



Rituals and myths at the death ceremony of the Toraja People: Studies on the Rambu Solo Ceremony

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ABSTRACT

Rambu Solo is a well-known ritual or traditional ceremony from the Toraja tribe in South Sulawesi. Rambu Solo is tribute to the funeral of the Toraja people who died. With lots of culture and tradition in Indonesia, the ritual of Rambu Solo is distinguished as being very sacred, scary and also expensive. The aim of this study is to find out how the Toraja tribe is still preserving the sacred tradition of Rambu Solo in this modern era. The author utilized the qualitative approach to analyze the rituals and myths at the death ceremony of the Toraja people. In order to help the author doing the analysis, Cultural Identity theory from Stuart Hall is applied in this study. To assist the author with the analysis, the author took the data from YouTube and other literary works related to this ritual. The result indicates that even though this funeral ceremony is sacred, scary, and costly, the Toraja people keeps preserving their tradition from generation to generation.

ABSTRAK

Kata kunci:

Budaya

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Rambu Solo adalah sebuah ritual atau upacara adat yang terkenal dari suku Toraja di Sulawesi Selatan. Rambu Solo merupakan penghormatan terhadap pemakaman orang Toraja yang meninggal. Dengan banyaknya budaya dan tradisi di Indonesia, ritual Rambu Solo berbeda karena ritual ini sangat sakral, menakutkan dan juga mahal. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui bagaimana suku Toraja masih melestarikan tradisi sakral Rambu Solo di era modern ini. Penulis menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif untuk menganalisis ritual dan mitos pada upacara kematian orang Toraja. Untuk membantu penulis melakukan analisis, teori Identitas Budaya dari Stuart Hall diterapkan dalam penelitian ini. Penulis mengambil data dari YouTube dan karya sastra lainnya yang terkait dengan ritual Rambu Solo. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa meskipun upacara pemakaman ini sacral, menakutkan dan mengeluarkan banyak biaya, masyarakat Toraja tetap melestarikan tradisi mereka dari generasi ke generasi.

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1. Introduction

North Toraja is one of the province's districts of South Sulawesi, with the capital city of Rantepao located between 20 and 30 degrees south latitude and 1190 and 1210 degrees east longitude. North Toraja Regency is 1,151.47 km² in size. The North Toraja district comprises 21 sub-districts subdivided into 111 villages and 40 sub-districts. North Toraja Regency is situated on a highland (500-2,500 m above sea level) with a hilly to the mountainous landscape. North Toraja is landlocked. Toraja is divided into 32 distinct customary regions. Twelve traditional territories are located in North Toraja and twenty in Tana Toraja. Each customary region has its elders and stakeholders. North Toraja district is traditionally divided into twelve customary areas: Kesu', Buntao', Rantebua', Tondon, Nanggala, Balusu, Sa'dan, Tikala, Pangalla', Dende', Piongan, and Madandan. Although, in general, the customs and traditions in each of these customary regions are similar since they stem from the same source of civilization, namely the Torajan civilization, the practice of customs and traditions in each customary region varies. According to folklore, the ancestors of the Toraja people were humans who descended from nirvana. This belief has been passed down orally from generation to generation among the Toraja people (God almighty) ([Siahaan et al., 2021](#)).

The Toraja tribe is one of the many Indonesian tribes whose traditions remain strong. Toraja is renowned for its funeral ritual, a significant social event ([Matana et al., 2020](#)). The Toraja tribe, a cultural community that engages in artistic, moral, and religious activities, is comparable to other Indonesian tribes. Despite this fundamental belief in unity, the Toraja tribe possesses distinctive characteristics, most notably the elaborate and expensive Rambu Solo's funeral ceremony ([Aswar et al., 2020](#)).

Rambu Solo is a funeral ceremony that is affected by Toraja's cultural aspects ([Resnita et al., 2020](#)). This Toraja funeral

ceremony has persisted for centuries. This ritual's remarkable mobilization of resources, which can cost up to billions of rupiah, is one of its most distinctive features. ([McKinnon & Volkman, 1987](#)) who traveled to Toraja in 1978, corroborated the luxury of this ceremony. According to earlier research, luxury in the Solo Rambu ceremony existed long before the arrival of the Dutch 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 quantity and kind of buffalo sacrificed as emblems of social position, riches, and, most importantly, as a metaphor for the vehicles that the spirits will take to reach *puya* (heaven). Thus, the faster the spirit will reach *puya*, the more types of buffalo there are and the more valuable they are ([Handayani et al., 2020](#)).

