



Changes In The Function Of Manimbong Music In The Rambu Tuka' Ceremony Of The Toraja People

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Abstract

Talking about traditional music, it is important to discuss the religious beliefs of the people around the music. This also applies to the Toraja tribe, which is located in the mountainous region of the southern island of Sulawesi. One of the arts that exist within the Toraja environment is Manimbong. Manimbong is a Torajan art form that combines two arts, music and dance, performed by a group of men at the Rambu Tuka' ceremony. This art is known as the art of Aluk Todolo (Toraja tribal religion). The introduction of Christianity in Toraja society has also affected some Toraja cultures. This research aims to see the changes in function that occur in Manimbong. In analyzing this research to see changes in the function of Manimbong using descriptive qualitative research methods. Primary and secondary data were obtained using observation, interview, and document study data collection techniques. Credibility criteria as a basis for conducting data validation techniques and data triangulation are in the standard of degrees of trust. The conclusion of this research is that Manimbong is not an art owned by Aluk Todolo or Christian, but belongs to all Toraja people. In addition, in the process of changing its function, Manimbong changes according to the context of several things, such as changes in the meaning of the poem of Manimbong itself in both Christianity and Aluk Todolo, as well as in the context in which Manimbong is performed or staged.

INTRODUCING

In the current era, culture is an object that is endlessly discussed and even studied by people who take part in it. Culture or local culture is a custom that has been recognized by the local community that develops and grows over time with oral inheritance and preservation efforts that make information regarding the author of the work or its creator unknown. (Parapat and Aritonang 2019) In the context of culture, art cannot be separated, especially traditional music. Traditional music is born from the place where it is often performed or performed. Traditional music survives and develops within a community by generations. The art of music includes playing instruments or musical instruments and vocals. Music is one of the human creations that has aesthetic value and can create a response for those who listen produced through the medium of sound. (Wicaksono, 2009, p. 4).

Discussing traditional music does not escape the discussion of religion or beliefs embraced by the community around which the music was present and developed. This also applies to the Toraja tribe in the mountainous region of South Sulawesi island. The Toraja tribe is the indigenous people who inhabit North Toraja and Tana Toraja districts. In the past before the introduction of Christianity, which is the majority religion today, the Toraja people adhered to the tribe's original belief, *Aluk Todolo*.

Kobong (1992) states that *Aluk Todolo* means ancestral religion that is still practiced by some parts of the Toraja community. In *Aluk Todolo*, "*aluk*" has a broad meaning, such as religion, customs, ceremonies (rites), behavior, and behavior, which are believed to have started from the sky or from among the gods, while "*todolo*" means first or long ago. *Aluk Todolo* which is the belief of Toraja's ancestors that has officially become a branch of Hindu Dharma in 1969 and then called Alukta which means "our religion". (Ismail 2019:87) The "*aluk*" rite can be divided into two well-known ceremonies from the Toraja

region, namely the *Rambu Solo'* and *Rambu Tuka'* ceremonies. *Rambu Solo'* (*Rambu* = smoke; *Solo'*= down, a figurative offering addressed to the deceased) is a funeral or death ceremony held when the sun leans towards the West or when the sun begins to set. While *Rambu Tuka'* (*Rambu* = smoke; *Tuka'*= up, a figurative offering addressed to *Puang Matua*, gods and ancestral spirits who have become Gods or *tomembali puang*) is a traditional ceremony of gratitude or joy or excitement held when the sun begins to rise or morning until noon. In the two traditional ceremonies above, there are traditional musical arts that cannot be exchanged between one another or in the sense that each has its own role.

Vocal music is a necessity that plays a very important role in the cultural life of the Toraja people, especially in the traditional ceremonies of *Rambu Tuka'* and *Rambu Solo'*. *Manimbong* is one of the arts in the *Rambu Tuka'* ceremony. *Manimbong* is a traditional dance and vocal music performed in conjunction with the *Ma'dandan* dance. *Manimbong* is performed by male singers wearing *Bayu Pokko'* costumes, *Seppa Tallu Buku*, cloth sash, ancient machete (*la'bo' pinai*), headdress made of bird feathers or chicken feathers, and *sarong simbong* (a type of small shield) as a rhythmic musical instrument.

