

Kolintang Symbolic Construction of The Union Odd Numbers (Three) in Socio-cultural Meaning of Minahasa Community

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the construction of Kolintang through the symbol of the number Three in the socio-cultural life system of the Minahasa people, whose embodiment in Kolintang music. A qualitative method through a historical approach in social and anthropological writing is used in this research. The data source was obtained from field observations for approximately three years in Lembean Village, namely Nine taranak or Minamerot. Interviews and recordings do well; researchers are also active in direct observation. The research found that the number one is a transcendent and intangible symbol, the God of the Minahasa people Empung, Wailan Wangko, Empung Renga-Rengan, God is Glorious, God is Great. The number one does not appear in the form of kolintang but is unifying. The number three is seen in the three forms of the Minahasa grandmothers Karema, Lumimuut, and Toar; also in the three Minahasa leaders, Tunduan/Tonaas, Wadian/Walian, and Teterusan. It is seen in the three first descendants of Minahasa, namely the Tombulu, Toutewoh, and Tounsawang sub-ethnicity. This symbolisation can be seen in the construction of Kolintang instruments using three wooden sticks (Teken) singing Tatembacken, the use of three-wood Kolintang in Waleposan, and traditional modes/scales such as (1 - 2 - 3) as well as the use of three wood in modern Kolintang Music Accompaniment called Wooden Kolintang Music Ensemble (AMKK). In conclusion, the construction of Kolintang music is a form of symbolisation of the Unification of the number three in the social and cultural life of the Minahasa people.

KEYWORDS

*Kolintang Music
Construction
Odd Number
Symbol (Three)
Minahasa Society*

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INTRODUCTION

Currently, the issue of intangible culture is getting louder, especially the plan to propose music to become UNESCO's Intangible Culture Heritage (ICH) was hampered by Gamelan which was finally officially designated as *Intangible Culture Heritage (ICH)* UNESCO on December 15, 2021. The reason is that existing academic manuscripts have yet to be able to convince that kolintang music or AMKK (Ansambel Musik Kolintang Kayu) is a traditional music originating from Minahasa, North Sulawesi. On February 15, 2022, Indonesian music re-entered the dominance of Indonesian culture into UNESCO's *Intangible Culture Heritage (ICH)* with Tempe, Reog Ponorogo, Jamu, Ulos and Tenun. Kolintang is offered a proposal through *Joint Submission* or a joint proposal with Kolintang from the country Philippines However, the proposal of Joint Submission or joint proposal with Kolintang from the Philippines received obstacles from several Minahasa

communities, making the North Sulawesi regional government discouraged the proposal through *Joint Submission* and plans to propose a single because on the basis that Kolintang music is the original Cultural Tradition of the Minahasa people, not artistic works together with others (Muhtar, 2022). In addition, the Philippines still needs to prioritise the proposal of Kolintang music to Unesco.

To evaluate and plan the strategy for proposing kolintang to Unesco, Sanggar Limeka made an online Webinar, and the speakers were cultural experts also; the assessment team proposed kolintang as world heritage which was held on March 2, 2022. Prof. Wiendu Nuryanti said the proposal was through joint Submission or Multi Nations is the decision of the Kemendikbudritek on careful consideration of experts in their fields because proposers of this model are few competitors. Even though only a single proposal, it takes a long time to hold negotiations with the Philippines and change the proposed document. Franki Raden, an ethnomusicologist, explained that he had communicated this to the Philippines to register Kolintang and Kulintang with UNESCO.

The issue of Kolintang became necessary, and the study of Kolintang music began to be carried out. The origin of the Kolintang began to be studied to support academic manuscripts based on the existence that Kolintang is an asset of the people of North Sulawesi. The Papers in the National Journal, especially in international journals, are written on this subject where there are measly, even though the issues and problems of kolintang are many and varied. The words Kolintang and Kulintang are still debated. Moreover, the ethnographic writings of pastor Graaffland in the early 19th century about society and culture in Minahasa talk about the Kolintang ensemble made from Copper. This causes our thinking paradigm of Kolintang music in Minahasa, an imitation activity carried out by our ancestors against the existence of Philippines Kulintang music made from metal.