Rambu Solo is the essential aspect of Aluk Todolo, the traditional religion of Torajanese prior to the introduction of Christianity in 1915. Aluk Todolo taught Rambu Solo the *puya* route that transports spirits to eternity and unites them with their ancestors. Thus, Rambu Solo's magnificence and perfection can affect the fate of spirits in the hereafter. The grander the Rambu Solo ceremony, particularly for noble spirits, the greater the assurance that they will ascend to heaven, convert into *to'membali puang* (God), and be able to bless their descendants and the entire Toraja ([Handayani et al., 2020](#)). Even after they converted to Christianity, belief in Aluk Todolo's conception of death remained strong. Therefore, Christianity has little choice but to modify this pagan-style ceremony. In each ritual procession, rituals and sermons demonstrate one kind of Christian accommodation. The compromise between Christianity and Rambu Solo rites has spiritually formed the Torajanese way of life, which now adheres to Christian values and Aluk Todolo. In this instance, Aluk Todolo's beliefs manifested through the Rambu Solo rite for Torajanese have become social life integrators and serve to preserve their Torajanese identity. As stated

by Fakhruroji, a ritual serves not only as a religious event but also as a means for social engagement and communication among community members, where they can express their identity (Fakhruroji, 2019). The ceremony Rambu Solo', which is festive and unforgettable, is typically carried out by a group of lords from the *Tana' Bulaan* (the highest nobility in the Toraja tribe). Death is a movement from empirical reality to the mythic-transcendent, whereas birth is a transition from the mythic-transcendent to the empirical-practical, according to Kobong (1983).

In the art procession and burial procession of the Rambu Solo ceremony, members of the Toraja tribe frequently wear various ritual garments. When utilized by actors in the procession (Toraja language = *Ma'rombongan*), mourners approaching the ceremony area (Toraja language = *rante*), and performers of dances when watching the style of dance, clothing used in the two processions appear coordinated and patterned. The pattern of the culprits in the procession, sorted from the actions of numerous individuals who performed the *Pa'randing* dance, was followed by other actors, including *To Minaa* (prayer leader), the nuclear family, and some individuals as an introduction to property ownership (buffalo). Observing a form of ritual dance based on the contents of the Rambu Solo ceremony reveals the pattern of actors in the art procession, such as the presence of *Ma'papangan*, *Ma'katia*, and *Ma'badong* (Aswar et al., 2020). The above forms of behavior and tradition are cultural manifestations of the Toraja tribe used to conduct social life.

The Rambu Solo ceremony is a complicated ceremony that involves intricate funeral and burial procedures. This complexity represents the Torajans' philosophy of life and their perspectives on death, the afterlife, and deceased individuals. Initially, the Rambu Solo' was tied primarily with traditional ideas concerning Aluk Todolo. Nevertheless, as time progressed, the beliefs changed,

affecting people's perspective of Rambu alone' (Hasbi et al., 2019).

Some believed that the advent of Christianity through education in Torajan society caused these developments. The socio-cultural change hypothesis, which describes change through diffusion (McLeish & John, 1969) reveals this condition. Consequently, the decision-making process and the performance of rituals are now influenced by social status and economic and cultural factors. This subjectivity in decision-making has led to the development of various Rambu Solo rites (McKinnon & Volkman, 1987).

Another perspective is taken from Demmalino (in Matana, et. al., 2020). He argues that the adherents of Aluk Todolo believed that *Puang Matua*, the creator of the first man and the entire natural world, is the supreme deity. The teachings of Aluk Todolo believed that the dead people would be strongly assumed to die after all procession of Rambu Solo Ceremony has been conducted. If not, the dead people will just be seen as sick people laid down on their beds and then given food and drink. Therefore, the Torajanese regard this ceremony to be of the utmost importance since its success determines the place of the deceased's soul as either a wandering spirit (Bombo), a spirit who has attained godhood (Tomembalipuang), or a protector God (Deata). In this setting, the Rambu Solo Ceremony is obligatory; hence, the Torajan people will undertake the ceremony as an act of devotion to their deceased parents (Matana et. al., 2020).

