



Actualization of Social Status through Giving Traditional Objects in Traditional Ceremonies of the Toba Batak Community in the Lake Toba Region

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to see the extent of the actualization of social status through the provision of traditional objects in the traditional ceremonies of the Toba Batak people. This study uses qualitative methods with data collection techniques of observation, interviews, document studies and focus group discussions. The results show that the life of the Toba Batak people in the Lake Toba area is regulated by the dalihan na tolu system, where this kinship system becomes the guideline for the community in social activities, especially in the implementation of various traditional ceremonies. There is a relationship between culture and social status, where traditional ceremonies become the arena of the Batak community. Toba to actualize his social status. Social status is actualized in various series of traditional ceremonies, ranging from traditional ceremonies before birth to traditional ceremonies after death, which include joy ceremonies and mourning ceremonies. The actualization of social status in various traditional ceremonies is carried out through efforts to provide rewards in the form of exchanging traditional objects between dalihan na tolu relatives. The giving of these traditional objects is a means of actualizing social status.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Toba Batak people are one of the tribes in Indonesia who come from the Lake Toba area. Administratively, the Lake Toba area is in North Sumatra Province, which includes part of the administrative area of seven regencies, namely Samosir Regency, Toba Samosir Regency, Dairi Regency, Karo Regency, Humbang Hasundutan Regency, North Tapanuli Regency and Simalungun Regency.

Every society has a purpose in life that motivates them to behave. Likewise, the Toba Batak community has a life goal of hamoraon (wealth), hagabeon (many descendants) and hasangapon

(honor). The three elements of life goals are interrelated and mutually support each other and if it can be achieved it will increase the social status of a person or group.

An important element in social stratification is status. Status is the position or position or place of a person or group in the social structure of society or a certain pattern of social relations. A person's status can be obtained from birth, given because of his services or because of his achievements and struggles. A person's status is also determined by social class, namely a group of people who have the same relative status, have a certain way of life, are aware of certain privileges, and have certain prestige (social prestige/honor). While status symbols are the characteristics attached to a person or group that can relatively show their status, such as how to dress and how to talk. The existence of differences in status and social stratification of society has consequences, including: different ways of life (way of thinking, feeling and acting), different prestige, different privileges, and different life opportunities.

The Toba Batak people are known as people who are always related and carry out traditional ceremonies in everyday life. This is caused by the *dalihan na tolu* kinship system that is lived by the Toba Batak people. The *dalihan na tolu* kinship system is a guideline for community behavior in the Lake Toba area. This can be seen in people's daily lives such as communicating, acting and solving various social problems, so that the presence of *dalihan na tolu* becomes the norm in people's lives.

The Toba Batak community is known as an advanced society, where many members of the Toba Batak community have been successful at home and abroad. The success of the Toba Batak people is a sign that the life goals of the Toba Batak people have been achieved and their social status has increased. However, in the midst of achieving this life goal, the Toba Batak people always try to actualize this social status in order to gain recognition from the wider community, specifically the element of *dalihan na tolu* relatives. With this recognition, the social status of a person or family who has been said to be successful is undoubtedly successful because it has been shown and distributed to the *dalihan na tolu* relatives.

In the context of the Toba Batak community, differences in status arise as a result of differences in exchange transactions, the higher status of those who provide greater benefits, which cannot be reciprocated by those who receive (Johnson, 1986: 82). In this case the *hula-hula* as the recipient of the wife has a higher status than the *boru* as the giver of the wife.

One strategy that can be used to try to gain power over others is to give them as much of what they need to show their high status and to make them owe us something. A common process in competition for status and power often includes attempts to reward the exchange partner more than others can (Johnson, 1986: 83).

There is a relationship between culture and social status, where traditional ceremonies are the arena for the Toba Batak people to actualize their social status. Social status is actualized in various series of traditional ceremonies, ranging from traditional ceremonies before birth to traditional ceremonies after death, which include joy ceremonies and mourning ceremonies. Social status actualization in various traditional ceremonies is carried out through efforts to provide rewards in the form of exchanging objects, customs among the *dalihan na tolu* relatives.

