



Gotong Royong in the Bugis Community: The Mappatetong Bola Tradition

Nisa Khusnul, Abdullah, Fitriansal

Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia

**Corresponding author:*

Abstract—The tradition of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) is a cultural treasure of Indonesia and an integral aspect of communal life, particularly within the *Mappatetong Bola* tradition of the Bugis community in South Sulawesi. This study explores *Mappatetong Bola* as a representation of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) in the construction of traditional Bugis stilt houses (*Mappatetong Bola*). Utilizing a qualitative methodology with a literature review approach, the research examines the values of solidarity, togetherness, and religiosity inherent in the tradition. The findings highlight that *Mappatetong Bola* not only embodies the unity of the Bugis community but also integrates spiritual and social principles that remain pertinent in contemporary contexts. As a vital symbol of social harmony, collective unity, and tolerance, this tradition underscores the importance of preserving cultural practices in the face of globalization.

Keywords— *Mappatetong bola*; Mutual cooperation; Bugis tradition; stilt houses; togetherness; social values.

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I. INTRODUCTION(Lukiyanto & Wijyaningtyas, 2020)

Gotong Royong in Indonesian is one of the most profound concepts in Indonesian culture. Etymologically, the term comes from the Javanese language. The word *gotong* means “to carry together,” while *royong* means “to work together.” In a broad sense, *gotong royong* refers to joint work activities to achieve certain goals that prioritize togetherness, solidarity, and the spirit of mutual assistance. “*Gotong royong* is a system of cooperation that has become a tradition, especially in rural areas, which is the cultural wealth of our nation.” (Bowen, 1986). According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), *gotong royong* is defined as “working together (helping, assisting).” This definition emphasizes the importance of collaboration in social life, where individuals not only act for their own benefit, but also for the benefit of the collective.

Gotong Royong in Cultural and Social Perspectives has been an integral part of Indonesian life since time immemorial (Siradjuddin, 2023). This tradition usually appears in various activities, such as building houses, cleaning the environment, and helping neighbors in need. *Gotong royong* is not just about physical labor, but also strengthening social relationships and building solidarity between community members.

Gotong royong is a basic value that is the foundation of various activities in social life. In general, *gotong royong* can be defined as a system of cooperation that involves additional labor from the family or community to meet labor needs, especially during busy times in the community's social environment (Sibarani, 2018).

In the *mappatetong bola* tradition in Kiru-Kiru village, the attitude of mutual cooperation is seen through the active participation of the community, especially those who live around the site of the tradition. Residents are jointly involved in the preparation process and implementation of the tradition, which shows togetherness and cooperation, which is the essence of *gotong royong*.

This research uses Emile Durkheim's theory of social solidarity as the basis for analysis. According to Durkheim, social solidarity is a relationship between individuals and groups based on shared moral values and beliefs. This relationship is strengthened by shared experiences that create mutual trust.

Durkheim also explains that solidarity is a condition in which members of a community trust each other, encouraging them to unite, take responsibility, and pay attention to common interests. The concept of social solidarity is one of the main ideas in Durkheim's sociological theory. He emphasized that relationships between individuals and groups based on moral values, collective beliefs, and shared

emotional experiences play an important role in strengthening the social structure of society.

Clifford Geertz, in his study of Javanese society, referred to *gotong royong* as a form of "moral subsistence" that describes collective cooperation as an effort to maintain social equilibrium and meet common needs (Bowen, 1986). This culture teaches that each individual has a responsibility to help others in order to achieve collective well-being.

The Bugis, for example, have the tradition of *Assamaturu'* which is a local form of *gotong royong*. In this tradition, cooperation is carried out in various activities such as *mappatetong bola* (building a house), *mappacakka' masigi* (cleaning the mosque), and so on. Each of these activities not only reflects cooperation but also fosters a sense of togetherness and trust between individuals in the community.

In Pancasila Ideology, *gotong royong* is also one of the important principles. This value is reflected in the third precept, *Persatuan Indonesia*, which emphasizes the importance of togetherness and solidarity in social life. In addition, the fourth precept, Democracy Led by Wisdom in Consultation/Representation, also contains the spirit of *gotong royong* in the context of joint decision-making. Law No. 23/2014 on Regional Government Article 385 Paragraph (1): "Local governments seek community empowerment through cooperation in the form of *gotong royong*." And Law No. 11/2010 on Cultural Heritage Article 83 Paragraph (1): "The preservation of cultural heritage can be carried out through community activities, including with the *gotong royong* approach."

Soekarno, Indonesia's first president, called *gotong royong* "the soul of the Indonesian nation." He emphasized that *gotong royong* was the core of the life of the nation and state, which had to be maintained as social capital. In line with this, Ki Hajar Dewantara stated that *gotong royong* reflected harmony between the rights and obligations of individuals towards society, thus creating a complementary relationship.

