

Out of Crisis: Maintaining Hegemony through Rambu Solo Ritual in Toraja

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Abstract

Rambu Solo ritual has been an inseparable part of the Toraja people for hundreds of years. Nevertheless, this luxurious funeral ritual had experienced various organic crises as new social forces emerged. Using ethnographic methods, this paper attempts to explore how traditional leaders of Toraja maintain the existence of this ritual. Using Gramsci's theory of hegemony, this article argues that their efforts were carried out in three phases. Firstly, political awareness phase, namely as aristocrat elites, they legitimized the feudal and religious authority of Aluk Todolo belief system that supported the Rambu Solo ritual through modern political strategies; secondly, the phase of solidarity of interests which carried out by negotiating and building commitment with social forces opposing the Rambu Solo ritual; and third, the phase of reaching consensus from the subaltern group is done by involving them in the Pasilaga Tedong betting, one of a series of Rambu Solo rituals where they see it as a medium to show empathy for grieving families rather than betting.

Keywords

aluk todolo; hegemony; organic crisis; rambu solo; Toraja

INTRODUCTION

Rambu Solo is a funeral ceremony in Toraja that has existed for hundreds of years. One of the striking uniqueness of this ritual is the extraordinary mobilization of resources which can cost up to billions of rupiah. The luxury of this ritual was confirmed by Volkman (1984: 4) who traveled to Toraja in 1978. Some previous studies also reported that luxury in the Solo Rambu ritual had existed even long before the Dutch came to Toraja in 1906 (see, Tangdilintin, 1978; Plaisier, 1993; Sarira, 1996; Jong, 2003; Bigalke, 2005). The luxury level of this ritual is determined by the number and variety of types of buffalo that are slaughtered as symbols of social status, wealth and most importantly, as a metaphor for vehicles to use by the spirits to reach *puya* (heaven). Thus, the more and

expensive types of the buffalo, the faster the spirit will reach *puya*.

Rambu Solo is the most important part of Aluk Todolo, the traditional religion of Torajanese before Christianity entered in 1915. Aluk Todolo taught Rambu Solo as a path that delivers spirits to eternity and merges with the ancestors in *puya*. That way, the splendor and perfection of Rambu Solo can determine the fate of spirits in the afterlife. The more luxurious the Rambu Solo ritual is held, the stronger the guarantee of the spirit—especially the spirits of the aristocrats—to enter heaven and transform into

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to'membali puang (god) and be able to bless his/her descendants and the whole Toraja.

Even after they embraced Christianity, belief in the conception of death by Aluk Todolo was still dominant so that Christianity seems to have no choice but to compromise this pagan-style ritual. One form of Christian compromise is manifested in liturgies and sermons in each ritual procession. In general, the compromise between Christianity and Rambu Solo rituals has spiritually constructed the way of life of Torajanese which now lives according to Christian values and dies according to Aluk Todolo. In this case, Aluk Todolo's beliefs manifested through the Rambu Solo ritual for Torajanese have become integrators of social life and function to preserve their identity as Torajanese. Because, as described by Fakhruroji (2019) a ritual is not only functions as a religious event but also as a vehicle for social interaction and communication among fellow community members where they can show their identity.

However, the ideology of death in the Rambu Solo ritual has led ambivalence. On one hand, the luxury of Rambu Solo has become collective pride for Torajanese, but on the other hand, that pride brings its own burden. The high cost of this ritual encourages them to work and save money to finance the rituals of family members and themselves. This burden continues beyond the ritual arena since they have to pay their parents' inheritance debt. When Rambu Solo is held, the mourning family will get gifts from mourners in consumption materials, money, pigs and buffalo without being asked. These gifts will become a debt that must be returned when the giver conducts the same ritual or at any time they need. Although this debt can be passed on to descendants, most sources of prolonged conflict in the Toraja social space are often triggered by this reason. Social punishment such as exclusion for individuals and descendants who were unable to pay these debts has created a multigenerational obligation and a constant effort to pay it off.

The preservation of this ritual is constantly maintained by traditional leaders

consisting of aristocrats called Puang and Pareng. Before the arrival of the Dutch in Toraja, Puang and Pareng were the highest leaders in traditional government structure of Toraja who also served as religious leaders of Aluk Todolo (Bigalke, 2005). However, their power was removed through the signing of a letter which united federalism and unitarianism in the late 1950s (Jong, 2003: 139) This had implications for the loss of their role from the political and religious fields (Bigalke, 2005; Pasande, 2011). Nevertheless, their authority is still dominant in regulating the everyday life of the Toraja people (Ernawati et al., 2018).

In this socio-historical context, the complexity of the Rambu Solo can not only be seen as a cultural practice that stands alone but also indicates the existence of hegemonic efforts in normalizing the ideology of death into common sense. On the surface, ideas about heaven, hell, and animals sacrificed in the Rambu Solo ritual can be accepted naturally by the Toraja people. However, if these ideas are used to show a way of life that is passed down over generations, it indicates that there are dominant groups behind the perpetuation of this ritual. In other words, the Rambu Solo ritual can be assumed as a hegemonic practice to maintain the status and power of aristocratic classes who are also traditional leaders.

