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Traditional Woven Fabric Craftsmen into Barana: A Creative Space Based on the Culture of the North Toraja Community 2017-2023

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the background of the emergence of traditional woven fabric craftsmen in To'barana North Toraja Regency in 2017-2023, the development of traditional woven fabric craftsmen in To'barana, and the social life of traditional woven fabric craftsmen. This research is a qualitative study that uses a historical approach method with four stages of work, namely: heuristics (finding and collecting sources), source criticism (external criticism and internal criticism), interpretation (interpretation of sources), and historiography (writing history). Data collection methods were carried out by conducting field research, interviews, and documentation. The results of this study indicate that the beginning of the emergence of traditional woven fabric craftsmen in To'barana was marked by historical relics in the form of sumpu woven fabric (endless woven fabric), which was made by one of the descendants of the nobles in To'barana, namely Ne'butung and Ne'panggau during the Japanese occupation which was used as a pennammu' (blanket) needed during the war. So that this weaving heritage has become one of the main professions for the To'barana Village community which was designated as a Weaving Village in 2017-2023. Supported by production equipment and support from the North Toraja Regency government, it also has an impact on marketing development, where the craft has been marketed outside Toraja Regency such as Makassar and Papua.

Keywords: Community; Craftsmen; Traditional Weaving.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui latar belakang munculnya pengrajin kain tenun tradisional di To'barana Kabupaten Toraja Utara tahun (2017-2023), perkembangan pengrajin kain tenun tradisional di To'barana, dan kehidupan sosial pengrajin kain tenun

tradisional. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif yang menggunakan metode pendekatan sejarah dengan empat tahapan kerja, yaitu: heuristik (menemukan dan mengumpulkan sumber), kritik sumber (kritik eksternal dan kritik internal), interpretasi (penafsiran sumber), dan historiografi (penulisan sejarah). Metode pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan melakukan penelitian lapangan, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa awal mula munculnya pengrajin kain tenun tradisional di To'barana ditandai dengan peninggalan sejarah berupa kain tenun sumpu (kain tenun tak berujung), yang dibuat oleh salah satu keturunan bangsawan di To'barana yaitu Ne'butung dan Ne'panggau pada masa pendudukan Jepang yang digunakan sebagai pennammu' (selimut) yang dibutuhkan pada masa perang. Sehingga warisan tenun ini menjadi salah satu profesi utama bagi masyarakat Desa To'barana yang ditetapkan sebagai Desa Tenun pada tahun 2017-2023. Didukung dengan peralatan produksi dan dukungan dari pemerintah Kabupaten Toraja Utara, juga berdampak pada perkembangan pemasaran, dimana hasil kerajinan tersebut telah dipasarkan ke luar Kabupaten Toraja seperti Makassar dan Papua.

Katakunci: Komunitas; Perajin, Tenun Tradisional

1 Introduction

Culture is a complex system, encompassing knowledge, beliefs, arts, morality, customary law, traditions, skills, and habits acquired by humans as part of society. Culture plays a very important role in human life, because it becomes an identity and unity for individuals or a nation. Culture encompasses all the wealth and quality of life of a nation, including various forms of social technology, ideology, religion, arts, and objects that are all cultural heritage (Sumarto, 2019).

One of the cultures found in North Toraja to this day still maintains the existence of weaving crafts as part of their culture. The Toraja tribe (Umar, 2015) uses the beauty of nature as a tourist attraction and a place for their funeral rituals. In addition, they are also known for their works of art that are in great demand by tourists who come to Toraja. One of the famous handicraft products is Toraja woven cloth, which is almost extinct due to the influence of globalization. The specialty of Toraja woven cloth lies in its distinctive patterns and colors, different from woven cloth from other regions in Indonesia. This cloth also has a strong material, but remains smooth and beautiful (Alloan, 2020).