Rappoport in Sambira (2020) states that ritual music in Toraja is on average presented or performed in the form of vocal choir music by exploring contrasting and melismatic vocal sounds. *Manimbong* is an art that has long been used or performed by the Toraja people who adhere to the *Aluk Todolo* belief in the *Rambu Tuka'* ceremony or more specifically in *Ma'bua'* and *Merok* which are events at high levels seven and six in the *Rambu Tuka'* ceremony.

Looking at the context of the current *Manimbong* performance, it has undergone changes. One of the things that can be seen is the change in the process of interpreting the poetry in *Manimbong*. This change in the function of *Manimbong*

music is an important part of seeing how the art of *Manimbong* music is in the context of Toraja today.

METHOD

In an effort to examine the above problems, this research uses descriptive qualitative research methods using the discipline of sociology whose data presentation relates to the changes in the function of *Manimbong* that occur in Toraja society. The data obtained is then analyzed and described by interpreting the reference concepts and/or theories of socio-cultural change.

This research was conducted in Lembang/Dende' Village, Dende' Piongan Napo District, North Toraja Regency, South Sulawesi Province. The data obtained were primary and secondary data. Primary data comes from original works or writings that are observed, obtained, written, and done by the author himself. While secondary data is publication data obtained from third parties that are not the result of direct observation by the author.

According to Mamik (2015), there are three data collection techniques which were also used in this study, namely observation, interviews and document studies. The process of observation or observation, in this study the author directly observed the activities of the community in Lembang Dende' and the process of *Manimbong* presentation activities in the *Rambu Tuka'* ceremony. Interview, a data collection technique carried out by two or more people in an effort to give and receive information from a topic or discussion. In this study, the author interviewed the leader of the *Manimbong* group or *Indok Simbong* as well as Christian religious leaders within the scope of the Toraja Church synod service. Data collection techniques through documentation studies are data collection in the form of documents in the form of photos, images, videos, and writings.

Sumaryanto (Sumaryanto 2007) describes the criteria for validating qualitative data, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and

confirmability. Based on the description above, researchers used the degree of trust criteria used in this study. Credibility criteria as a basis for conducting data validation techniques and data triangulation are in the standard degree of trust.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Toraja is a lowlander term derived from Bugis "*to*" meaning people and "*ri-aja*" meaning from above. Overall *to* and *ri-aja* means people who occupy the upper area or highland area of Sulawesi island. Before the 20th century, however, Torajans and others who inhabited the highlands did not refer to themselves as Torajans, but instead used terms using the name of the region or village where they lived, such as "*to Randanan*" meaning people from Randanan. (Bigalke 2016)

The location of Toraja, which was originally a remote place that was very difficult to reach due to its location in the mountains of Sulawesi Island, has now turned into a place that is often visited. This is due to the many social changes that have taken place in the community, such as easy access, socially literate Torajans (though not all), and other factors.

This also applies to the culture of Toraja. *Manimbong* is one of the arts that proves that changes have occurred, especially in terms of culture. *Manimbong*, an art form that was originally only performed or staged in *Ma'bua'* (the highest *Rambu Tuka'* activity in Toraja society), now takes a role in various community activities that smell of joy or excitement or expressions of gratitude.



Figure 1. *Manimbong* performed

According to Alan P. Merriam (Merriam and Clauson 1967), there are ten main functions of music, including the function of emotional expression, entertainment function, function related to social norms, function of community integration, function of music as an aesthetic appreciation, function of physical reaction, function of validation of social institutions, function of cultural continuity, function of music as communication, and function of symbolism. *Manimbong* is also seen, including; (1) a means of entertainment that entertains guests and families who hold activities; (2) a means of physical response used to accompany dances in *Manimbong*; (3) a means of communication to convey an expression of gratitude through sung verses; (4) a means of religious rituals or social institutions expressing gratitude to God for blessings in a traditional activity; (5) a means of symbolic offerings; (6) a means of harmony of community norms to respect norms in a cultural group; (7) a means of preservation and continuity of a culture so that *Manimbong* will continue to exist; (8) a means of manifesting the identity of a society, especially the Toraja people.