Rambu Solo ritual is generally in line with the concept of hegemony that was sparked by Antonio Gramsci which illustrates how the ruling class dominates other classes by manipulating the culture of society to present their views as "common sense" which is defined as a view passed down from the *pasa* without criticism (Gramsci, 1971). On its way, Rambu Solo ritual has been opposed and put this ritual in an organic crisis that correlates with political and religious interests. Therefore, this paper is specifically attempts to describe the organic crisis along with the emergence of new social forces organized by the working-class movement which aims to terminate the monopoly of feudalism through cultural deculturation, and then establish new interests. Therefore, the hegemonic efforts by the aristocratic

elite were not only aimed at preserving this ritual but also to perpetuate their status and position as elite with all power and influence they already have.

Several studies of funeral rituals in other cultural contexts have been carried out. For instance, Tsuji (2006) studied the motivation behind the *Soushiki* ceremony (funeral rites) in Japan which also spent a lot of costs and required people to exchange *koden* (cash) in large amounts as a condolence form. The assumption was built on the theory that people take advantage strategically from funeral rituals to perpetuate cultural act. Tsuji concluded that discourse appeared to be hegemonic actually contained multiplicity, fluidity, contradiction, and ambiguity. In addition, hegemonic funeral ritual is also found in Bali which studied by Warren (1993) who used popular culture approach. He explore the implications of a death ceremony that interpreted inter-village relations and analyzed the symbolic codes that bind humans on earth, ancestors and reciprocal relationships that integrate the living and the dead. Warren's research states that although the ideology of hierarchy and inequality marks the political and judicial system in Balinese social and cultural life, people try to maintain their existence by opposing the conception of cultural interpretation.

Another funeral ritual was also studied by Zahorka (2013) on the Dayak Banaq Ohookng tribe in East Kalimantan. He generally revealed the *Kwangkai* funeral ritual that lasted for seven days or more and required the host (the mourning family) to entertain guests, especially the traditional leader. For those cannot afford, the ritual will be three days, but the ritual conditions must be carried out, namely the sacrifice of 12 pigs and buffalo. In order to comply with customary rules, *Sentagih* (a giant wooden statue as a representation of ancestors) is placed in the middle of the arena to "watch" the stages of the ritual so that it runs according to the rules. The estimated cost of this ritual is around 100 million rupiahs, a significant amount for the Dayaks who rely on agriculture.

Specifically, Toraja and the Rambu

Solo ritual itself have been attracted many researchers. Scarduelli (2000) for example, analyzes the phenomenon of cultural shifts and changes in Toraja identity using cultural materialism paradigm. He revealed that Toraja culture, especially the Solo Rambu ritual, was used to strengthen the capitalist economic system that was packaged as discourse of preserving history and culture. This has resulted that customary traditions and ritual practices not only being separated from their original meaning but also has reinterpreted and renegotiated. The commodification of the Rambu Solo ritual also involves other objects from the material culture of Toraja, *tongkonan*, and *tautau* (a kind of wooden stupa representing the ancestors of Toraja) which have become objects of consumption which implied has implications for the loss of meaning and turns into merely antiques and souvenirs.

Meanwhile, as a cultural practice, Rambu Solo ritual has also been studied from the religious structure and transformation of Toraja (Buijs, 2006). Buijs interpreted symbols, religious ideas, cosmological concepts, and spells used in Rambu Solo ritual and concluded that the aspects those constituting religion, spirit and gods and the relationships they experienced about developments have transformed their interaction of religion and culture. Therefore, religious ideas and expressions must be studied as phenomena related to other aspects of society. The Rambu Solo ritual has also been studied with the socio-cultural paradigm by Adams (1998) and Bigalke (2005). Adams stated that; 1) the traditions, customs, and ritual practices of Rambu Solo are not only separate from the original cultural meaning but have been reinterpreted and renegotiated; 2) Rambu Solo as a symbolic marker of the status of nobility has changed into a shared ethnic identity. While Bigalke explained how government support for Rambu Solo ritual has made Toraja's position increasingly taken into account.

Other studies were also conducted by Yamashita (1994), Waterson (1984) and Adams (1997b) in the context of culture as a socioeconomic mode. Adams, for exam-

le, reviewed the shift in meaning in Rambu Solo ritual practice which had formed “habitus,” which was internalized and structured in the unconscious. Meanwhile, Waterson stated that the ritual practice of Rambu Solo is a reconstructed conscious tradition. This is based on the need for something to be staged for the tourism industry, rather than something unconsciously embedded in society.

Several studies with various paradigms and foci show that both the Rambu Solo ritual and the funeral ritual in other cultural contexts have not alluded to Gramsci’s hegemony theory as a theory or perspective. Therefore this article is significant because it describes how the cultural ideology of Rambu Solo ritual carries out hegemony to the Toraja people and how this ritual is maintained by the aristocratic elite in dealing with various organic crises so that their influence and power remain sustainable.

