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Social status relationship to purchase of tedong bonga for the Community Toraja Tribes

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Abstract. Death ceremony of the Toraja community is not like an actual death event. It really requires careful planning and enormous costs to implement it. The most important factor in this ceremony is how many buffaloes and what types they will sacrifice, because it becomes a benchmark in the assessment of the wealth and social status of the dead in society. For the noblemen class, a death ceremony will be held for a week by sacrificing hundreds of buffaloes and thousands of pigs. The selection of buffaloes also uses the best striped buffalo at exorbitant prices, while the simplest parties are only carried out one day and only cut one buffalo which is usually done by the lower social strata. Striped buffalo or called with “tedong bonga” used by Toraja people consist of two types, buffalo bonga and saleko buffalo. According to Toraja tribe belief, tedong bonga is considered a sacred animal that will be ridden by the spirit of the dead to the afterlife. The more buffalo, the spirit of the dead will quickly reach nirvana and his sins will be quickly erased. Those who are able to carry out traditional festivities with great fanfare and sacrifice many buffaloes will have elevated their social status, while those who are not able to carry out large traditional parties will be neglected and even the social status considered going down.

1. Introduction

Prospect of buffalo development is quite extensive because its role is not only used as labor to plow paddy fields, produce meat and milk, but also to fulfill much higher social-cultural needs, namely as sacrificial animals in traditional rituals, symbol of prosperity and social status when carrying out traditional party [1]. Even though the development of the world is progressing, Toraja tribe communities still hold tightly to their ancestral culture. The function of buffalo in this area can replace the physical value of money as a means of exchange. The sale or pledge of land and rice fields and even marriage dowry is still based on the number of buffalo whose their have. This is consistent with the opinion [2] that buffalo cattle are a social symbol for their owners in several tribes in Indonesia.

Toraja people prize their buffalo very much, all daily activities are always associated with buffaloes ranging from social, economic, cultural to religious life. From the 24 regencies in South Sulawesi, district where is inhabited by Toraja tribes have the highest buffalo population each year.



Table 1. Data on Buffalo Population in Several Districts in South Sulawesi from 2013 to 2017

Number	Regency	Year				
		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
1	Selayar	4,460	4,514	4,588	4,674	4,684
2	Bulukumba	1,529	1,548	1,570	1,588	1,619
3	Bantaeng	203	194	172	177	83
4	Jeneponto	3,310	3,597	3,759	3,860	3,937
5	Takalar	3,235	3,271	2,935	3,319	3,109
6	Gowa	1,468	1,537	1,670	1,607	1,388
7	Sinjai	1,127	1,202	1,233	1,108	1,134
8	Bone	3,841	3,955	4,075	4,198	4,505
9	Maros	2,634	2,950	3,332	3,818	4,330
10	Pangkep	3,068	3,183	3,288	3,423	3,141
11	Barru	707	834	839	720	699
12	Soppeng	75	105	91	46	69
13	Wajo	3,917	5,949	5,960	6,969	6,212
14	Sidrap	2,569	2,711	2,853	3,004	3,158
15	Pinrang	2,599	2,939	3,231	3,500	3,397
16	Enrekang	3,271	3,167	3,414	3,730	3,744
17	Tana Toraja	22,448	25,416	25,553	26,026	26,094
18	Palopo	453	496	498	489	486
19	Luwu	5,871	5,754	5,665	5,799	5,567
20	Luwu Utara	12,117	13,323	14,218	14,929	15,380
21	Luwu Timur	1,021	1,041	1,043	1,094	1,067
22	Makasar	398	386	366	301	274
23	Pare-Pare	91	25	72	68	65
24	North Toraja	20,419	20,582	18,121	21,002	20,731
Total		100,831	108,679	108,546	115,449	114,837

Source: South Sulawesi Provincial Animal Husbandry Service, 2018

Table 1 showed the population of buffalo in Tana Toraja in 2017 of 26,094 and North Toraja of 20,731. With an average percentage of 41% of the total buffalo population in all regencies in South Sulawesi Province [3]. These buffaloes come from various regions both within the South Sulawesi itself such as from Bone and Jeneponto, West Sulawesi such as from Mamasa Regency and also West Nusa Tenggara Province.

From the many buffaloes that come in, striped buffalo or specifically named “Tedong Bonga” which are local buffaloes of the Toraja Tribes are excellent compared to other buffaloes. This is because its body characteristics are quite unique because of his social functions in Toraja communities. The more beautiful the striped of buffalo is, the more expensive the price and the higher the social level of the owner [4]. In the end, buffalo became a symbol in measuring the wealth and social status of the Toraja tribe. The existence of social status will be reflected in the number of buffaloes slaughtered during the death party that is called “Rambu Solo”.