Matana et.al (2020) also stated that the celebratory nature of the Rambu Solo ceremony was influenced by the social rank of the deceased family and quantified by the number of animal sacrifices. The greater the number of buffalo slain, the greater the family's social standing. Typically, the noble family murdered between 24 and 100 buffalo tails, while the middle family slaughtered between 8 and 50 buffaloes and pigs. In the past, only noble families could conduct this event. However, due to

economic progress, social status is no longer determined by lineage or position but by education and economic capacity. In the Rambu Solo Ceremony, numerous cultural attractions are shown, including the buffalo fight (*Mappasilaga Tedong*), in which the buffaloes to be sacrificed are butchered beforehand. Intriguingly, the buffaloes were slain in a manner that has become a defining characteristic of the Torajanese. The neck was slashed with a single cut. The killed buffalo is not typical, but rather a "bule" (*Tedong Bonga*) buffalo with a price ranging between 100 and 500 million Rupiah per tail. Rambu Solo depicts the lives of Torajanese who value mutual aid, assist one another, maintain kinfolk, have a social standing, and revere their ancestors ([Matana et al. 2020](#)).

According to [Sariubang et al. \(2014\)](#), the price of a buffalo is very expensive than the usual type. It is up to 30 to 50 times more expensive than the common one. The number of buffalo sacrificed depends on the social strata of the family left behind. The higher the social strata, the more the number of sacrifices. Also, the Rambu Solo' ceremony sacrifices ordinary buffalo and pigs, which number in the hundreds or even thousands. So that the total cost can reach billions of rupiah ([Sariubang et al. 2014](#)).

In conducting this study, the author selected several relevant prior studies as references. First, a research entitled "Function And Meaning Of Symbolic Fashion In Rambu Solo' Ceremony" conducted by [Aswar et al. \(2020\)](#). In their research, they focused on the symbolic significance of clothing that is always associated with mythology and the origin of the deceased for the Toraja tribe. Then, a research conducted by [Handayani et al. \(2020\)](#) entitled "Out of Crisis: Maintaining Hegemony through Rambu Solo Ritual in Toraja". Their research aimed to retain the hegemony of the Rambu Solo ritual, which is typically described as having three primary phases. Aristocratic elites oppose the Rambu Solo ritual's ongoing organic crises. The last is the research conducted by [Matana et al. \(2020\)](#). The title of their

research is "Social, Economic and Cultural Perspectives in Funeral Ceremony Rambu Solo' in Toraja Utara Regency". It aims to examine the social, economic, and cultural aspects of the Rambu Solo funeral ceremony in North Toraja. It was a descriptive study, and the informants were North Toraja society members. Observation, interviews, and documentation were the methods of data gathering employed. Research revealed that the process of Rambu Solo's ceremony strengthened familial ties, as distant relatives attended the ceremony. Meanwhile, my research is different from the others as the focus of my research is to analyze how the rituals and myths at the death ceremony of the Toraja people preserved in modern era.

To reveal that issue, the author utilized the Cultural Theory from Stuart Hall. [Sihombing & Aditya \(2021\)](#) stated that Stuart Hall's idea of cultural identity serves as the main theoretical foundation to understand the values, beliefs, thought processes, and behavior which is learned and shared by a group of people. It guarantees survival, strengthens the sense of belonging, and assists in giving a group identity. "Identity is the definition of ones-self. It is a person's frame of reference by which he perceives himself. Identities are constructed by an integral connection of language, social structures, gender orientation and cultural patterns. There is a complex relationship between culture and identity" ([Sihombing & Aditya, 2021](#)).

According to [Hall \(1990\)](#) "identity is a structured representation that achieves its positive only through the narrow eye of the negative." It must pass through the eye of the needle of the other entity before it can assemble itself. Identity is always a transitory and unstable consequence of relations that define identities by highlighting distinctions. Thus, the emphasis is on the multiplicity of identities and differences as opposed to a singular identity and the linkages or articulations between the fragments or differences. As with identity, the agency is primarily concerned with the spatial interactions between places and areas

and the distribution of individuals within them.

Hall (1990) in (Christian, 2017) also propound that there are two basic ideas about cultural identity. In the first thought, he states that cultural identity is a shared culture that is owned by a group of people and descendants who have the same cultural history. In this case, cultural identity reflects the historical and cultural code of an area that tends not to change or still preserved. Meanwhile, on second thought, he states that cultural identity is not completely fixed (unchanged), but can be changed. This depends on how a group can position itself (positioning) and become a culture, history, and power that continues to be preserved. Thus, Hall (1990) concluded that cultural identity is a production that never ends or stops, but is always in the process of identification.