This research uses a qualitative approach by applying the literature study method as the main data collection technique. According to Reinbold (2013), literature study is a series of activities that involve the process of collecting data from various references or libraries. In this context, researchers attempt to obtain as much information as possible related to the research topic being raised, by ensuring that the sources used are relevant and directly related to the research problem.

The sources of research data collected in this study come from various library references, such as books, journal articles, scientific magazines, and the results of previous research, both in the form of theses and dissertations. In addition, the data used can also be sourced from other supporting sources, such as information taken from the internet, newspapers, and other media deemed relevant to the topic discussed. Thus, through literature study, researchers are expected to compile a strong and in-depth theoretical foundation to support the analysis in this study.

II. METHODS

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III. RESULTS

In this modern era, people's habits are often interesting to observe and document, especially traditions and customs that are still maintained today. The nature of this tradition is also legally recognized in Indonesia. This is stated in the 1945 Constitution Article 18B paragraph 2 which states, "The State recognizes and respects the unity of customary law communities and their traditional rights as long as they are still alive and in accordance with the development of society and the principles of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, which are regulated by law."

This statement shows that Indonesia has a wealth of diverse cultures and traditions, varying from one tribe to another, and most of which are still preserved today. However, it cannot be denied that in this era of globalization, the culture and traditions of the community have shifted due to technological advances that have changed the pattern of life of the community at large and across regional boundaries.

One of the tribes that still maintains its customs in Indonesia is the Bugis tribe. This tribe developed in South Sulawesi Province with a culture that includes language, lontara script, and their traditional government system. Several major Bugis kingdoms, such as Luwu, Bone, Soppeng, Pinrang and Sidenreng Rappang, became the center of their cultural development. Despite being spread across many regencies, the customs of the Bugis tribe are still maintained.

In Bugis society, the values of kinship and togetherness are important aspects of their social order. One tradition that reflects these values is the spirit of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) known as *Mappatetong Bola*. This tradition illustrates the strong solidarity and spirit of togetherness among the Bugis community.

In the view of Bugis society, every individual goes through seven main phases of life that are considered sacred. Each of these phases is usually accompanied by a ritual process as part of the life journey. The seven phases include: *esso rijiangna* (day of birth), *esso ripasellengna* (day of Islamicization or circumcision), *esso ripalebbinna* (day of Qur'an recitation), *esso ripabbotingenna* (day of marriage), *esso ripabbolana* (day of house construction), *esso ripahhajjinna* (day of pilgrimage), and *esso rimatenna* (day of death).

Mappatetong Bola comes from two words, *Mappatetong* which means "to build" and *Bola* which means "house". Thus,

Mappatetong Bola can be interpreted as the ritual of constructing the framework of a typical stilt house of the Bugis community.

The *Mappatetong Bola* tradition is one of the ritual ceremonies passed down from generation to generation by the ancestors. This ceremony has important values that are reflected in every stage of its implementation, where each process is always full of deep meaning.

The *Mappatetong Bola* tradition has important meanings and values that are relevant to understand, especially in today's modern society. The presence of sophisticated and instant technology has facilitated various aspects of life, such as household affairs, agriculture, and development. However, this development also has an impact on the depletion of traditional values in society. This can be seen in the changing shape and process of house construction in Anabanua Village.

In the past, houses in the village were built using traditional materials, especially wood, and in the form of houses on stilts. The construction process involved community cooperation through *gotong royong*. However, over time, there has been a shift. Now, many people prefer to build houses from cement materials, known as stone-built houses. This shift occurs due to several factors, such as the more economical cost of building this type of houses compared to wooden houses, as well as the better efficiency, comfort and durability of stone-built houses. This reflects a change in values in society due to the influence of globalization.

Culture, as an ancestral heritage, actually has rich meanings and must be maintained in accordance with the pattern of social life. One tradition that should be preserved is *Mappatetong Bola*. This tradition involves certain mechanisms and stages in its construction, as well as customs that have been passed down from generation to generation. *Gotong royong* is the main element in the process of building a house on stilts, which not only has the value of togetherness but also reflects social harmony.

It is also important to explore the influence of this tradition on the lives of local people, including how its values are in line with Islamic law. With this understanding, it is hoped that the *Mappatetong Bola* tradition will remain relevant and able to survive amidst the changing times.

IV. DISCUSSION

The *Mappatetong Bola* tradition or the activity of building a typical Bugis stilt house is an event that is always crowded and carried out together. The process starts from building the frame of the house until it is completed, then closed with a meal provided by the house owner and the community helping. In addition to being a moment of mutual cooperation, this tradition is also a place to stay in touch, eat together, talk and joke among residents.