Hegemony theory was emerged in Marxism tradition which introduced by George Plekhanov and Vladimir Lenin related to the struggle of Russian society to undermine the old order. The popularity of the theory increased when Gramsci added new dimensions to this concept where his conception of hegemony refers to the relationship between civil society and the state as the structural level (Gramsci, 1971: 12). Gramsci distinguishes between coercion and consent as alternative mechanisms of social power. Coercion refers to the capacity of the state that can be used against those who refuse to participate in capitalist production relations. Instead, hegemonic forces work to convince individuals and other social classes to accept social values and norms of inherently exploitative systems. It is a form of social force that relies on volunteerism and participation, rather than threats of punishment for disobedience (Gramsci, 1971: 137).

Therefore, Gramsci uses the term “hegemony” not only in the activity of the ruling class, but also to describe the influence of progressive forces (Brown, 2009). In this way, hegemony is also the process by which social groups gain power to lead and how they expand and maintain their power. Ac-

cordingly, Gramsci sees that hegemony also arises in the way civil society builds its political power to deal with repressive regimes so the role of intellectuals is very important. However, intellectuals are not characterized by intrinsic thinking activities, but by their functions. Many people can be called intellectuals—what he calls traditional intellectuals—but not everyone have intellectual functions, namely those categorized as organic intellectuals (Gramsci, 1971: 9).

Furthermore, (Gramsci, 1971: 181-182) describes three main moments in the hegemony process. The first is the moment of economic-corporate level which is illustrated through a context where a trader feels he has a moral obligation to support other traders but has not built solidarity with the manufacturer. Meanwhile, the second is the moment of solidarity of interest among all members in the social class but still in the economic sphere. Then, the third is the moment where each group realizes the importance of having a broader interest interconnected above other interests to build the present and future of the whole group beyond economic interests. At this moment the interests that are built must also be the interests of other subordinated groups.

However, even though economic interests are integral in the concept of hegemony, the important role given by the ruling group to the core that determines economic activity is also crucial. Because, hegemony which achieved by merely struggling for the economy and cannot extend to other social classes will fall on corporatism (Gramsci, 1971). In other words, ideology cannot be separated from everyday life. This ideology was brought to life by social meanings which he called common sense, namely how ordinary people understand the world as a result of natural and historical processes. These sources of common sense can be used by the dominant class and other special social forces to build a hegemonic belief system that will seek to reaffirm the status quo and break alternative political projects by making social change seem unrealistic. Common sense is a place where ideology built at the same time as a place of resistance and chal-

lenge for the ideology (Gramsci, 1971: 55).

Therefore, the use of Gramsci's theory of hegemony in this article is to see how a cultural ideology is reconstructed in various streams of meaning and encompasses a variety of ideologies so that it affects the Torajanese worldview. On the one hand, the birth of new forces in a particular cultural context becomes a kind of challenge to test the hegemonic practices of the Rambu Solo ritual. But on the other hand, the aristocratic elite who are the dominant class try to perpetuate this ritual as a hegemonic practice which then makes them involved in hegemonic moments as illustrated in Gramsci's thought.

METHODS

This study uses ethnographic methods that aim to understand the Torajanese worldview concerning the Rambu Solo ritual. Data obtained by directly observed the field to gain the primary data needed, namely to the regions of Toraja and Makassar. In addition to field work, research is also conducted by tracking documentation and information related to the Rambu Solo ritual in print and social media. Data collection is done by participatory observation, in-depth interviews using the technique; recording, photos, and notes.

This study was operationally involved informants who were chosen purposively to obtain comprehensive information from various perspectives regarding the ritual hegemony of Rambu Solo. The informants in this study consisted of; 1) customary council; 2) priestess; 2) church assemblies; 3) government officials of Tana Toraja Regency; 4) Torajanese those stay at Tana Toraja and North Toraja who came from various level of social classes in Tana Toraja; 5) Torajanese who migrate and live in Makassar. These data are then classified according to the purpose of the study to be verified before being presented as a conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Geographically, Toraja is a mountainous re-

gion and is about 300 kilometers from the city of Makassar. The income of the population comes from agriculture, animal husbandry, employment in government, tourism and small-scale industry. All worship activities; rituals, rules of daily life and customs that connect fellow human beings, ancestors, gods, and celestial powers are summarized in the concept of *Aluk* (Plaisier, 1993). For Torajanese, *Aluk* is not only a religion but also a comprehensive way of life implemented in custom (Kobong, 2008: 64). *Aluk* has very broad scope, for example; *Aluk Padang* concerns regulations for agrarian sector; *Aluk Banua* concerns the rules regarding the construction of tongkonan; and *Aluk Rambu Solo*, related to the rules of death and funeral (Kobong, 2008: 79).