Individuals create their identities through contact with society. The subject retains an inner core or essence that constitutes "the real self," yet this is continuously changed and modified by "outside" cultural settings and the identities they confer (Jacobson et al., 1997). Hall (1990) also advocated for two unique viewpoints on cultural identity. On the surface, cultural identity is described as the shared culture of a group with a common history and heritage. In this context, cultural identity is characterized by adherence to a relatively stable and unchanging cultural code and historical experience. While the second notion asserts that identity culture is not completely permanent (irreversible), it can shift in response to how positioning and being the subject of a continuing history, culture, and power have played out. In other words, the first argument states that cultural identity already exists, whereas the second argues that cultural identity is in the formation process. Cultural identity is a constant identification process within a cultural and historical context (Hall, 1990). In addition, Budianta et al. (2017) noted that when two groups of people from various natural environments and cultures

collaborate on a project, miscommunications and disagreements will indeed develop. The situation may worsen if the disputes are founded on individuals' diverse personalities. Indeed, individual personalities could cause confused and convoluted communication patterns.

Based on Stuart Hall's theory that has been stated above, it can be understood that the Rambu Solo' ritual is basically a cultural identity that is inseparable from the Toraja people who are still preserved until now. The Toraja tribe, in any situation and condition, continue to carry out the Rambu Solo' ritual as a form of maintaining a cultural identity that has been passed down from generation to generation. In its development, the Rambu Solo' ritual no longer adheres to the socio-economic status of the community, nor the person's caste.

Regarding the preservation of the indigenous cultural values, Jacobus Ranjabar (2006: 114) quoted from Nuraeni et al. (2012) states that "the preservation of the old norms of the nation (local culture) is to maintain the values of cultural arts, traditional values, by developing manifestations that are dynamic, flexible and selective, as well as adapting to situations and conditions that are always changing and developing."

In the current era, things that need to be addressed are safeguarding, preserving, maintaining, and inheriting the values of customary culture as well as possible to strengthen indigenous culture. In this case, we can see a real example of cultural preservation carried out by the Toraja people in the traditional Rambu Solo' event which is still often done today. This goes hand in hand with research on cultural preservation put forward by (Paulus 2010: 196) in (Rohani et al., 2018). According to Paul, There are some strengths that can be done in order to preserve Indonesian culture, it is the diversity and uniqueness of local cultures that exist in Indonesia. Local culture is also a source of national cultural resilience. But we are also facing a challenge to preserve the culture. Changes in the natural and physical

environment can be the first challenge to preserve culture. And there are also technological advances and globalization. We also have some weakness in preserving the culture, for example, lack of public awareness, lack of cultural communication and lack of cultural learning.

In a culture, there must be a belief in it which is usually manifested in the form of a ceremony or ritual. Situmorang (in Ngare, 2014) concluded that ceremony is an activity carried out by a group of people and has stages that have been arranged according to the purpose of the event. Meanwhile, what is meant by ritual is something that is related to spiritual beliefs and beliefs with a specific purpose.

Definition of ritual ceremonies according to Koentjaraningrat (in Ngare, 2014) is a system of activities or a series of actions that are governed by custom or applicable laws in society that are related to various kinds of events that usually occur in the community concerned. The existence of rituals in all regions is a symbol of belief or religion and also symbolism of human culture. The symbolic act of the religious ceremony is a very important part and cannot possibly be abandoned. Humans must do something that symbolizes communication with God. Apart from religion, customs also carry out traditional rituals and ceremonies which are inherited from generation to generation from the older to the younger generation (Herusatoto Budiono in Hasibuan & Muda, 2017). Rambu Solo' which until now has been maintained by the Toraja tribal community from generation to generation means strong cultural preservation as conveyed by (Widjaja in Nahak, 2019) defines cultural preservation as an activity or which is carried out continuously, directed and integrated in order to realize certain goals that reflect the existence of something permanent and eternal, dynamic in nature, flexible and selective. We are also going to adapt with the high culture and low culture theory. High culture is a collection of thoughts, ideologies, beliefs, trends, practices and works - intellectual or creative

- aimed at a cultured, civilized and educated elite, whereas low culture is culture of the common people and the mass (Debnath, 2019). Hence, in this study, the author is interested in analyzing the rituals and myths at the funeral ceremony, Rambu Solo.

2. Method

This study applied the analysis of Cultural Identity proposed by Stuart Hall. The author started by examining impressions on YouTube media to get information about the Rambu Solo ceremony. There are several stages that the author did.

First, I chose the pertinent information according to the presented study question taken from two YouTube videos: "Indonesia Bagus - Tana Toraja," released by the Netmediatama YouTube channel, and "Milyaran habis untuk sekali pemakaman di Toraja," uploaded by the Ric snt channel. The Rambu Solo ritual procession performed by the Toraja tribe is described in length in each of the two YouTube presentations we chose. Then, the Toraja people who carry out the actual Rambu Solo rite are also included in the two videos. These two films have a substantial amount of viewers as well.