Rumengan (2011: 171) says Kolintang is a melodious and beautiful sound, pleasant to hear. This concept did not show what kolintang is meant, whether Kulintang is made from metal, or Kolintang tradition from wood, or also the Kolintang Kayu Music Ensemble (AMKK) the term is the result of the agreement of the kolintang community in 2013. Rumengan & Hartati (2021) also said that around the 1940s, the term Kulintang in Minahasa was quite popular, especially in the subethnic area of Tonsea and its surroundings. However, the Minahasa people's understanding of Kolintang is still as 1. Musical instruments, and did not know what kind of musical instruments are meant by Kolintang. 2. Moreover, some people know this term, although they only know it as a punch musical instrument, so in specific contexts, every musical instrument that is played hit is referred to as Kolintang. 3. However, some know that the Kolintang musical instrument is a metal percussive musical instrument, which looks like Bonang or Kenong in Gamelan orchestras in Java and Bali.

Diniafiat & Loho (2020) said that Kolintang Music is traditional music from Minahasa, including a type of pitched percussion consisting of pitched wooden slats neatly placed on a box-shaped stand, played by hitting or tapping with similar wooden slats. On the other hand, this concept still needs to be clarified talking about tradition, but the content is modern kolintang music now. Windewani (2022: 137) explained that the Lembean Community performed a ritual ceremony using three wooden slats in the ritual. However, the Protestant church's entry into Lembean Village marginalised Kolintang's music because it was considered profane. Kolintang Reappeared when played by a person with special needs named Nelwan Katuuk during the Japanese occupation of Minahasa.

Referring to culture to the Arts in Minahasa, especially Kolintang Music, Kolintang Music manifests from a society's expression in activities of religious traditions, community organisation systems, livelihood systems, technological systems, arts and languages.

Therefore, there were religious activities of the community, such as in Waleposan (Lembean) with the sound of three woods and using three wooden sticks in traditional speech, which later became known as Tagunen Art or singing speech. In the Minahasa community organisation system, initially, they did not know the king or power vertically but a horizontal community system that functionally protected the community called **Tonaas Wangko, Walian, and Teterusan in the** Matriarchal system. However, after mixing with foreign cultures began to change vertically, the classification system there was *Majoor Law*, and there were people, although the activities of Tonaas, Walian, and Teterusan remained in society (Palar, 2009: 28–36).