For Torajanese, this world is a duplicate of the spirit world so life in the world is similar to life after death but cannot be seen and touched (Tangdilintin, 1978: 90). Since death is a process, Toraja people believe that a person is considered to have actually died after the entire ritual procession of Rambu Solo is carried out (Tangdilintin, 1978: 90). Before the Rambu Solo ritual, the body was still considered as *to'makula* (sick) so that the deceased was still provided with food, drink, cigarettes and invited to communicate. Thus, Rambu Solo becomes a kind of legitimacy of one's death (Kobong, 2008; Sarira, 1996; Tangdilintin, 1978)

Rambu Solo ritual is a kind of gate that delivers dead people to the afterlife so they must be equipped with supplies (Sarira, 1996; Tangdilintin, 1978). *Aluk Todolo* also taught that the corpse of an aristocrat must be enlivened by the number of buffaloes and pigs that are slaughtered so the spirit can be well received. This respect for aristocrat spirits is motivated by their belief that the spirits have the power to determine the good and bad fortunes of the living. But on the contrary, the fate of their spirits was also determined by the Rambu Solo ritual which was held. Nevertheless, the teachings of *Aluk Todolo* do not allow non-aristocrats to get ceremonies as the aristocrats have since the spirits of "ordinary people" will only live in the world of the dead, not reaching

puya (Kobong, 2008).

The series of rituals on the Solo Rambu Ritual is practically consisted of; *Maro*, meaning abstaining from consuming rice for the nuclear family and *petoe aluk to mate* (organizers of Rambu Solo) during the ceremony. *Maro* is a sign of mourning so the food served for spirits is similar with one which consumed by families who are grieving as a form of sadness. Every funeral must end with the *kumande* ritual as a sign that the family may return to consume rice which is then ended with the *UntoE Sero* (cleansing) procession by slaughtering a buffalo and the entire series of obligations to serve the deceased is ended.

Organic Crisis of Rambu Solo: Religion, Culture, and Politics

Along with its development, the Rambu Solo ritual confronts new social forces that aim to eradicate the monopoly of feudalism through cultural deculturation in order to establish new interests. This has implications for Rambu Solo ritual to experience some organic crisis that has the potential to threaten Rambu Solo ritual practice along with the power of the aristocratic elite therein. The organic crisis was generally can be categorized into three things namely religion, culture and politics. The first crisis occurred in the 1913-1920s when the Dutch government allowed the *Gereformeerde Zendings Bond* (GZB) to build the foundation of Christianity in Toraja (Loosdrecht, 2005: 30-34) which was basically triggered by the rapid development of Islam in Indonesia. The spread of Christianity was carried out through educational channels aimed at making Christian teachings acceptable to the community without causing conflict with their previous belief system. The first missionary in Toraja, van de Loosdrecht, believed that the aristocrat elites were very influential on the success of the mission because if they became Christians it would be followed by many people so van de Loosdrecht tried to approach them persuasively (Loosdrecht, 2005: 102-111). Previously, the missionary had tried other ways that tried to eradicate Aluk Todolo following the Rambu Solo ritu-

al but when he realized the resistance of the aristocratic elite, he finally chose to emphasize education.

This rejection also made van de Loosdrecht intend to bring down the Toraja social order by alienating the aristocratic elite from Toraja and its people. Van de Loosdrecht then lobbied the Dutch government to support the intrigue he drafted. As a result, a number of cases such as misuse of funds and incest were charged on a number of aristocratic elites while those who refused to cooperate with the GZB mission were exiled and died in exile (Bigalke, 2005: 33). Furthermore, he also changed his conversion tactics by no longer approaching the aristocratic elite, but rather the middle and the slave class. He began to “attack” Aluk Todolo and Rambu Solo ritual as wasteful and increases inequality (Loosdrecht, 2005: 90-95).

Whereas previously van de Loosdrecht looked positively at this ritual through his report which wrote, “*It is also good for the (Dutch) government not to prohibit this ritual because people can still continue to worship their ancestors. If the government totally eliminates all these animistic habits without providing a better substitute, maybe the government will unintentionally make these people convert to Islam.*” However, after the rejection of the conversion of some aristocratic elites, his views changed. This can be seen from his writings, “*the mission’s task is to fight against these inappropriate animistic*” (Loosdrecht, 2005: 90-95). This criticism resulted in his death and the uprising of the aristocratic elite in 1971. Although this small uprising was able to be quelled and led to the exile of a number of the elite involved, the revolt had already aroused the aristocratic elite’s awareness that the mission of the GZB and the Dutch government not only meant to eradicate the religion of Aluk Todolo but also to eliminate their power (Bigalke, 2005: 156-160).

The second crisis was triggered by the emergence of resistance movements from progressive groups against the aristocratic elite. These progressive groups—hereinafter referred to as the modern elite—are the result of education developed by the GZB mis-

sion. Education has transformed Torajanese into a socio-cultural entity where they begin to refer to the world and their ethnicity as “Toraja” (Bigalke, 2005: 208). Literally, the modern elite is the union of various classes. They consist of descendants of aristocrats and non-aristocrats who were educated with the rhetoric of the GZB mission. Initially, education was only for elite aristocratic children as a way to convert their parents.