Second, the author selected the element of identity on the two YouTube channels which refers to the subject of the Toraja tribe, namely the Rambu Solo' procession. At this stage, I assessed how the two channels collected information to see the cultural identity of the Toraja people in the Rambu Solo' ritual procession.

Third, the author took data in the form of complete information, obtained from sources on the two YouTube channel shows.

Forth, the author analyzed the data that had been obtained from the two YouTube shows and related them with the theory of Cultural Identity from Stuart Hall.

The last, the author concluded Rambu Solo funeral ceremony by giving interpretation from the prior observation.

3. Result and Discussion

This funeral ceremony, Rambu Solo takes into consideration the deceased's social

standing. The burial ritual for the Rambu Solo for the upper middle social class is typically carried out with great festivity, implying that the deceased's family, children, and grandchildren will incur a substantial debt as a result. The number of buffalo and pigs slain at Rambu Solo's funeral ceremony indicates the ceremonial's splendor and grandeur. Although the Rambu Solo' burial ritual needs a substantial quantity of assets, the Toraja believe that the amount of assets used during the execution of the activity is not equal to the services and kindness of the deceased while they were living (Tangdiella, et.al., 2020). They also stated that the funeral ceremony of Rambu Solo is a rite that cannot be detached from the ancient belief system (aluk Todolo). In addition to being viewed as the final tribute to a deceased loved one, it is inextricably linked to the significance of the symbols in implementing the Rambu Solo' ceremony. This emblem can take the shape of To Minaa's prayers, representing adoration, worship, and supplication. Other symbols may take the shape of ceremonial equipment, which signifies an offering to the ancestors and is the final homage to the departed from the deceased's family, relatives, and *ma'rapu* (extended family community) (Tangdiella et al., 2021). In its implementation, the aluk rule governs the funeral Rambu Solo'. The ancient belief of the Toraja is that aluk was created in the heavens. Consequently, aluk is divine, and all living things are subject to aluk (Sarira, 1996: 63 in (Pasulu, 2009).

As already written in the method, the researcher used 2 YouTube videos as a data source, namely a YouTube video uploaded by Ric snt's channel entitled "Milyaran Habis Untuk Sekali Pemakaman Toraja!" and a Youtube video uploaded by the Netmediatama channel entitled "Indonesia Bagus - Tana Toraja". To support this research, the author took data in the form of video clips from these two sources, and took information related to the Rambu Solo ritual. Here are the data sources obtained from the video uploaded by the Ric snt channel "Milyaran Habis Untuk Sekali Pemakaman Toraja!"



Figure 1: "Kerbaunya bisa sampe ratusan juta Rupiah"

Translate: "The price of buffalo can be up to hundreds of millions Rupiah"

From the [figure 1](#), the informant revealed that the price of buffalo used in the *Rambu Solo'* ritual has a fantastic price, reaching hundreds of millions of rupiah. This is because the buffalo used are special, for example, the Tedong Bonga (striped buffalo), where this buffalo is a very expensive buffalo. Every family makes every effort to buy it as it has a very important meaning.

Following Stuart Hall's theory of Cultural Identity, it could be interpreted that The informant's utterance represents Toraja people who have a strong tradition. He informed that the buffalo could cost more than hundreds of millions rupiah. Even though they know that the price is costly, they still preserve their tradition by following its ritual. Hence, I agree with Stuart Hall's concept that cultural identity is a shared culture that is owned by a group of people and descendants who have the same cultural history. In this case, he has the same history as others. He is part of descendant that believes in his cultural ceremony.

The following analysis can be seen from [Figure 2](#). In its implementation, the *Rambu Solo'* ritual is able to spend billions of rupiah, this is because the expenses required are very large, such as purchasing tens to hundreds of buffalo, pigs, and so on. So that every family who carries out the *Rambu Solo'* ritual helps each other for the success of the event.



Figure 2: “*Satu kali pesta pasti bisa habis sampe M*”

Translate: “*One party can run out up to billions*”

In a closer context, the scene vividly shows that the informant shares if his tribe can spend billions of rupiah. In my opinion, his information symbolized his identity as a Toraja man. He has seen or probably experienced that Toraja people have strongly believed in their ritual. They do not mind spending billions of rupiah as it is part of their tradition. Toraja people share their culture from generation to generation. Thus, their tradition still exists until now. As Hall (1990) stated that there are two distinct perspectives on cultural identity. Cultural identity is initially defined as the shared culture of a group with a shared history and background. Adherence to a cultural ethic and historical experience essentially unchanging and stable in this setting defines cultural identity. While the second idea contends that identity culture is not entirely irreversible (irreversible), it does so with the caveat that it may change due to how positioning and being the object of developing history, culture, and power have played out. From Hall’s theory, I see that the scene and information stated by the informant attempted to show that he believes in his tradition.