2. Material and methods

This research was carried out at Bolu Animal Market in North Toraja Regency in April to June 2018. The population was all Toraja people who had bought “Tedong Bonga” for customary party needs while the samples were taken by purposive sampling, which was based on respondents who were easily found as long as the research done. Analysis of the data used is descriptive qualitative analysis through snow ball depth interview techniques, namely in-depth data collection from one informant to another informant who understand the problems deeply.

3. Result and discussion

3.1 *Tedong bonga types and its characteristics*

There are several types of striped buffalo or “Tedong Bonga” known by Toraja, namely:

- a) Tedong Saleko, a type of buffalo that has a perfect stripe where the position of the symmetrical stripes throughout the buffalo body so the selling price is quite fantastic at least IDR 300 million to 1 billion per one buffalo. This buffalo is looking for a favorite of the Toraja people because its fur is very beautiful and it is difficult to get because of its very limited population. For those who can afford to buy buffaloes this will directly increase their prestige and make their social status rise in the community.
- b) Tedong Bonga, a type of buffalo that has striped body in large or small quantities. The minimum selling price from IDR 25 million to 175 million, it depends on the how much and large the distribution of stripes on the body. In contrast, female buffaloes are cheaper because they are only used as a complement, while male buffaloes, although not as beautiful as tedong saleko, are also a pride and sought by Toraja people.

Toraja people prize their buffaloes very much, especially striped buffaloes. They believe that striped buffalo are sacred animals that will be ridden by the spirit of the dead who guard and deliver them far from the doom and obstacles on their journey to the afterlife. The more striped buffalo sacrificed the faster the sin of the dead is erased and gets the best place on God side [5]. In addition, many striped buffaloes that are slaughtered symbolize the worthiness of the life of the dead spirit in the afterlife. The high and low selling prices of striped buffalo are also based on the assessment of their characteristics [6]. There are five assessment categories starting from the highest to the lowest factors, carried out:

1. Striped motif (black and white distribution on the body). This factor gets the highest rating in determining the selling price of striped buffalo. It is named Bonga saleko and bonga doti [7,6] are striped buffalo which have the highest selling price based on the assessment of the spread of black and white on their skin with a balanced composition with sprinkles of surrounding spots. The selling price reached IDR 300-350 million/ one buffalo and it can be higher price.
2. Eye color. Assessment of eye color is based on the color of the eyeball. Striped buffaloes that have white balls will have a high selling value. The type of buffalo for Torajan People is known as the “mata gara”.
3. Model and horn color. Yellowish-white horns and horns that are proportional to their posture will increase their selling value. Buffaloes that have a horn model that is balanced with the head will have a high price [8,6].
4. Tail (color and length tail). Striped buffalo that has a long tail over the knee will be much more expensive. Condition of buffalo tails that are long, clean, fat and the tail end has many feathers which will have high socio-economic value [9].
5. Hair vortex. Normally hair vortex is found in the nose, shoulders and hips [10]. The hair vortex which is located in the middle of the upper neck is not liked because it is believed that if the vortex is lost or cut, the owner will die quickly. While the navel is located in the scapula, if the buffalo goes away it is difficult to return or the buffalo becomes short-lived. This trust also determines the selling price of buffalo.

3.2 *Social stratification in Toraja Community*

Social stratification is the differentiation between the position of a person in the community where he or she lives. Stratification adopted by Toraja community is closed (closed social stratification), which is a rule that limits the possibility of a person moving from one layer to another following the rules made by ancestors and kept from generation to generation. This rule is unilateral because it protects those who are noble and have difficulty recognizing those who used to be low-caste to rise to the top because they are economically capable. Toraja Tribe divides its social class into several different social layers, ranging from high, medium and low [4]. Stratifications are known as the following levels:

- a. Tana' Bulaan (To Pareng).

To Pareng is the highest caste. In general, this nobility group has a very important role in society because they are tasked with creating rules which later become the leader of the highest customary government in each custom / custom group, for example the king and the nobility. They also controlled the rice fields in Toraja.

- b. Tana' Bassi (To Makaka)

Tana' bassi is an intermediate nobleman or king who is very closely related to Tana' Bulaan. They are free groups, they own rice fields but not as much as those of the nobility, they are community leaders, educated people, and others.

- c. Tana' Karurung (To Pa'tondokan)

This caste is a common people or is often called a condominium. These people have no power but become the backbone of toraja society.