Responding to the actualization of social status, it is necessary to raise a major question: how is the actualization of social status through the provision of traditional objects in the traditional ceremonies of the Toba Batak people? As for the minor question: what is the meaning contained in traditional objects? How to give traditional objects so as to increase social status?

2. RESEARCH METHODE

The method used in this study is a qualitative method, to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by the research subject holistically, by describing it with words and language,

in a special natural context and by utilizing various natural methods. In collecting data the researchers used the methods of observation, interviews, document studies and focus group discussions. The criteria for key informants are traditional leaders and religious leaders who are administrators of social associations such as clan associations, unions for help and churches. Meanwhile, the informants of the perpetrators were determined along with the development of the review and analysis of research results during the research, namely the community, and the younger generation who immediately felt life as members of the Toba Batak community. This study was conducted in six sub-districts, namely Parmaksian and Balige sub-districts in Toba district, Pangururan and Nainggolan sub-districts in Samosir district, as well as Sipoholon and Tarutung sub-districts in North Tapanuli district. The selection of the six sub-districts is because the area is the hometown of the Toba Batak people, the people in the area have lived on average for 30 years, consisting of various backgrounds and have carried out various traditional ceremonies, so that people know how to actualize social status through the provision of objects. traditional objects in traditional ceremonies.

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

The Toba Batak people know a kinship system called *dalihan na tolu*. *Dalihan natolu* are three parallel stoves made of stone, which together function to support the cauldron while cooking so that the ingredients for the food can be cooked successfully. The distance between the three stones is the same. So that all three can firmly support the cooking utensil on it. The fulcrum of the pot or cauldron is on the three stoves together and under the same weight pressure, or as a joint work. Therefore *dalihan na tolu* is symbolized by three furnaces, aiming to show the similarity of roles, obligations and rights of the three elements in each activity (Harahap, 2016: 123).

The kinship elements of *Dalihan na tolu* are *hula-hula* (the giver of the wife), *dongan tubu* (the relatives) and *boru* (the recipient of the wife). The Toba Batak people's attitude is regulated in the pretext *na tolu*, namely; *somba marhula-hula*, *manat mardongan tubu*, and *elek marboru*, which means to be respectful to the *hula-hula* (the giver of the wife), be careful (wise) of *dongan tubu* (brethren of the clan), and affectionate to *boru* (the recipient of the wife).). In addition to the three elements described above (*hula-hula*, *dongan sauntunga* and *boru*). *Dalihan na tolu* also has a "helper" element. The rationale is that sometimes the argument is not perfect, it does not match the size of the cooking utensil, that's why a small stone is needed to support the argument. That small stone is called *shal-sihal* (Gultom, 1992: 52). As for the evil-spirit group, they are friends, acquaintances, village friends, other clans, and even other ethnic groups who are not included in the three functional groups of *dalihan na tolu*.

The Toba Batak people respect the *hula-hula* very much because it is he who gives the wife. The wife is the giver of offspring for the husband's family, meaning that the *hula-hula* has given blessings to the male family through their daughter. The *dongan tubu* have to be careful because they live in the same village, the same yard, the same field. Thus almost every time they meet very vulnerable to jealousy, competition and fights. To avoid such things, it is necessary to be careful. Meanwhile, for the *boru* group, the wife-taker must behave *mangelek*, meaning to persuade, take heart, love because the princess has become part of another clan. The princess got nothing more from her father and brother. In addition, the *boru* is expected to be an economic source for *hula-hula* in terms of *tumpak* (donations), energy, and so on (Simanjuntak, 2011: 221).

Clifford Geertz views culture as a text that needs to be read. Culture is understood as a very complex network of signs, symbols, myths, routines, and habits that require a hermeneutical approach. Culture is understood as a very complex network of signs, symbols, myths, routines, and habits that require a hermeneutical approach (Huda, 2005: 211-216).

Culture is the behavior of society, where in culture sparked and expressed thoughts, feelings, values of life, and symbolic interactions that are always played by humans in the pattern of social relations. Herbert Blumer said that humans relate to each other and their world in order to share meaning (Astono and Soembogo, 2005: 73-77).