The next observation can be seen from [Figure 3](#). The scene above was followed by another one that could be seen from [Figure 4](#).

In Figure 3 and 4, we can see that Toraja people try to offer as many sacrifices as possible in the *Rambu Solo*’ ritual. This is closely related to the social status of a family in society. The more sacrifices they give, the more respect the family’s social status is.



Figure 3: “*Saya kasih (kurban) 11 kerbau, totalnya ada 20, sisanya dari keluarga saya, sama ada 1 sapi*”

Translate: “*I gave (sacrifices) 11 buffaloes, the total is 20, the rest is from my family, and also 1 cow*”



Figure 4: “*Kekayaan seseorang dapat dilihat dari seberapa banyak kerbau yang dikorbankan saat upacara Rambu Solo*”

Translate: “*A person’s wealth can be seen from how many buffalo were sacrificed during the Rambu Solo’ ceremony.*”

In a closer analysis, I see that Toraja people strongly believe and preserve their tradition. They even want to spend much money on that ritual. It has been done from generation to generation. As stated above, the sacrifice given by the family reflects their social status in a society. Thus, when they spend more, they will get more respect from the society. All in all, they will get the privilege from surroundings.

The next source was obtained from the video uploaded by the Netmediatama channel “Indonesia Bagus - Tana Toraja” which can be seen in [Figure 5](#).

In Toraja culture, helping each other is commonplace and often encountered. The *Rambu Solo*’ ceremony is no exception. Even though it is not a close relative who is grieving, anyone can help, like the host in the video.



Figure 5: *“Mereka yang meninggal adalah saudara jauh dari bapak mamakku”*

Translate: *“Those who died were distant relatives of my mother and father”*

For further observation, the author sees that the aspect of cultural identity proposed by Stuart Hall clearly seen in this scene. Hall (1990) argued that cultural identity is described as the shared culture of a group with a common history and heritage. In this scene, we can see Toraja people help each other. They do not see who passed away. They do not see what status the one who passed away was. Anyone from a different background can help and do the funeral ceremony. The point that I get here is Toraja people have inherited not only the ritual of funeral ceremony but also value in social life. As a human being, we should help each other and I could see this value from Toraja people. To put it in a nutshell, I can interpret that their identity to help each other is also essential.

The following analysis is taken from [Figure 6](#).



Figure 6: *“Begitu ada rambu solo’, seluruh keluarga besar dan saudara akan datang”*

Translate: *“Once there is a rambu solo’ ritual, the whole extended family and siblings will come”*

In this scene, we can see the Toraja people view kinship as the highest and most priceless thing. Through this ceremony, kinship is re-strengthened by the gathering of family, relatives, and relatives which will certainly strengthen kinship between one another.

In a deeper analysis, Rambu Solo is the funeral ritual that attracts families and lots of people to gather. It is the time to make everybody meet each other. Hence, through this funeral ceremony, everyone can meet and unite.

The following observation is taken from [Figure 7](#).



Figure 7: *“Tamu tamu yang datang akan kami sambut selayaknya di pesta besar”*

Translate: *“We will welcome guests who come to the ceremony like a big party”*



Figure 8: *“Siapapun yang datang, akan kami jamu layaknya saudara, tak pandang bulu, termasuk turis asing”*

Translate: *“Whoever comes, we will treat it like a family, indiscriminately, including foreign tourists”*

In the screenshot ([Figure 7](#) and [Figure 8](#)) even though the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony is a funeral ceremony, this ceremony is held happily. Entire families, relatives, and even foreign tourists will gather for and participate in this ceremony. Apart from being a form of

strengthening kinship with one another, it is also a symbol of recreation.

In a further research, *Rambu Solo'* ceremony is a funeral event that is held happily. The whole family, relatives, travelers will come together to experience and follow this atmosphere of grief. Many guests who came to watch the ceremony were local and foreign.