At this point, the GZB mission not only to “arm” the new generation of Toraja with education but also to make them new agents of christianization that are packaged in the discourse of the struggle for ethnic identity. As expected by the GZB mission, modern elites interpret the awareness of ethnic identity as to free themselves from the cultural burden of Rambu Solo ritual. This can be seen from the modern elite’s agenda which openly declare their struggle to abolish the Rambu Solo ritual which is considered did not in accordance with the progress and general standards of civilization. The discourse of ethnic identity has succeeded in encouraging young people to accept the ideology of Christianity that opposes the central characteristics of the Toraja cultural tradition (Bigalke, 2005; Pasande, 2011).

The departure of the Dutch after 36 years of occupying Toraja became a turning point for the hegemony struggle of Rambu Solo ritual. Supported by the Japanese who occupied Toraja in 1942, the aristocratic elite sought to reaffirm their aristocratic and religious authority over Christians who were considered as bullies. They began to mobilize followers of Aluk Todolo to carry out “attacks” against opponents of the Rambu Solo ritual. One of the attacks was took place in the Sanggala district, where the body of a converted aristocrat was stolen and received a ritual procession of Rambu Solo before it was buried. Although modern elites and Christian leaders do not accept such treatment, they are powerless to prevent the coercive actions of followers of Aluk Todolo (Bigalke, 2005).

The strong resistance of the aristocratic elite made the GZB mission have no

choice but to allow Christians to practice the Rambu Solo ritual. The modern elite and GZB mission realize that being violent and opposing the Rambu Solo ritual will only bring back hostility (Bigalke, 2005: 172). Nevertheless, hidden efforts to eliminate the Rambu Solo ritual are still ongoing. But this was returned by the aristocratic elite by pressuring people to stop coming to the Church and causing the number of church members to decrease in the first months of the Japanese occupation. As a result, parish evangelists no longer receive regular salaries, nor do Christian teachers and they changed their professions to become merchants who moved around and took part in playing cockfighting bets. This caused the spread of Christianity to automatically stop in many districts (Bigalke, 2005: 264).

The third organic crisis was caused by the transformation of the Toraja political system that took place under the Sukarno regime. In order to restore power from the hands of the Dutch government, the Sukarno government replaced feudal authority with a Western democratic governance system (Ruibing as cited in Jong, 2003: 139). In this case, the traditional elites throughout Indonesia were largely banned from engaging in the political domain (Bigalke, 2005: 314-315) which resulted in heavy losses to the aristocratic elite in Toraja (Van Lifj as cited in Jong, 2003: 139). However, this system was beneficial for modern elite which mostly coming from the middle class. They quickly rose to political power through the establishment of the Indonesian Christian Party (*Partai Kristen Indonesia*, Parkindo) to voice reforms in the government, religion and culture system.

At the same time, the Rambu Solo ritual, which had strengthened in the early days of the Japanese occupation, back to weakened when Toraja was attacked by fundamentalist guerrillas Darul Islam (DI/TII) in 1952 and reached its peak in 1953 and thereafter (Morrel, 1998). The DI/TII attack was the most difficult time for Torajanese. They arrested the followers of Aluk Todolo, boycotted the ritual of Solo Rambu, and destroyed the religious sites of Aluk Todolo

and causing Torajanese to defensively convert to Christianity. This was stated by the representative of *Badan Pekerja Sinode Gereja* (the Church Synod Workers Agency), Elvis Leme as follows,

“The choice of Torajanese on Christianity rather than Islam was more determined by ethnic-cultural factors than religious ones since in Christianity, cultural identity is considered more secure than Islam, and in daily life, no significant difference between Christian values and Aluk Todolo...” (Interview with Elvis Leme, July 2018).

This was reinforced by Parkindo’s efforts to respond to DI/TII actions by actively visiting Toraja suburbs which led to many people join Parkindo (Crystal, 1977) and Parkindo’s popularity once again opposed the power of the aristocratic elite (Ramstedt, 2004: 199). The Toraja government, which for centuries had been under the control of the aristocratic elite, turned to Parkindo, who won the 1955 General Election in Toraja (Bigalke, 2005: 259). After the strategic abolition of the aristocratic elite in the colonial period, this was the second time in Toraja history that the aristocratic elite was removed. This means that the Rambu Solo ritual is also threatened with extinction as the aristocratic elite’s power ceases.

Maintaining Hegemony of Rambu Solo

This section will reveal the phases of perpetuating the hegemony of the Rambu Solo ritual by an aristocrat elite. The first phase was to build the legitimacy of power and traditional religion. In order to establish the hegemony of Rambu Solo ritual, the aristocrat elite felt the need to align themselves with the modern elite. The first step was trying to build a new alliance with the fellow aristocratic elite in Makale and Rantepao to build awareness of the importance to maintain the status quo and political stability. The formation of an aristocrat elite’s awareness of uniting power is indicated by their willingness to compromise with the reforms initiated by Parkindo. Bigalke (2005: 66) sees this as an effort to preserve the feudalism system because they transfer power to their descendants as an act of passive re-

volution to rearrange their power while waiting for the right moment to return to the power. Gramsci stated that the passive revolution was the characteristic of the bourgeoisie when its hegemony was threatened (Gramsci, 1971: 119).