The life of the Toba Batak people in the Lake Toba area is regulated by the *dalihan na tolu* system, where this kinship system becomes the guideline for the community in social activities, especially in the implementation of various traditional ceremonies. Everyone involved in traditional ceremonies is separated in position and role through the *dalihan na tolu* system. Their presence in traditional ceremonies to carry out obligations and receive all the rights that have been determined. These obligations and rights are described in the form of giving and receiving traditional objects which are a means of giving and receiving both parties in traditional ceremonies, these traditional objects are meaningful symbols.

Man is a creature of symbols, symbols capable of connecting the spiritual and the physical, the transcendent and immanent, the far and near. Symbols enable humans to express and communicate the depth of their relationship to "other" and their environment. In this expression, humans involve all their understanding and feelings (Dillistone, 2002: 127).

Symbolically, the *hula-hula* are the source of life for the *boru*, where the *hula-hula* give their daughter to the recipient's wife (*boru*), and their daughter gives birth to a son who becomes the successor of the clan. Thus *hula-hula* has a higher status than *boru*. The status of the *hula-hula* which is higher than the *boru* makes the *boru* have high respect for the *hula-hula*. The various gifts that *Boru* gives to his *hula* must be the best because the *hula* has given the best first.

In general, as a sign of love in various traditional ceremonies, *hula-hula* are always obliged to bring rice or rice and *ulos* to *boru*, to respond to the sign of love brought by the *hula-hula*, *boru* is obliged to give rights to *hula-hula* in the form of *tuak na tonggi* (traditional drink), *jambar* (meat of slaughtered animals), and *piso-piso* (in the form of material/money). Meanwhile, the elements of *dongan tubu*, *boru* and *sihal-sihal* provide a batch as a sign of solidarity. The giving of these traditional objects is a means of actualizing social status.

The obligation of the *hula-hula* in various traditional ceremonies is seen in the procession of giving rice or paddy. The Toba Batak people believe that rice is a symbol of strengthening the human spirit called *boras si pir ni tondi*. Rice is put in a *tandok* (knitted from *pandanus* which is used as a place to hold rice). The giving of *boras si pear ni tondi* is done *hula-hula* by placing rice on the head of the *boru* and scattering it over the body of the rice giver. The giving of rice was in line with the prayers and hopes described in the rhyme *boras sipirni tondi binuat sian plate, Lord Debata ma na manggohi pasu-pasuNa jala mangiring-iring*, which means spirit-strengthening rice is taken from the plate, God is the one who fulfills His blessings and accompanies.

The large number of groups (*uduran*) from the *hula-hula* who carry rice or paddy in the *tandok* is a symbol of strength and a symbol of social status from the *hula-hula*. The *hula-hula* will be called in by the *boru* family who carry out traditional ceremonies when the traditional ceremony is about to begin, seen in wedding ceremonies, funeral ceremonies or funeral ceremonies. *Tandok* will be upheld by married women from the *hula-hula* above the head and handed over to the *boru* who carry out the traditional ceremony. The social status of the *hula-hula* will be seen when the group of the clan enters, the measure of social status can be seen

from the number of groups carrying tandok on their heads. But now there are many women who no longer hold the tandok above their head, the tandok has been flanked at the waist, so there has been a shift in the meaning of tandok.

Ulos is a tool used by hula-hula to give urns (blessings) to boru. Ulos serves to protect the body and also tondi (spirit) of the person who receives ulos. Ulos is given by mangherbangkon (spreading) ulos to the recipient of the ulos. Ulos is also a term used for the gift of goods other than cloth, such as soil, which is called ulos na so ra bad (ulos that will not be damaged). Similar to woven ulos, land cannot be given in the reverse direction of social relations, namely from boru to hula-hula.

Lifestyles are patterned ways of investing certain aspects of daily life with social or symbolic value; but this also means that lifestyle is a way of playing identity (Chaney, 1996: 92). Currently ulos has become a symbol of social status, where social status will be seen when someone uses an ulos. Ideally a person's social status will increase if someone has married a son and has grandchildren from his child, that person will wear ulos yeastidup (ulos with the highest level) in traditional ceremonies. Ulos yeastidup is used because one's status is already at the level of marpahoppu (grandfather/grandmother). But now efforts to actualize social status have been carried out in various ways, among others, by wearing beautiful and expensive ulos when attending traditional ceremonies, as is currently prevalent using Tarutung weaving. Another way is to give beautiful and expensive ulos to relatives who carry out traditional ceremonies, such as giving Tarutung hande-hande. Relatives who see the gift will judge the person who gave the ulos to be in the upper middle class.

