interpreting its symbolic meanings.

The participants in the ritual extend beyond the homeowner and immediate family to include neighbors, youth, and community leaders. Young people usually assist with preparations and logistics, while elders and religious leaders oversee the sacred elements. This inclusive participation highlights the ritual's function as a collective social event that strengthens bonds across generations.

One notable finding is the community's differing levels of understanding regarding the deeper values of the tradition. While elders and religious leaders interpret the ritual as a symbol of gratitude, balance, and social harmony, the younger generation often participates merely as a cultural habit without deeper reflection. This indicates a generational gap that may affect the sustainability of the ritual in the future.

From the observation checklist, it was evident that the ritual maintains conformity with Islamic law, with no elements contradicting religious principles. However, gaps exist in intergenerational dialogue about its values. While solidarity and mutual cooperation are strongly visible, awareness of the philosophical significance is less developed among younger participants.

Symbolic offerings used in the ritual were also observed to hold significant meanings. For example, coconuts symbolize peace and prosperity, rice containers signify abundance, and traditional cakes represent unity and blessings. These symbolic elements reinforce the notion that Menre' Bola Baru is not only a ceremonial act but also a medium for transmitting ancestral wisdom.

The following table summarizes the observation checklist from the fieldwork:

**Table 4.1 Observation Checklist of *Menre' Bola Baru* Ritual**

No	Observation Aspect	Yes	No	Description
1	Islamic opening prayer	✓		Ceremony begins with prayers led by an ustaz
2	Determination of auspicious day	✓		Deliberation with elders based on cultural beliefs
3	Family and neighbor participation	✓		Active involvement of relatives and neighbors
4	Role of religious leaders	✓		Ustaz guides prayers
5	Involvement of traditional elders	✓		Panrita bola ensures authenticity
6	Youth involvement	✓		Help with logistics and kitchen
7	Central ritual of ascending to the house ( <i>menre'</i> )	✓		Symbolic entry into the new house
8	Recitation of Qur'an/doa selamat	✓		Religious recitations accompany rituals
9	Communal meal	✓		Eating together as a symbol of unity
10	Understanding of ritual meanings		✓	Younger generation lacks deeper awareness
11	Dialogue between elders and youth about values		✓	Limited to elder groups
12	Social expressions of solidarity and cooperation	✓		Strong communal support visible
13	Conformity with Islamic teachings	✓		Ritual adapted to align with religion

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the *Menre' Bola Baru* ritual functions as both a spiritual and social practice. Spiritually, it serves as a prayer for safety and blessings upon the new household. Socially, it brings together family, relatives, and neighbors, thereby reinforcing solidarity and strengthening cultural identity. This aligns with Turner's (1969) theory of ritual as a revitalization practice, ensuring the continuity of cultural values within society.

One of the main discussions emerging from the findings is the adaptation of the ritual to Islamic values. Historically, *Menre' Bola Baru* was rooted in animistic beliefs, but with the spread of Islam, its practices were adjusted to align with Islamic teachings. Instead of being abandoned, the tradition survived by incorporating Islamic prayers and symbolism, reflecting the flexibility of Bugis culture in maintaining relevance.



Another significant aspect is the symbolism embedded in ritual materials. Each item, from coconuts to rice and traditional cakes, carries a meaning that reflects the community's worldview. These symbols embody values such as prosperity, peace, fertility, and solidarity. According to Blumer (1969), meanings are constructed through social interaction, and in this context, the community collectively interprets the symbols as representations of gratitude and hope.

The ritual also reflects Durkheim's (1893) concept of mechanical solidarity, where traditional societies are bound by shared values and collective participation. The involvement of all community members—from elders to youth—illustrates how rituals serve as instruments of social cohesion. However, the weaker understanding among the younger generation indicates a potential shift toward individualism influenced by modernization.

This generational gap is one of the challenges discussed in the findings. While older members understand the ritual's philosophical depth, younger participants tend to regard it as a routine cultural activity. Without deliberate efforts to transmit meaning, there is a risk that the ritual may persist only as a superficial ceremony, losing its spiritual and philosophical essence over time. The discussion also highlights the practical role of deliberation (*musyawarah*) in the ritual. The selection of an auspicious day and the preparation process involve consultation and collective decision-making. This illustrates how the values of consensus and cooperation remain integral to Bugis society, ensuring that traditions are conducted harmoniously.

Furthermore, the *Menre' Bola Baru* ritual contributes to cultural preservation amid modernization. While globalization encourages uniform lifestyles, traditions such as this serve as anchors of local identity. By maintaining and adapting such rituals, communities assert cultural resilience and strengthen intergenerational ties. This resonates with Koentjaraningrat's (1961) view that culture persists through adaptation while retaining its symbolic core., the discussion confirms that the *Menre' Bola Baru* tradition is not only a cultural artifact but also a living practice that carries meanings and values essential to the social and spiritual life of the Bugis community. The challenge lies in ensuring that its philosophical depth is communicated to younger generations, thereby sustaining its role as a source of identity, solidarity, and cultural wisdom in the face of modern change.

## **CONCLUSION**

The *Menre' Bola Baru* tradition in Bugis society, particularly in the Lancirang community, is more than a ceremonial practice to mark the occupation of a new house. It is a cultural heritage that integrates spiritual devotion, social solidarity, and ancestral wisdom. The ritual expresses gratitude to the Creator, ensures blessings for the new household, and symbolizes a new phase of life, while at the same time reinforcing collective identity and togetherness among family members, neighbors, and the wider community.

The findings reveal that this tradition embodies important values such as religiosity, deliberation, friendship, and mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*). These values are transmitted through symbolic actions, such as prayers, offerings, and communal meals, which not only bind the participants socially but also strengthen their relationship with the spiritual realm. However, the study also highlights a generational gap, as younger

participants often engage in the ritual without fully understanding its deeper meaning. This limited awareness may pose a challenge to the sustainability of the tradition in the future.

Therefore, it is essential to preserve and revitalize the *Menre' Bola Baru* tradition as both a cultural and educational practice. Efforts should be made to transmit its philosophical values to younger generations through cultural education, intergenerational dialogue, and documentation. By doing so, this tradition can continue to serve as a source of moral guidance, social solidarity, and cultural identity for the Bugis community, ensuring its relevance in the midst of modernization and globalization.

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