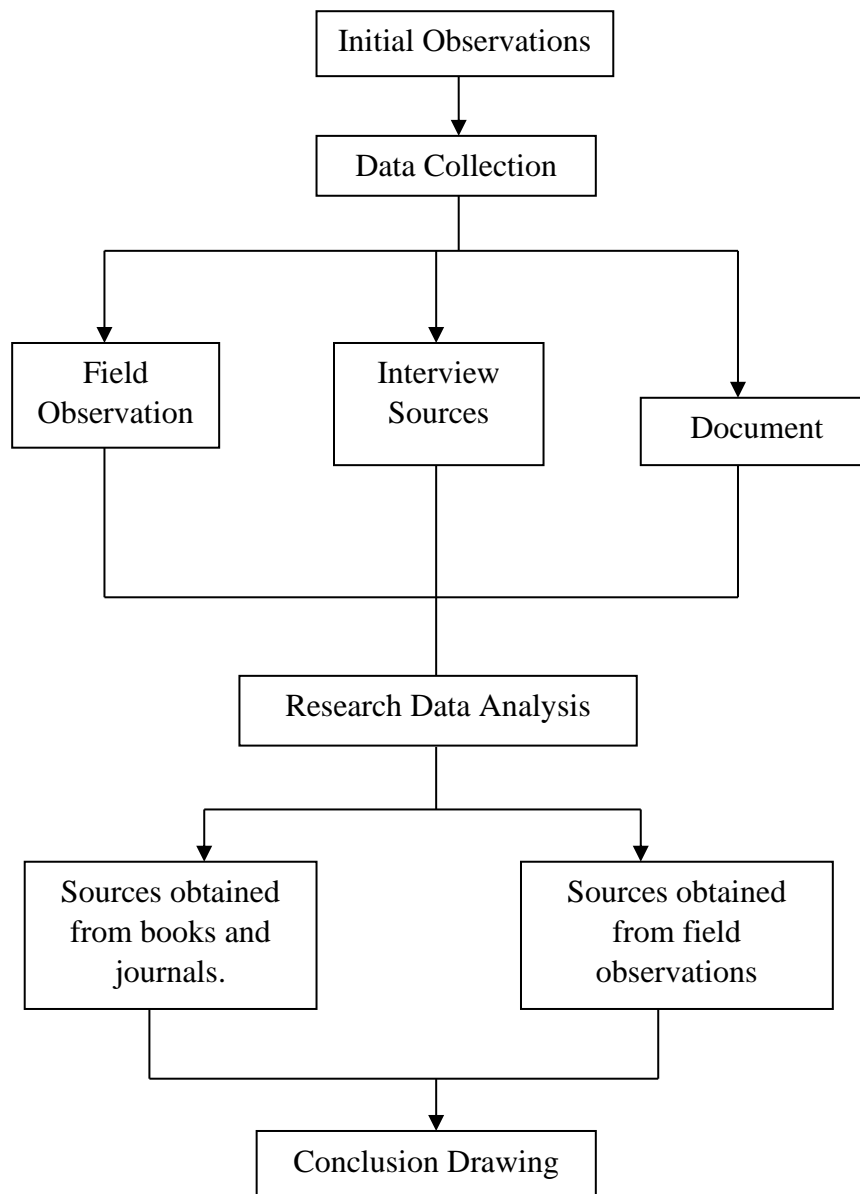
In the livelihood system of the Minahasa People, the work is the system of agriculture, fishermen, and hunting—rice Fields of existing crops other than Corn and other crops. Minahasa people also know the tradition of fishing around Lake Tondano and on the coast (sea); in hunting skills, the Minahasa people are very skilled. Art and Language become instruments of intangible cultural embodiment. Language in folklore, singing informs various things about culture, a means of expressing one through the sounds of Kolintang.

According to Rohidi, culture contains knowledge model devices or meaning systems that are thoroughly intertwined in historically transmitted symbols, and it can be seen that culture is a deposit of creativity of its supportive communities (Latuni & Utomo, 2018; Rohidi, 1995; Stenberg, 2006). Because ritual tradition is a medium of interaction, with messages constructed using symbols (iconic) or actions of words and objects), in other words, ritual tradition has a sociocultural meaning that is symbolically transmitted through ritual activities (Cahyono, 2006). Concerning Kolintang Music, the symbolisation of this number is integrated into the form and structure of traditional Kolintang musical instruments until its development can be seen from the use of the number of traditional musical instruments used from three logs that produce three sounds that are sorted according to the taste of the community at five, seven, nine, then 15 pieces / wooden slats until it becomes the Kolintang Kayu Music Ensemble (AMKK) as a result of the Keroncong Orchestra mutation.

This research shows that Lembean has a ritual using three woods called kolintang. Indeed, Graffland has noted that in the mid-19th century, the Minahasa Tradition Society used numbers as symbolic expressions in its life. The numbers are odd (Graafland, 1991: 40). The symbolisation of this odd number can be seen in the development of Kolintang music, starting from Kolintang tiga kayu to kolintang five, seven to nine instruments transmuted as it is today called the Kolintang Kayu Music Ensemble (AMKK). To examine this problem, researchers focused on Kolintang Music, a symbolic construction in the sociocultural meaning of the Minahasa Community.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used qualitative descriptive research with data sources from observation results for approximately three years to observe the existence of Kolintang Music in Minahasa, especially in Lembean Village and Nine Taranak Villages, known as Minawerot. Researchers attend various community activities; and culture, conducting interviews with enslaved people and informants related to Minahasa and Kolintang culture and conducting recordings. In addition, researchers also obtained data through books, manuscripts, and discussions directly and through webinar activities with the community in Lembean Village. These data were then analysed through the stages of analysis by Miles and Huberman (1994), namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