The struggle to rebuild hegemony among the aristocratic elite was marked by incorporating the interests of non-aristocrats into their interests. When Parkindo offered protection from the cultural burden of the Rambu Solo ritual, the aristocratic elite emphasized their obligation to protect the ritual by reversing Parkindo’s aggressive struggle as a “social problem” that must be resisted. To regain the support of non-aristocrats, they formed the opinion that Parkindo aimed to destroy cultural heritage of the ancestors (Bigalke, 2005: 366-386). The traumatic DI/TII attack caused the Torajanese to reject all forms of religious militancy including militant Christianity. This makes it easier for aristocratic elites to lead public opinion in accordance with their goals. Returning the power of the aristocratic elite, they succeeded in defending the Aluk Todolo religion which in 1967 received official recognition from the government (Ramstedt, 2004: 185-190). The New Order gave full support to Aluk Todolo’s religion by facilitating the promotion of Aluk Todolo in modern schools so Aluk Todolo could compete with Christianity and Islam for spiritual and political propagation (Volkman, 1985: 167).

At this point, the role of the New Order was pivotal in perpetuating the feudalism system in Toraja. Under the New Order government, the power of the aristocratic elite which had previously controlled in a traditional leadership format was now transformed into a modern institutional structure. This shows that if the progressive power is not strong enough, the bourgeoisie will again strengthen its hegemony. After the 1971 election, the aristocratic elite increasingly solidified its position as ruler of the Toraja when the modern elite chose to immigrate out to expand their economic and career opportunities.

In the second phase, the aristocratic elite built solidarity of interests in the 1980-

1990s. During the New Order era, the crisis and external threats to the power of the aristocratic elite and the Rambu Solo ritual had largely disappeared, but the power gained by the aristocratic elite to revive Aluk Todolo's religion, unfortunately, did not lead to the re-enactment of social control of the aristocratic elite. The decline of followers of Aluk Todolo in 1984 resulted in a system of political representation that had been guaranteeing the power of the aristocratic elite back into crisis.

This irony shows that even though the dominant group is ruled in the state, they cannot make the state solely to apply their own interests to other classes. The composition of the modern elite which consisted of most former Parkindo members and a small portion of the Protestant-educated slaves succeeded in garnering the benefits of education. They managed to accumulate more wealth than the aristocratic elite whose sources of income were largely derived from the results of land managed by the subaltern with a patron-client system. The aristocratic elite who belatedly realized the importance of education to maintain their status and prosperity felt that the concern of the modern elite could eliminate the ritual practices of the Rambu Solo and their power as told by Puang Era, an aristocratic elite in Mengkendek region,

“With their education, these people can avoid carrying out the ritual obligations of Rambu Solo because they consider this ritual a waste. Whereas with the money, they can buy people’s obedience. This means that the disappearance of the Rambu Solo ritual also means the disappearance of the only arena where they can control the community, and most importantly they are worried that the community will worship the wealth of the new elite they display in the Rambu Solo ritual. Eventually, the modern elite will replace the aristocratic elite in formal government positions. As such, aristocratic elites were no longer respected either as aristocrats or customary functionaries. This is very contrary to the teachings of our ancestors...” (Interview with Puang Era, July 2018)

The concerns of the aristocratic elite

are reasonable given that the modern elite and the new generation of Toraja have an openness to modernity. Those who returned to Toraja after completing their education soon realized that their area was left behind. The education and experience they gained led them to the conclusion that the Rambu Solo ritual was a waste that prevented the Torajan from developing themselves. In their perspective, the large number of resources spent on carrying out the Rambu Solo ritual should be used to build Toraja. In addition, the conception of the death of the Toraja people is no longer in line with the modern world.

This re-emerging perspective can position aristocratic elites in a situation similar to that which they experienced during the social conflict of the 1950s. But this time it was no longer possible for the aristocratic elite to dampen changes that entered the world of Toraja. To create consensus on the ritual practices of Rambu Solo, the aristocratic elite then resorted to building new systems and alliances. Reconciliation with modern elites with great potential succeeded in eliminating the Rambu Solo ritual. In addition, the modern elite is also permitted to own wealth and occupy government positions and organize luxurious Rambu Solo, something that was once forbidden for them.

This strategy can be seen as one of the manifestations of the concept of hegemony offered by Gramsci. As Gramsci revealed that power can be used against enemies, but not against those who need to assimilate quickly groups who are fighting for their hegemony, must absorb allied social forces to create history, politics, economy and homogeneous blocks without internal contradictions (Gramsci, 1971: 62-65). For Gramsci, a person or a group that will establish hegemony must first recognize the tendency of groups that are the target of hegemony. In this case, the aristocratic elite's decision to form an alliance with the modern elite seems to be based on their ability to recognize the needs of the modern elite to obtain social recognition for their newly acquired achievements and assets.