The entry of Christianity into the Toraja community has made some Toraja cultures adapt to the situation, as well as *Manimbong*, which initially only took part in the *Aluk Todolo* religion, now also becomes part of Christian religious events in Toraja society. The statement made by Rev. Tiku Rari, an Emeritus Pastor and Toraja arts activist in an interview on July 4, 2022, that *Manimbong* does not belong to a religion (*Aluk Todolo* or Christianity) but is a vocal music art owned by the Toraja people.

"It (Manimbong) is an art to express something. It has nothing to do with, for example, Aluk Todolo. That (Manimbong) art belongs to the Toraja people. So don't imagine that it belongs to Aluk Todolo....anyone who is a Torajan,

he has an art (Manimbong) that wants to express gratitude, among others, can be through Manimbong".

Through the statement of Rev. Tiku Rari, it is known that *Manimbong* music becomes the identity of the Toraja people in which there are poems used in the form of Toraja local language. The existence of Christianity is a change in function that acts as a link to contextualize with current life because the majority of Torajans adhere to Christianity. The change in the function of *Manimbong* is not a change that can be seen in plain sight. The change in function that occurs in *Manimbong* lies in the meaning through the poetry contained.

In the poems that exist in *Manimbong* both before and after Christianity entered are no different. It is the change in the context of meaning for each religion that makes *Manimbong* today look more "Christian" in accordance with the majority of Torajans. "*Puang Matua*" in *Manimbong* poetry also does not necessarily refer to the God worshipped or referred to by Christians in Toraja. The use of the word "*Puang Matua*" long ago could have meant "God" in *Aluk Todolo*, which according to Rev. Tiku Rari also means God according to Christianity.

When "*Puang Matua*" then has multiple meanings, it is not something that needs to be debated for one belief. In fact, as Rapoport (2004) argues, *Manimbong* has become part of three types of rituals, including; rituals of gratitude for the house, gratitude for the church, and government or community activities. Thus, *Manimbong* is not just an activity of one religion but the whole religion (Toraja scope) seen in the context of the formation of the *Manimbong* performance. Similarly, when *Manimbong* is performed in Ma'bua' or Mangrara Banua (cultural activities as an expression of gratitude for the Tongkonan or house), it is certainly different when performed at religious events such as the inauguration or consecration of a church building, or even

at an activity that expresses gratitude such as the district's birthday or in a festival, as well as other gratitude events. Therefore, *Manimbong* in the current context cannot be patented as belonging only to Aluk Todolo or Christianity, but is a Torajan cultural art that belongs to all Torajans.

Similar to Kobong's (Kobong 1992) statement that culture (in which art is present) created by humans based on reason, taste and will that produces works both material and spiritual moves dynamically in accordance with the demands of the times. So that humans must now be more able to think positively and even selectively, creatively and critically to develop existing culture with the intention that everything is dedicated to God.

CONCLUSION

Through the presentation of the results and discussion above, it can be concluded that *Manimbong* is not an art owned by *Aluk Todolo* or Christians, but belongs to all Torajans who want to express their gratitude through *Manimbong*. In addition, in the process of changing its function, *Manimbong* does not lead to things that are visible or obvious, but rather changes in function that are contextualized in several things, such as changes in the meaning of the poetry of *Manimbong* itself both in the Toraja majority religion, namely Christianity and the religion or beliefs of the Toraja tribe, namely *Aluk Todolo*, as well as in the context in which *Manimbong* is performed or staged. As an art form that is still rarely looked at, it is hoped that future researchers can take a discussion on how the role of *Manimbong* in each activity, be it religious or institutional activities or even competitions that *Manimbong* is now starting to be contested.

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