Sa'dan is one of the sub-districts of North Toraja Regency with an area of 80.48 km². Sa'dan District has 10 villages/sub-districts (Lestari et al., 2012). Of the 15 villages/sub-districts. There is a village which is an area where the community still maintains traditional woven fabric crafts or as a center for weaving craftsmen, namely To'barana Village (Bare et al., 2020). Toraja Woven Fabric is a woven craft product made directly by the skilled hands of the Toraja people (Donzelli, 2020).

The Toraja tribe has a very important position for the Toraja people because each design and motif contains deep meaning. Therefore, this fabric has a significant role in the cultural life of the Toraja people (Sumiaty et al., 2023). This craft is made using manual techniques using traditional equipment. The center of Toraja woven fabric production is located in To'barana, Sa'dan District, North Toraja Regency. This artifact has its own value for craftsmen, namely economic value, because Toraja fabric can be processed into various other craft products, such as clothes, bags, wallets, pareos, and scarves (Fridayanti, 2015).

After reading sources in the form of books and theses on woven fabric crafts, there are several that can be used as reference sources. Among them is a thesis entitled "The Process of Making Pa'tannun Woven Fabric in Sa'dan Village, North Toraja Regency, South Sulawesi, owned by Michael Frederick Sosang in 2017, focusing on the process of making woven fabric. Then the thesis from Rizki Marsella "Traditional Toraja Woven Fabric in a Symbolic Perspective (Study of Traditional Woven Fabric Craftsmen in Sa'dan Malimbong Village, Sa'dan District, North Toraja Regency)" in 2016, aims to determine the structural aspects of traditional Toraja fabric. And finally the thesis from Devi Tifany Pongdatu in 2016 entitled "Information Center for Woven Fabrics in Sa'dan, North Toraja, where the contents discuss re-popularizing Sa'dan woven fabric as a weaving production village through facilities that accommodate information and are recreational and educational. The existence of several studies and writings, it is concluded that in previous studies, the researchers only focused on how the development of woven fabrics in the current era. Because of that, it is necessary to

study Traditional Woven Fabrics in To'barana, Sa'dan District, North Toraja Regency about the background of the emergence of craftsmen, their development, and the socio-economic life of traditional woven fabric craftsmen.

To explain the history of traditional weaving craftsmen, there are three important concepts that need to be put forward as a basic reference.

First, Woven Fabric, is a technique in making fabrics that are made with the principle of alternating warp and weft. Woven fabrics are usually made from wood fiber, cotton, silk, and others. Woven fabrics are also a cultural heritage of Indonesia that has been passed down from ancestors. Woven fabrics have the same meaning as ikat weaving. Where the development of the form of woven fabrics that are given various ikat decorations, was created to complement human needs. Woven fabrics have functions in several aspects of the lives of the people who make them, both social, economic, religious, and aesthetic aspects (Utomo & Yunita, 2022).

Second, Traditional comes from the word *Traditio* which means habits that are hereditary. The word traditional itself is a trait that means adhering to hereditary habits. Traditional is a relationship with cultural values and community ethos. The division of traditional is always formed through the concept of the era after the arrival of influence. Therefore, the culture and values of personal ethos that are manifested and previously the era of the arrival of western influence (Sylvana Murni D, 2015).

Third, Traditional Toraja Woven Cloth, the Toraja tribe has a unique culture, making it one of the famous tourist attractions in Indonesia. Many of the Toraja tribe's works of art are in demand. Toraja woven cloth, for example, is a handicraft from Tana Toraja whose existence continues to be preserved and developed. The specialty of Toraja woven cloth is its distinctive patterns and colors, different from woven cloth from other regions in Indonesia. In addition, the fabric is strong but still smooth (Alloan, 2020).