Nevertheless, there are negotiations that give birth to commitments between the two parties. These commitments include; *First*, ritual rules and mechanisms must be in accordance with the rules of Aluk mandated by the ancestors, that is, only the aristocratic elite has the right to lead and to determine the level of the ritual, how many buffaloes and pigs must be sacrificed, and who has the right to receive buffalo meat (Interview with Sando Dato De'na and Puang Era, July 2018). *Second*, the social status transfer rules do not apply to the modern elite of the slaves even though they occupy a higher position and are richer than the modern elite of the middle class. This commitment aims to maintain the class differentiation while at the same time affirming that even though slavery is abolished but cannot eradicate one's origin. Thus, the regulation aims to remind and make aware of the origin of the slaves so that self-awareness arises and does not ask for more (Interview with Sando Dato De'na, July 2018).

For the aristocratic elite, this commitment produced a foundation of power in their political revival. The authority they have in the Rambu Solo ritual arena gives them the rights of power in the new social space of Toraja. Their power lost due to the abolition of the traditional government system has transformed within adat institutions as "*customary community leaders*". The label "*customary community leaders*" themselves were chosen to differentiate their social status and function from the modern elites who were "*community leaders*" pursued through education. This is expressed by an aristocratic elite, Yohannes Palilingan as follows,

"Puang and parenge are different from community leaders. Community leaders are those who occupy a position in government such as Regents, Camat (head of a subdistrict) and Lurah (head of the village), and so on. While the aristocratic elite is a traditional community figure who has the role of guarding, maintaining and guiding the community to protect and preserve Aluk. It should be noted that the position of traditional community leaders is

higher than community leaders since the customary community leaders who determine all customary laws in Toraja compared to community leaders..." (Interview with Yohannes Palilingan, July 2018).

For the modern elite, consensus on these commitments leads them to a higher status. Modern elites from the middle class renegotiate their status better than slaves because they equip themselves with more symbolic capital; finance, academic degrees and positions. The symbolic capital is then used to identify their position and reach that position in the Toraja social space. The restoration of the power of the aristocratic elite in this new context marked the change from reformist to accommodationist Christianity, from cultural deculturation efforts to advocating cultural preservation and its revival, including the revival of the ritual practices of Rambu Solo.

Since Toraja was established as a tourist destination, the Rambu Solo ritual has become a good business in the 1970s and throughout the 1980s. Adams (1984) mentioned that a successful promotion by the Indonesian Tourism Association in collaboration with overseas travel agents brought tourists from Western Europe, America, and Australia. The interest of foreign and domestic tourists to witness firsthand the Rambu Solo ritual opens business opportunities for modern elites who have a great vision and capital. The heavy traffic of tourism makes them no longer depend on agricultural products. As for the aristocratic elite, tourism provides an economic resource in the form of income for the district. Although the amount is not much, tourism tax is used to renew the religious rituals of Aluk Todolo which fade with the presence of Christianity (Interview with Sando Dato De'na, July 2018).

Although the consensus to maintain the Rambu ritual practice has been achieved, but it has not reached the level of hegemony because this consensus is still in a limited scope, and according to its development the consensus is based on economic interests. Whereas the condition for a comprehensive hegemony is the formation of a collective consensus in which the con-

sensus of non-elitist middle classes and slaves as subalterns must be involved. The term subaltern itself is promoted by Antonio Gramsci as excluded groups in the social order. From this negative connotation, Spivak (1994) develops that subaltern is not only the oppressed classes but also refers to anyone whose voice is restricted. Therefore, in this case, the consensus of modern non-aristocratic elites cannot be categorized as a subaltern consensus because their subaltern status falls when they have renewed their social status. In other words, to make the Rambu Solo a hegemonic ritual, the aristocratic elite as the dominant class must win the consensus of the subaltern as a dominant class to voluntarily accept their way of thinking and way of life.

The third phase is the hegemonic phase which is marked by efforts to reach a collective consensus that emerged from the late 1990s to post-reform. The fall of the New Order in 1998 and democratic reform positioned Toraja in a situation that had not been experienced since the turbulent times of the 1950s and the period after 1906. With the loss of its strong patron, Toraja returned to vulnerable minority status in South Sulawesi and re-entered the precarious stage relating to various other struggles to position elites at the local and national level. In order to achieve this goal, the subaltern consensus was achieved using a similar mechanism that applied to the modern elite, but the effort to win the subaltern consensus was carried out by involving them in *Pasilaga Tedong* (bullfighting) bets. *Pasilaga Tedong* which was held on the fifth day of the Rambu Solo ritual where the lost buffalo will be given to the shepherds as a grateful form of the aristocratic elite who organized the Rambu Solo ritual.