People in Lembean Village - Minawerot Tounsea understand the word Kolintang bukan Kolintang with several understandings; first that the meaning of Kolintang is the sounds of wood or wood that sounds. They also mention Kolintang in several forms, including 1). Mortar pounding wood is used for rice pounding or cape. 2). wood is a type of stick (*Teken*) used in the singing of word-by-word called *Tatembaken*, as well as wood used as a means of sounding three wood in Waleposan, or five, seven, nine up to 15 wood and slats used by Nelwan Katuuk, up to Kolintang now which consists of nine or even ten musical instruments termed Ansambel Musik Kolintang Kayu (AMKK). In addition, they also mentioned Kolintang Besi for the gamelan tools left by the Prince in Ponegoro and the Commander of the Kiay Modjo Army from Central Java after the Diponegoro War 1825-1830. So kolintang is the sound of wood, or wood sounding.

Windewani (2022: 138) explained that the tradition in the Lembean community carried out ritual ceremonies using three wooden slats. However, the entry of Protestant

church teachings in Lembean Village made this Kolintang music tinged because it was considered an infidel. This paper states that in Minahasa, there are sounds from wood ribs called.

Kolintang. The symbolisation of this odd number is still seen in the development of Kolintang music, starting from Kolintang three wood to kolintang transmuted five to nine instruments as it is today called the Kolintang Kayu Music Ensemble (AMKK).

- **Number one and number three symbols**

The symbol of the number one, or Esa, is rarely found in Minahasa community activities because it involves something transcendent. Graafland (1991: 190) notes that Minahasans know a name that is neither a name nor a god nor a goddess. He who calls himself, I will exist, and I exist (*Ik zal zijn, die Ikzijn zal*). The nameless God of Minahasa is called Empung Wailan Wangko, Empung Renga-Rengan, God is Most Glorious, God is Greatest. They believe in a God who always accompanies people wherever he is (Graafland, 1991: 65). Hence the symbolisation of the number one in the Minahasa tradition is intangible. The number one in its form always speaks of unification; this concept gave birth to the name *Ma Esa* then became Minahasa or became one.

Riedel (1894: 8–11) writes that based on the folklore of Minahasa, people at that time were not yet called Minahasa but *Malesung*. Originally lived on Mount Wulur Mahatus, then expanded to the North and South. The concept of population distribution using the pattern of three *Pasiowan Telu* means the mother of three descendants. Originally three Pakasaan regions were called pakasaan Tombulu (*tou'un* meaning people and *Wuluk* meaning bamboo), Pakasaan Tontewoh (*towoh* meaning commoner) and Tongkimbut (*Kimbut* meaning loincloth). The distribution system starts from *tumanik*, forming walak, which is a group related to blood, some walak form Pakasaan (Riedel, 1894: 7).

Luddy Wullur said in an interview conducted that the type of work carried out by each pakasaan in utilising its natural potential was described as follows; Pakasaan Tombulu is a community that relies on paddy farming. Pakasaan Tontewoh relies on the potential of water (Lake). Tongkimbut formed a hunting society. They formed patterns of population distribution with the pattern of three philosophies of three furnace stones (*dodika*). It is also seen, for example, that the Tontewo pact partly formed new potential as field farmers formed the Tounsea community. Luddy Wullur said about Tounsea, which is divided into three parts: Old Tonsea, Tonsea Weru, or called Tonsea, and Tonsea Dimembe. We can see this spread pattern in the family formation system, such as in the Nine Taranak Villages lined up in Tounsea called Minawerot.

The Tountewo community, then known as Tounsea, took on the new potential to form a Farmer's Field community; this is very interesting if we associate it with the sounds of wood found in farmers' fields in Tounsea. Sumardjo says the Farming Community lives from creating (planting), maintaining, and developing rice. His obsession is to live; life is to nurture life like the Minahasa philosopher *Si Tou Tu Mou Tu Mou Tou* Living Man to bring others to life. According to Soemarjo, life can be maintained only through marriage. Rice plants can continue to live if there is a marriage between heaven and earth; the basis of the cosmological belief of human farmers is the basis of the three-pattern way of thinking. Pattern three departs from the antagonist dualism, heaven above and earth below. The sky is wet, and the earth is dry; the sky is female, the earth is male; bad separation will bring death; separation must end by marriage. Life is the harmony of two conflicting but complementary entities (Sumardjo, 2006: 72–73).