According to the traditions and beliefs of the Bugis people, there are customary rules and guidelines that guide their thinking and actions in life. These customs are passed down by ancestors and include how to socialize, manners, and how to build a house (Kotarumalos, 2022). Knowledge and traditions related to house construction are passed down from generation to generation through both oral and written texts. Knowledge taught orally is usually applied directly in the

practice of building houses, so it is easier to remember and not easily forgotten (Thamrin et al., 2021).

Meanwhile, (Cahyadi, 2016; Hamriani & Garim, 2016) explains that written heritage is usually in the form of manuscripts on wooden boards or scrolls of palm leaves called *lontara*. This manuscript is only used by ritual experts during house construction. It covers various important matters related to house construction, such as the selection of a good time and day, location, materials, and procedures for building and occupying the house, all of which are related to traditional rituals and ceremonies.

For the Bugis community, a house is not just a place to live or a physical refuge, but also a sacred space that is the center of social and ritual activities, such as marriage, birth, death and other ceremonies (Wihanry & Chyan, 2015). The Bugis community, which is predominantly Muslim, still preserves ritual ceremonies in the procession of house construction. These rituals aim to invoke safety and protection from disasters while the house is occupied. Therefore, the process of building a Bugis house always involves spiritual concepts (Syarif et al., 2016). The Bugis community is also known to have a strong spirit of mutual cooperation, especially in building houses on stilts (Nuh, 2016). *Gotong royong* is one of the characteristics of rural communities that is an important part of maintaining cultural values, especially amid the challenges of globalization. This tradition has been passed down from generation to generation and is still maintained today. One prominent form of mutual cooperation is the tradition of *mappalette bola* or moving houses. This tradition is carried out when the house owner wants to move his residence to a new location, involving a lot of human labor to do so (Cahaya et al., 2019).

The construction of a Bugis house is carried out through several stages that require a lot of labor (Syarif et al., 2016). In general, the process is divided into three main stages: preparation, house building, and adjustment to be ready for occupancy. Each stage must follow customary requirements. Therefore, the process requires the involvement of various parties who understand the rules, norms and procedures of Bugis house construction. According to (Bare et al., 2021), those involved include the house owner, *Sanro Bola* (ritual expert), *Panre Bola* (wood craftsman), community leaders, and villagers, all of whom have important roles in building a Bugis house.

According to research informants, this tradition has important meanings and values, especially the value of mutual cooperation which is very typical in community life. One of the main characteristics of this tradition is that it is carried out together. The value of *gotong royong* is evident when constructing the frame of the house on stilts, which involves relatives, neighbors and the village community. Their participation, especially in building a large house, requires cooperation and voluntary help.

The *Mappatetong Bola* tradition involves a lot of labor because building a house requires the help of many people. In this process, residents help each other to ease the burden on homeowners. In addition, this activity is also accompanied by the recitation of prayers or *barazanji* to ask for protection, so it contains religious values. This tradition also strengthens relationships between residents, and can even improve relationships that may have previously been strained.

This tradition is a lively event that involves almost the entire village. Women also enliven the atmosphere by preparing various traditional foods such as *doko-doko* (banana cake), *bella utti* (banana compote), and others. The spirit of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) is felt as the villagers shout and work together to build the house. This value reflects the tolerance and social strength that characterizes village communities. In this modern era, it is important to maintain this value so that it is not eroded by individualistic attitudes.

That way, *Mappatetong Bola* is not only a part of culture but also a symbol of togetherness, mutual cooperation, and religiosity that needs to be preserved in the midst of changing times.

V. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this article highlights the importance of the tradition of *gotong royong* in Bugis society, particularly through the practice of *Mappatetong Bola*. This tradition is a form of collective cooperation in building houses on stilts that involves all members of the community, from relatives, neighbors, to traditional leaders. *Mappatetong Bola* is not only a house-building ritual but also a means to strengthen social relations, strengthen solidarity, and maintain the values of togetherness in the community. The implementation process, which involves many parties, shows a high spirit of mutual assistance, so this tradition is a symbol of tolerance, social harmony and religiosity.

Although modern technology and globalization have brought significant changes in people's lifestyles, the noble values contained in the *Mappatetong Bola* tradition are still relevant to be maintained. This tradition reflects the local wisdom of the Bugis people which is rich in spiritual and cultural meanings. In addition to strengthening social relations, this practice also serves as a medium to maintain the sustainability of ancestral culture as well as an expression of gratitude and a request for protection to the Creator. Therefore, efforts to preserve this tradition are very important, especially in the midst of modernization that tends to erode traditional values. By preserving this tradition, Bugis communities can continue to strengthen their cultural identity while contributing to the preservation of Indonesia's cultural heritage as a whole.

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