2 Method

In conducting a study, there are many ways used by researchers, both based on the process, procedure, and principles adopted (Ahmadin, 2022). This study was conducted in To'barana Village, Sa'dan District, North Toraja Regency. The type of research conducted is descriptive research with a quantitative approach. Using the historical

method, where there are 4 stages of work, namely:

1. **Heuristics** or source collection is the first stage of work in compiling this research. Conducting exploration and collection of sources that have quality or objects to be studied, namely "Traditional Woven Fabric Craftsmen Community in To'barana, North Toraja Regency (2017-2023). This data collection process emphasizes library research and interviews. There are two types of sources, namely primary sources and secondary sources (Ahmadin, 2013). Primary sources are the main sources that are directly related to the research topic, such as archives, documents, oral sources, and material sources (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Meanwhile, secondary sources include books, magazines, and research reports such as theses.

2. Criticism is the stage after collecting sufficient resources, the next step is to criticize (filter) the sources. The purpose of source criticism is to obtain facts that are as objective as possible, so that the resulting historical work is a product of a scientific process that can be accounted for, not the result of imagination or manipulation. In criticizing sources, there are two important things that need to be considered, namely criticism of authenticity (external criticism) and criticism of reliability (internal criticism).

3. Interpretation is the work stage where after the criticism is completed, data related to the subject being studied is obtained and then interpreted. The interpretation of historical facts taken in the form of an explanation of the facts may be subjective (Gunawan, 2023). This interpretation is carried out through cross-checking between several relevant sources related to the problems studied. In addition, interpretation is also done through argumentation based on a theory.

4. **Historiography** is the last stage in historical research or called historical writing. Where to reconstruct what has happened in the form of a historical story as a whole according to the sequence of events (Darwawan Edi Winoto, 2023). This type of research is classified as socio-economic history with the unit of analysis being the community of traditional weaving craftsmen.

3 Result and Discussion

1. Background to the Beginning of Traditional Woven Fabric Craftsmen in To'barana

The emergence of weaving craftsmen or the first to weave in the North Toraja region, namely in Sa'dan District, there is evidence of historical relics in the traditional house of the Toraja tribe, namely (Tongkonan) Bambalu, which is one of the villages in the Sa'dan District, namely Sa'dan Andulan. So that the ancestors of the area who first made traditional weaving crafts were named Awerigading who was about to marry Padangaran's grandmother. Awerihading at that time made Sa'dan weaving which was named Sumpu weaving, which means "endless weaving" (Wulan, 2016). Then Padangaran and Aweridahading had a son named Serok Bongga, who married Sau Allo, the daughter of Bualolo in Tongkonan Puntak. They also had a second child, namely Tandibayang. Sau Allo, who is the daughter of Bualolo, then made the longest weaving that can stretch from the top of the mountain to Mount Tibembeng. The weaving has a symbolic meaning, namely so that all his descendants can continue the tradition of making weaving. One of the descendants of Tongkonan Puang Ponglabba in To'barana, who continued the legacy of traditional weaving is named (Ne' Butung and Ne' Panggau). They started making weaving crafts during the Japanese occupation in 1941, initially they spun because of the lack of blankets (pennammu') needed by the community during the war. After the war ended, they continued their weaving activities until finally To'barana was designated as the center of Toraja weaving (Septo Aprilis Samben, 2021)

The results of the interview showed that the community or traditional woven fabric craftsmen in To'barana generally pursue the profession of woven fabric craftsmen because they learn from generation to generation. From one generation to the next, it is mandatory to continue to know the process of making woven fabrics which is carried out traditionally.

The number of craftsmen who are still engaged in the profession of woven fabric craftsmen as a cultural heritage, so from 2017 to 2023, the Sa'dan District, especially in the To'barana area, was declared a weaving village in the area by the government until now. From the traditional woven fabric craft business to meet consumer needs that are produced according to consumer needs such as traditional clothing, sarongs, scarves, wallets,

and other accessories made of woven fabric. This business turned out to grow and develop into a production business that is included in a weaving group community that can meet the needs of consumers around Toraja and even outside Toraja.