A farmer gives no opposition; The opposition ends with harmony. Initially, it was indeed the One; the singular was a paradox; it caused itself to split into the oppositional dualistic phenomenon. The One becomes plural, the plural one each oppositionally paired. Opposition couples need and complement each other because they originate from the One. For that oneness to reappear, reuniting the pairs of opposition entities is necessary. This concept occurs in the community in Minahasa, one becomes three, and the three are to be harmonious during this unification, known as the Mina Esa or Minahasa concept. This concept is seen in Kolintang music. Kolintang music will speak, playing together in difference. Each Kolintang musical instrument will be played with its function, but the differences become harmonious if put together. Philosophy will always be a differentiator and a hallmark of Kolintang music in Minahasa. The triple wood comes from the same branch but has differences in large or small as well as long and short; in organology, small wood produces a higher sound than large wood. Short wood will produce a higher sound than long wood, but everything will be harmonious when united. See Figure 1.

Like the Minahasa folklore Toar and Lumimuut, they were united in marriage because they found the object of the stick they held; this story symbolises the dualistic opposition phenomenon.



Figure 1. The Triple Wood Kolintang in Waleposan
(Glenie Latuni's Photo 2022)

- **The sound of three woods**

The embodiment of the number three is bound in the kolintang of three woods. This three-wood kolintang is almost not found, in general, today due to the influence of Protestantism in Minahasa. However, in Lembean-Minawerot Village, from some community information, these sounds are still found in the Waleposan area 1 km south of Lembean Village.

The sound of these three woods is of sacred value and not just any sound Wood in the Minahasa community is a symbol of the presence of the Creator. Every field opened in Minahasa land for cultivation must naturally grow a variety of dry wood that sounds loud, including Kakenik, Bintangar / wintangar, Wanderan, Bintang etc. Medium round leaves,

rather lush, characterise these woods, rarely have wooden segments, and are relatively light and loud even though they are still raw; the sound gets louder when it gets drier.

The sound of these three woods is of sacred value and is not just sounded. In religion in Minahasa, people use three woods to connect with the three ancestors: Karema, Toar, Lumimuut, and three Opo, Wadian/Walian, Tonaas, and Teterusan. His philosophy in kolintang music is to feel the symbol of the presence of these 3 Opo. Because of the Tou Minahasa philosophy, that wood symbolises Opo's presence. For this reason, the Minahasa people must ring the wood to blend with Opo. So some stories say that when the Minahasans who after going through enormous problems, they will ring these three woods. That is why the sound of kolintang tiga is not just sounded; requiring a particular place and atmosphere. (Wullur 2022)

- **Teken**

In the Minahasa Tradition community, if we talk kolintang, it will mean. First, a *Teken* or a stick of wood like a stick used by beating to the ground while playing a type of spoken song called Tatembaken. In folk rituals and songs, three signs are usually used. Each is held by three community leaders in Minahasa: Tonaas, Wadian, and Teterusan. Tonaas was the prominent leader in Minahasa society; Wadian functioned as an Imam or spiritual figure who became a liaison between humans and the Opo, while Teterusan functioned as the head of the guard force. These three figures are usually equipped or inherited knowledge that serves to help their communities.



Figure 2. Tagunen singers in Tonsea
(Glenie Latuni's Photo 2022)

This traditional c-d-e (do-re-mi) mode or scale is derived from several Tagunsen songs. This traditional c-d-e (do-re-mi) mode or scale is derived from several Tagunsen songs. Below is one melody phrase of Tatembaken's singing.



The image shows a musical score for a piece titled 'Tunduan'. It consists of three staves: Tunduan (vocal line), Rakyat Minahasa (vocal line), and Kolintang (instrumental line). The Tunduan part has two lines of lyrics: 'Ro - yor E - pa - un - ti - mee - tee - an Wo -' and 'ki ta - ma we - ren we - re - nan'. The Rakyat Minahasa part has lyrics 'E - ro - yor' at the end of the second line. The Kolintang part is a single-line instrumental melody. The score is written in 4/4 time and includes a triplet of eighth notes in the second line of the Tunduan part.