By involving subalterns in *Pasilaga Tedong* there is no reason to prohibit bets as it becomes an integral part of the Rambu Solo ritual and as a Torajanese custom. To avoid assuming the Rambu Solo ritual as a place to normalize bets, aristocratic elites emphasize that buffaloes are not provided by the host but by people who want to enliven a Rambu Solo ritual, including other types of bets

provided by spread bookmakers throughout Toraja and in the Bugis-Makassar region. Even so, there is no prohibition for anyone who wants to bet as long as people can gather and enliven the ritual because many people present are interpreted as consolation for families who are grieving. This is as stated by an aristocratic elite in Makale,

“(Whether) there is gambling or not, the Pasilaga Tedong must continue to be carried out because it is a legacy of ancestors which was handed down over generations. If gambling takes place in Pasilaga Tedong event, it is beyond the control of the aristocratic elite as the person in charge of the ritual and the family as the organizer...” (Interview with Elyas Bangapadang, December 2018).

Efforts to create consensus do not always have to focus on synchronizing narratives with reality but how the narratives made by the dominant group can be received by the subordinate group. In the context of the Rambu Solo ritual, the legalization of bets wrapped in the narrative of preserving tradition has triggered spontaneity which was motivated by the economic crisis that hit Toraja due to the Indonesian political turmoil throughout 1965-1966. The economic crisis made people migrate to find work, which resulted in Toraja shortage of agricultural labor (Bigalke, 2005: 387-388). This situation makes Torajanese see betting in *Pasilaga Tedong* as a quick way to get cash. This is as stated by Puang Era, an aristocratic elite,

“For Toraja people in the past [and in the present], gambling was an attempt to get out of the difficult economy of the 1960s to the late 1990s, and it had to be understood... At that time, Toraja was not like now where there were many rich people, there were still many people Toraja lives barely. The roads in Toraja was not as good as now. It takes one week to go to Makassar. This inhibits the delivery of agricultural products to downtown (Makassar -author)... This condition is getting worse because many agricultural lands are neglected since most people prefer to migrate for money rather than working in the rice fields “(Interview with Puang Era, July 2018).

It can be said that the consensus built by the aristocratic elite with subalterns is in line with Gramsci's formulation where the conformity shown in behavior has levels of awareness with certain elements in society (Gramsci, 1971). For Gramsci, the emergence of consensus was not caused by the hegemonic class considering the existing social structure as their desire, on the contrary, it happened because they lacked the conceptual basis that formed their consciousness to understand social reality effectively. But in the Toraja case, consensus occurs because the subalterns have a conceptual basis in understanding their position in the Toraja hierarchical social space.

As previously mentioned that in Toraja, people are not born the same and confirmed by Rambu Solo ritual. This means that the subaltern group is the most benefited if Rambu Solo being abolished because it can eliminate the social stratification system so that they do not need to be reminded of their birth status. In other words, a consensus is not always formed due to the lack of conceptual bases that shape their consciousness. In certain cases such as in Toraja, a consensus is formed because the dominated groups realize their position in the arena of contestation and see the benefits they can get in it. They may not have the cultural capital that can be used to align their position with the aristocrats, but they can still express their passion for the betting arena that is held as part of the Rambu Solo ritual.

CONCLUSION

The organic crisis which was continually faced by Rambu Solo ritual gets resistance from aristocratic elites while maintaining the hegemony of the Rambu Solo ritual which generally can be described in three main phases. The first phase was conducted by establishing the legitimacy of power and traditional religion through efforts to build new alliances in order to build awareness of the importance of maintaining the status quo and political stability. This struggle was marked by incorporating the interests of non-aristocrats into their interests and they

succeeded in defending the religion of Aluk Todolo until it received official recognition from the Government in 1967.

In the second phase, the aristocratic elite seeks to build solidarity of interests and reconcile with modern elites who always have the ambition to abolish the Rambu Solo ritual. Through this reconciliation, they allowed modern elites to have wealth and positions in the government and organized the luxurious Rambu Solo, something that was once prohibited for non-aristocrats. In Gramsci's thinking, this strategy is one manifestation of hegemony in which power can be used against enemies, but not against those who assimilate with groups who are fighting for their hegemony. The aristocratic elite's decision to form an alliance with the modern elite seems to be based on their ability to recognize the needs of the modern elite to gain social recognition for their achievements and assets. However, this reconciliation gave birth to a commitment between the two parties where for the aristocratic elite, this commitment produced a foundation of power in their political revival while for the modern elite, this consensus led them to a higher status.

The third phase of preservation of hegemony is done by reaching collective consensus. Democratic reforms positioned Toraja in a difficult situation and lost many patrons and resulted in Toraja returning to having a minority status in South Sulawesi. To return to the previous position, the subaltern consensus was obtained by involving the subaltern in the Pasilaga Tedong bet, one of the ritual series of the Rambu Solo. By involving subalterns in this arena there is no reason to ban it because it is an integral part of the Rambu Solo ritual and as a native Toraja culture. The success of winning the subaltern consensus can be seen from the diversity of narratives and actions of the aristocratic elite and the subaltern narratives who agreed that the Tedong Pasilaga is not a place to bet, but only a medium to show empathy and provide consolation for families who are grieving.

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