The increase in the number of artisans and the establishment of Sa'dan Sub-district, especially To'barana as a weaving village, shows that this is inseparable from the role of the local government. It should also be noted that the existence of Tana Toraja as a tourist attraction area is an important factor in supporting the development of this traditional industry. This is because visitors are always interested in unique things such as traditional handicraft products.

2. Development of Traditional Woven Fabric Craftsmen in To'barana

Development The development of crafts is reflected in the evolution of production turnover and net profit obtained during the year which is calculated at the end of the closing of the financial report (Feptian Kuni, 2014). Based on the findings of the research results, the causes of the development of traditional woven fabric craft businesses in To'barana are: (1) Increasing orders and accompanied by increasing production volumes. Where traditional weaving in To'barana received a certificate (Indonesian, HAKI) at the North Toraja Nusantara traditional fabric exhibition as the fabric most sought after by consumers; (2) After the launch of the weaving village in 2017, the number of craftsmen was only 5 people in the To'barana area or the local community there, but now the number of craftsmen has increased to 11 people who are still working as craftsmen and sellers of traditional woven fabrics in the To'barana area; and (3) There is support from the government in the form of providing business capital, offices, and tenants for craftsmen in running their businesses.

The process of making woven fabric crafts and the results of this craft are based on its motif. The following is the manufacturing process and the results of the craft.

a) Process of Making Woven Crafts with Traditional Tools

The use of traditional tools used by craftsmen makes the quality of woven fabrics never change until now. Where this is a special attraction for consumers, and craftsmen still use traditional tools that are used to maintain the quality of the fabric produced (Michael Frederick Sosang, 2017).

The following are the stages of the fabric making process: (1) Spinning yarn. The process of producing yarn from cotton fibers using a sling and unuran tool. In this process, cotton fibers are selected and woven together to form yarn; (2) Coloring. The threads to be used are then colored according to the desired motif. This coloring uses natural dyes obtained from plants, such as roots, stems, trees, and bark; (3) Ma'renden. After the threads are colored, the threads are then arranged according to the desired motif. The thread is used as a separator between threads and is arranged neatly to prepare for the weaving process; (4) Pa'nata. After the thread arrangement process is complete, the threads that have been arranged are tidied up and tightened one by one, strand by strand, following the pattern of the motif that will be used; and (5) Weaving. After the threads are arranged according to the motif, the next process is weaving, which is to apply the threads as a whole by weaving them together. In this process, traditional weaving tools play a very important role in every weaving process.

b) Traditional Woven Crafts Based on Motifs.

The types of woven fabrics based on the motifs produced by traditional woven fabric craftsmen in To'barana are: (1) Paruki motif (Flower), the motif that is often made is a motif known as pasekong kandaure'. This motif has a meaning as a symbol of nobility or glory; (2) Pamiring motif, it means the boundary of the woven fabric. This motif uses 1 wide row as the boundary of a plain piece of cloth; (3) Paramba motif, it has the meaning of cheerfulness whose motif consists of many thin lines in groups that usually reach 6 different colors; and (4) Paborong-borong motif (rows or lines), a motif similar to paramba, but the line motif is not full in one cloth (Tumba Marante, 2018).

3. Socio-Economic Life of the Community in To'barana

a. Social Life

Social Life Is the position or standing of a person in a community group that is determined by the type of economic activity, level of education, and income that they have, various customary regulations (Ahmad et al., 2022). Until now, it is still considered valid for the Toraja community, namely the existence of social classes/strata.

In the To'barana area, they still adhere to the social strata that exist in their environment, in the

To'barana area there is a traditional leader in this area named Puang Ponglabba who was appointed as a traditional leader (Interview, Mining Ponglabba, September 21, 2024). The artisan community in To'barana who is still oriented towards the Toraja tribe's customary cultural system (Aluk Todolo), Christianity, In Indonesia, both are integrated side by side and autonomously, which can be seen in their attitudes, behavior, and actions, which tend to prioritize the values or customary rules. Toraja tribe (Aluk Todolo).