The *Rambu Solo'* ceremony plays an important role in the life of the Toraja people today. This is because in its meaning there are important points that can serve as guidelines in social life. According to [Pasasa \(2014\)](#), there are five important things that are socio-cultural in the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony, which is one of the reasons the Toraja people continue to exist in maintaining customs and traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation by their ancestors, including:

1. Kinship, the Toraja people view kinship as the highest and most priceless thing. Through this ceremony, kinship is refreshed by the gathering of relatives and families which will certainly strengthen kinship between one another. Quoted from the video uploaded by Netmediatama, it was said that when the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony was carried out, all relatives and families were present at the ceremony. All the guests who attended were also respected and served as well, because service that is given by the deceased's family was also a special value that needed to be considered to maintain family dignity.
2. Dignity, *Rambu Solo'* ceremony has a connection with family dignity and self-esteem. It is explained in the video uploaded by Netmediatama that if there are guests who are not happy, then the family performing the ceremony will feel embarrassed. Through this ceremony, the success and excitement of the event has a high socio-cultural value. On the other hand, if the ceremony is not successful, the family will feel ashamed. Social values in this culture are also

passed down from generation to generation to each family.

3. Inheritance distribution, in the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony, inheritance is distributed to the descendants of the deceased. The distribution of inheritance can be determined, with the exception of a will from the deceased. The importance of inheritance sharing is inseparable from the encouragement of the Toraja people to maintain the culture they have, to their children and grandchildren, so that this does not become extinct over time.
4. Mutual cooperation or in Bahasa is "gotong royong", as mentioned in the video uploaded by Netmediatama, everyone and relatives help each other. In the *Rambu Solo'* ritual there is mutual cooperation in the form of assistance such as giving sacrifices like buffalo, pigs and others from various circles. This assistance will be returned if the person who gave it at one time is stricken by death or it can be called reciprocating.
5. Recreation. Many people including family, tourist or natives are allowed to see this funeral ceremony ([Pasasa, 2014](#)).

The next analysis is taken from [Figure 9](#).



Figure 9: "Semua akan saling bantu agar kegiatan lancar"

Translate: "Everyone will help each other so that activities run smoothly"

The Toraja people uphold social unity, therefore every time there is a big ceremony like *Rambu Solo'*, the community takes part

in helping each other so that activities run smoothly.

In a closer observation, the Toraja people have implanted the meaning of life and death in each of their descendants. Each of the meanings taught is certainly implemented in accordance with the teachings that have been carried out since the time of the Toraja ancestors. This ceremony requires the family of the deceased to make a funeral feast as a sign of final respect for the deceased family by preparing various requirements, such as sacrificial animals, which vary in number, according to the economic capacity of each family of the deceased.

The last analysis is taken from [Figure 10](#).



Figure 10: “Tidak semua kerbau yang akan disembelih dibeli sendiri, ada juga pemberian dari keluarga lain yang datang, biasanya pemberian ini akan saling berbalas nanti saat ada yang meninggal”

Translate: “Not all buffalo that will be slaughtered are bought by themselves, there are also gifts from other families who come, usually, these gifts will be reciprocated later when someone dies”

From the observation, the author views that all people and relatives help each other in the implementation of this *Rambu Solo'* ritual. The term mutual cooperation is certainly always carried out by the Toraja tribe in the implementation of this ceremony, like giving sacrificial animals such as buffalo, pigs and others from various circles. Of course, the assistance that has been given will later be returned if the person who gave it at one time experiences death or loss. This is commonly known as reciprocation.

In a closer context, The Toraja people really respect the culture that has been ingrained from their ancestors, and

prioritizes the preservation of *Rambu Solo'* culture even in the current era of globalization. The ritual itself teaches important things about life. According to Paranoan (1990) in Guntara (2016), *Rambu Solo'* ritual has four aspects:

1. As a sign of love; this means that the Toraja people really cared and loved people who have died. The Toraja people believe that, if they do not carry out the *Rambu Solo'* ritual, they will feel cursed or in Toraja it is called *ma busung* according to the prevailing cultural measure or what is called the Toraja language (*tana*).
2. Prestige; means that the family carries out the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony based on family dignity. Thus, the more buffalo being sacrificed is a measure of the social status of a family in society. As stated by Alan Tonapa in the video uploaded by Ric snt, he said that a person's wealth can be measured by how many buffaloes are sacrificed.
3. Religious; is one of the reasons for implementing *Rambu Solo'* in the *Aluk To Dolo* belief. According to the belief of the Toraja people, the more buffalo are sacrificed in the *Rambu Solo'* ritual, the more the deceased's spirit will be guaranteed to enter Heaven or in the Toraja language it is called *Puya*.
4. Economy; in implementing *Rambu Solo'*, there will also be a distribution of inheritance from the deceased to their descendants. The distribution of the inheritance is based on the number of sacrificial animals offered by each heir. Thus, each heir tried to offer as many sacrificial animals as possible to control the inheritance.