- d. Tana' Kua-Kua (Kaunan)

This caste is devotees or servants of Tana 'Bulaan with certain jobs. For example, packing the dead and others, they are very trusted by their superiors because their ancestors have sworn heredity will devote themselves, but their king also has the obligation to help them in the difficulties of their lives. This group can not marry a higher class, such as caste of Tana 'Bulaan and Tana' Bassi.

3.3 *The meaningfulness of Tedong Bonga in social stratification*

For the Toraja society, speaking of funerals is not only about ceremonies, status, the number of buffaloes that are cut, but also about shame (siri'). The excitement of the Rambu Solo ceremony is determined by the social status of the deceased family, measured by the number of animals sacrificed. The more buffaloes are slaughtered, the higher their social status. Usually, for noble families known as the term "Rapasan Sapurandanan" the number of buffaloes slaughtered is at least 24 hundreds of tails and addition thousands of pigs. In the aristocratic class the solo signpost party will last for one week full of the number of tedong bonga that are sacrificed usually dozens of tails originating from relatives' contributions, sympathy from friends and those who pay debts. while the middle class population ranges from 8 buffaloes where 1-2 buffaloes should be include tedong bonga and then 50 pigs.

Over time, the notion of the social strata began to change. In the modern era, Toraja people think that they are capable of carrying out traditional festivities with great fanfare and sacrificing many buffaloes, so their family status will be elevated, while those who are not able to carry out large traditional parties will be neglected and even descended from class. Today's reality, some of the Toraja communities that were once wealthy and nobleman have slowly fallen into poverty and become servants. They can recover this condition by carrying out a redemption ceremony called "aluk sanda saratu" (all-hundred) which is to do a ceremony with all-hundred sacrifices such as one hundred buffaloes, one hundred pigs, one hundred chickens, etc [5]. The point is in the life of Toraja people, the implementation of the Rambu Solo ceremony must be based on a person's social strata so that those who are in the "kua kua class" means the level of the ceremony for "tana' kua kua" caste not the same as the ceremony for "tana karurung", even though one is economically capable. Thus, the Rambu Solo ceremony reflects the dignity or self-esteem of a family, especially the nobility. In other words, the success or excitement of the ceremony will have high social value and at the same time

increase the prestige of a family. Contrary, the family will feel very embarrassed when they cannot bring about their dead as they deserve.

Before carrying out the death ceremony of “rambu solo”, the family needs considerable time and costs to prepare for their needs. Before the party is held, it must first be built traditional cottage that is called “lantang- lantang” for Toraja Tribe to accommodate guests during the party. Guests who come consist of relatives whose numbers sometimes follow the dead family's social status, if they are noblemen, it will be thousands of guests to come. Besides that, a large place is also prepared as a buffalo race arena which is a popular program for both domestic and foreign people. For Toraja people, rambu solo ceremony is also a place to share with the surrounding community where slaughtered animals such as buffalos and pigs which are cut into pieces and distributed to all neighbors, traditional leaders, religious leaders and to worship places. The simplest party was only held last night and cut one buffalo while the noblemen carried out a full week and cut hundreds of buffaloes. The Toraja community strongly believes that many buffaloes are sacrificed in addition to maintaining the safety of the spirit of the dead also leaving inner peace for all members of the family left behind in the world. The spirit that has been purified through traditional rituals will always keep an eye on his grandchildren, including in giving sustenance and rejecting reinforcements.

4. Conclusion

The death ceremony which is popularized with rambu solo of the Toraja communities are not like an actual death event. It really requires careful planning and enormous costs to implement it. The most important factor in this party is how many buffaloes and what types they will sacrifice, because it becomes a benchmark in the assessment of the wealth and social status of the dead in society. For the noblemen caste, a death ceremony will be held for a week by sacrificing hundreds of buffaloes and thousands of pigs. The selection of buffaloes also uses the best striped buffalo as called tedong bonga at exorbitant prices, while the simplest parties are only carried out one day and only cut one buffalo which is usually done by the lower class. Tedong bonga used by Toraja people consist of two types; buffalo bonga and saleko buffalo. According to Toraja Tribe belief, tedong bonga is considered a sacred animal that will be ridden by the spirit of the dead to the afterlife. The more buffalo, the spirit of the dead will quickly reach nirvana and his sins will be quickly erased. Those who are able to carry out traditional festivities with great fanfare and sacrifice many buffaloes will have elevated their social status, while those who are not able to carry out large traditional ceremony will be neglected and even considered the social status going down.

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