The social relations that occur between the community and the craftsmen in To'barana are: (1) Social relations between the craftsmen and the surrounding community. Namely, mutual cooperation activities to clean the environment are still carried out, such as cleaning (Tongkonan) which is used for community meetings in To'barana; (2) Social relations between the craftsmen and the craftsmen. For example, between the craftsmen, they know about the price increase of each cloth that will be sold; (3) Social relations between the craftsmen and buyers. Namely, buyers help market their craft products through word of mouth or social media. Because they continue to communicate with each other; and (4) Social relations between the craftsmen and the relevant government officials. Namely, there is assistance from the government in the form of establishing an office for craftsmen to store their woven cloth craft products.

b. Economic Life

The development of traditional weaving craft businesses has an impact that is felt by the community, both direct and indirect. The direct impact that arises on the surrounding community is the formation of jobs (Feptian Kuni, 2014). Here are some of the other benefits of the profession of weaving craftsmen, namely: (1) Working with yarn sellers, where the sellers subscribe to the craftsmen; (2) Innovation of other woven products by collaborating with MSMEs; and (3) The presence of food and beverage sellers/stalls located in the woven fabric manufacturing location. Due to the large number of visitors from outside, who want to see the woven fabric manufacturing process directly.

Craftsmen who work in this craft business generally earn income from the sale of each traditional fabric made. One of the craftsmen said that the selling price of each fabric is different, namely: "Each fabric sold has a different price, we sell this woven fabric according to the motif of each fabric, starting from ordinary woven fabric

without a motif, namely (Pa'miring: IDR 350,000.00) per fabric, Woven fabric with bitnik or flowers (Pa'binti: IDR 750,000.00), and woven fabric with Toraja carvings at a price (Pa'ruki IDR 1,600,000.00-3,000,000.00) per fabric. And from each seller of fabric sold, sometimes other sellers increase the price to new buyers according to the length of time the fabric was ordered" (Interview with Omba Soppa Matandung, September 21, 2024). The results of the interview above show that every income from the sale of traditional woven fabrics depends on the weaving results which can be seen from the motifs made by the craftsmen. With a higher price, it automatically increases the standard of living of woven fabric craftsmen. This is evidenced by the increase in the number of family members of woven fabric artisans.

4 Conclusion

The beginning of the emergence of traditional woven fabric craftsmen in To'barana Village is marked by the existence of historical relics in the form of woven fabric called "Sumpu" or "endless weaving", which was made by Awerigading when he was going to marry Padangaran's grandmother. From this marriage, Serok Bongga and Tandibayang were born. Serok Bongga married Sau Allo, the daughter of Bualolo, at the Toraja traditional house (Tongkonan) Puntak. When they arrived at Tongkonan Unnoni or Buntu, and at Tongkonan To'barana which is the center of weaving development in Sa'dan Sub-district, Sau Allo then made the longest woven cloth which symbolizes the hope that all her descendants can continue to preserve the tradition of making woven cloth.

In its development, To'barana Village who continued this weaving craft were the descendants of Tongkonan To'barana, namely from Puang Ponglabba named Ne'Butung and Ne'Panggau. They began making weaving crafts during the Japanese occupation in 1941, initially spinning because of the lack of blankets needed by the community during the war. After the war ended, they continued weaving activities until finally To'barana was designated as the center of Toraja weaving. The development of the traditional woven fabric craft business cannot be separated from the assistance of the government and consumers. The social life of the woven fabric craftsmen in To'barana is integrated side by side and autonomous, which is reflected in their attitudes, behaviors, and habits.

The social life of the woven fabric craftsmen in To'barana is integrated side by side and

autonomous, which is reflected in their attitudes, behaviors and actions that tend to prioritize the values or rules of the Toraja tribe (Aluk Todolo). Some still adhere to Christian religion and culture, while others realize that they are citizens of the Republic of Indonesia. The economic impact felt by traditional woven fabric craftsmen in To'barana is the increase in income or income for both craftsmen and communities around the To'barana area.

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