Based on the theory expressed by Stuart Hall (1990) quoted from Symphony ([Christian, 2017](#)), it is argued that cultural identity is a shared culture that is owned by a group of people or communities who have the same history and descent history. In this context, cultural identity can reflect historical experiences and the same cultural code which tends to be stable and unchanging. Therefore,

this theory is in line with the cultural identity possessed by the Toraja people, who until now still maintain the traditional ritual of *Rambu Solo'* even though it has entered the era of modernization. The Toraja people still perform the *Rambu Solo'* traditional ceremony for their deceased ancestors. People in the Toraja tribe still perform this traditional ceremony because they still adhere to their beliefs according to their customs that are ingrained from their ancestors.

The implementation of the *Rambu Solo'* ritual in Tana Toraja is full of social values that exist in society. These social values which are formed in the funeral ceremony, gradually transform into a tradition in the social order of the indigenous Toraja people. This is one of the factors that causes the *Rambu Solo'* rite to remain in the midst of changing times/in the current era of modernization, not completely changing the pattern of cultural identity in the Toraja people. Modernization actually strengthens the traditions of the Toraja people and is also able to explore the culture that is owned by others outside the Toraja tribe itself. The existence of the Toraja tribe also proves that the historical value of culture is important to be preserved, protected, and continues to strive to preserve it so that it is not consumed by time and rapid global development.

The way for the Toraja people to preserve *Rambu Solo'* is to help each other and to lend to one another. So, when one of the families holds the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony, other families will help to donate, and vice versa. This is evidenced by the video from Ric Snt, which states that one of the deceased's relatives who was doing the *Rambu Solo'* ritual said that he donated several dozen buffaloes and cows for the deceased, and some of the buffalo and cows were assisted by their relatives from other families.

In a closer observation, the author finds that the Toraja people still exist to maintain the *Rambu Solo'* ritual in the current era of globalization. We can see that the Toraja people still hold the *Rambu Solo'* ritual without any obstacles until now. The

Toraja people still help each other if there is another family/community that holds the *Rambu Solo'* ritual such as donating sacrificial animals, helping with the implementation of ceremonies, and so on. The Toraja people still practice the *Rambu Solo'* ritual to this day, because they still have the belief that the heritage that has been passed down since the time of their ancestors needs to be preserved. The Toraja people also still prioritize an attitude of togetherness between each other, this can be seen through their various activities, such as helping each other and sharing. This has implications for future generations to continue to preserve the traditions that have been passed down, because for the Toraja people, these kinds of customs must not fade even though the times keep changing, they try to maintain the existing values as much as possible.

4. Conclusion

To conclude, *Rambu Solo'* is a death ritual according to the beliefs of the Toraja people who still adhere to the Aluk To dolo belief, the religion of the ancestors of the Toraja people. In this ritual, it takes a lot of animal sacrifice, so that it costs a lot. The costs incurred for one ceremony can reach billions of Rupiah, one of which is due to buying offerings/sacrifices such as buffalo, pigs, or cows for the implementation of the *Rambu Solo'* ritual. The *Rambu Solo'* ritual ceremony is unlike any other funeral ceremony, this ceremony is held happily and lively. Because according to the belief of the Toraja people, we must be happy so that the spirits of our ancestors are also happy in the afterlife which Toraja people called Puya. There are many series of events from this *Rambu Solo'* ritual ceremony, starting from the cavalcade of the corpse around the village, to the event of pitting the buffalo that will be used as a sacrifice later. This event is usually crowded with people and is held like a festive and big party. Everyone present will definitely be treated like a family at the ceremony. Even though the times have continued to develop and there is also the swift flow of modernization, for the Toraja

people, the existing culture must still be preserved and must not be lost. Until today, people are still practicing the ritual. This is because this ritual is their way of honoring their deceased ancestors/family. Although the Rambu Solo' ritual ceremony is very expensive to carry out, the Toraja people still carry it out every time a family or relative dies, because they still respect the beliefs of their ancestors. With this, the Toraja people are still very active in maintaining the culture and customs of their ancestors. Love for customs and culture is very important and needs to be instilled in us from an early age, as has been done by the Toraja people, so that even though we are facing very fast changing times, the love of culture is still very well preserved. Until in the end, culture itself is no longer just a ritual in a society, but becomes a good example for all people in the world to continue to preserve the original culture, a legacy from their ancestors.

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