The melody of this song starts with the lowest sound, c (do), goes to the highest sound, e (mi), and d (re) becomes the intermediate sound (coma). The singing phrase ends again with do. The singing begins with a few verses with a solo from the male character, then reciprocates in a choir or together (The responsorial style of Jewish singing is also the Gregorian style of the song). Singing uses a syllabus or one tone for a word, although sound gestures such as chirps often exist. (Rumengan & Hartati 2021) said that some Western music has characteristics and styles similar to Minahasa music. For example, the melodies of Gregorian songs resemble traditional ritual songs, such as Masambo, Mah'zani, Maoli, etc. The bond between melody and verse, especially regarding stress, intonation, and other suprasegmental elements of Language, in Gregorian and ethnic songs, is very similar, especially regarding ictus (pressure according to word stress) and neuma (group of tones). Rumengan further stated that Minahasa ethnic music had been assimilated with Western music to form a new art with a new atmosphere, for example, mode 3 -- 5 – 6 – 7 – 1 – 2 – 3, which is an assimilation of Minahasa mode with Gregorian mode.

- **Number Three in Today's Kolintang.**

Today's Kolintang is the result of a transformation from traditional kolintang into ensemble music, consisting of five, seven, nine, or even ten instruments, which is the result of the Kolintang Music Kumunity Sarasehan and Minahasa culturalists declared it to be AMKK or Kolintang Kayu Music Ensemble in Salatiga 2013. Transmutation occurred as a musical impulse of the people in Minahasa to the existence of the Keroncong Orchestra that mushroomed in Indonesia, including in the Land of Minahasa pre and post-Indonesian independence.

From the composition of Kolintang musical instruments, transmutation results remain in the symbolic application of odd numbers in society. Composition is a functional symbol of the community leader structure in Minahasa. According to Luddy Wullur (2022), Kolintang Music Composition manifests the community's existence in Minahasa. Melody is from Tunduan/Tonaas, Pengacing is a symbolic form of Wadian/Walian (Ritual Leader), and Bas is a form of Teterusan symbol.

Tunduan is a guide through the melody of the song. Tunduan/Tonaas is a form of Pasiowan Telu, the mother of three descendants. Therefore, the three-bladed Webinar in Waleposan in 2022 opposed the existence of two melodies in the Kolintang Music Ensemble because Melody is a symbol of Minahasa's mother (Lumimuut); there is only one, not two. This view is very appropriate because if it uses two melodies, the number is not nine anymore but becomes ten according to the odd number symbol in Minahasa.

Accompaniment is a symbolic form of Wadian/Walian (Makatelu Pitu), Wadian in carrying out rituals and using the number three symbol for ceremonies. This symbolism is still visible in using Kolintang accompaniment wooden sticks totalling seven tools and seven players. Suppose all of them are combined into nine Makarua Siow. This symbol number is a form of adding the Bantik tribal community (Pakasaan Bantik and Siau Pakasaan Bowuntehu Community).



Figure 3. Wooden Kolintang Music Ensemble Accompaniment
(Photo: Google)

CONCLUSION

Based on the data results and analysis found through observation, interviews, and document studies, the conclusion is that using odd numbers, especially the number three, is significant for the Minahasa community. The number three is the basis of everything done in the

life of the Minahasa people, starting from the belief in three gods, the division of tribes, the division of families, and the division of the village. The use of odd numbers is very close not only to the daily life of the Minahasa people but the kolintang that is played, which consists of three blades and even songs that consist of only three notes, namely C – D – E (Do-Re-mi). Kolintang three was used for ritual ceremonies, but when Christianity entered kolintang tiga, this was considered pagan and eliminated kolintang tiga. It does not make the use of odd numbers disappear; odd numbers are still used today, even though kolintang has been transmuted but Still use odd number construction. Furthermore, even though the function of this kolintang has changed, it still uses odd number constructions.

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