Lifestyle is also seen in the implementation of giving ulos in various areas in the Lake Toba area. In principle, giving ulos is done by hula-hula closest to the boru who perform traditional ceremonies, such as parents to their daughters or brothers to their sisters (itonya). But now the giving of ulos has been done by the element of wide hula-hula to the boru who perform customary ceremonies. When one of the clans becomes a hula-hula in a customary ceremony, the group of clans will give ulos to the boru. The ulos given is called ulos holong (ulos kasih). Giving ulos holong has become more prevalent in the last twenty years. The giving of ulos holong can be seen in the customary ceremony of marriage, death or the ceremony of excavating the bones of the deceased (mangkokal holi). The greater the number of ulos holong, the higher the social status of a person or family.

Responding to the sign of love for giving hula-hula, the boru gave tuak na tonggi (sweet tuak) to the hula-hula. Tuak associated with traditional ceremonies is called tuak tangkasan. Agile tuak is the best choice tuak, said to be the best tuak because it will be given boru to hula-hulanya. Giving tuak and tonggi is done during the manortor (dancing) event at the place where the traditional ceremony is held such as at home, in the courtyard or in a multi -purpose building. To the women from the hula-hula who could not drink tuak, the boru who performed the customary ceremony gave aek sitio-sito (white water). Now the supply of drinks from the boru to hula-hula is not just tuak and white water, has increased with a variety of expensive drinks such as beer and fizzy drinks. The habit of giving a variety of drinks to hula-hula is one of the behaviors to actualize social status. In traditional ceremonies there is also the giving of tuak na tonggi (to buy sweet tuak), which is the giving of a sum of money from the boru to hula-hula. Jambar is one of the customary objects that must be given and accepted by various elements of dalihan na tolu in various customary ceremonies. Jambar consists of three types, namely: jambar ulaon, jambar hata and jambar juhut. Jambar ulaon is the obligation of a person or group to play a role in carrying out tasks in the social activities of the community. Jambar hata is the right of a

person or group to be able to speak. Jambar juhut is the right of a person or group to obtain a portion of the meat of a slaughtered animal.

There are two main reasons why jambar becomes so important in traditional ceremonies. First, jambar determines a person's position in his or her social status; and secondly, in the division of jambar, rights and obligations must be manifested as a sign of solidarity togetherness (community) and cooperation of indigenous peoples (Sitompul, 2000: 338-341).

The activation of social status is realized through the behavior of manghalindangkon na adong (showing that it exists). This behavior leads to a showy attitude. Families who carry out customary events will make a luxurious customary ceremony to look established. Manghalindangkon and adong behavior for wealthy families is not a problem, on the contrary for middle class families and below this behavior becomes a problem. This is seen in the often forced consumption of slaughtered meat.

Upper class families will slaughter buffalo at a traditional marriage ceremony, even though in the customary rules, slaughtering the animal is not a must. Families who are partying can take pinahan lobu (pork) or lumbu sitio (ox). Animals slaughtered in general in traditional marriage ceremonies are pigs, to be eaten together and as jambar. Slaughter of pigs is based on the view that the bride and groom are still pioneering life, if during the traditional marriage ceremony an ox or buffalo is taken, then in the future when the parents of the bride and groom die, the ox or buffalo must be slaughtered at the death traditional ceremony.

At the traditional ceremony of death, sari matua (died with grandchildren, but not all of the children are married), and saur matua (died with grandchildren and all children are married) taking boan (which was brought) horbo (buffalo), is often forced Sari Matua's death, because the condition of the grieving family is considered sufficient, the grieving family takes boanhorbo, whereas for the Sari Matua traditional ceremony, horbo is not a must. Grieving families can take pinahan lobu (pork) or lumbu sitio (ox).

Piso, which means knife, is an important work tool and weapon for an agrarian society. Because of the difficulty of obtaining iron in ancient times, the piso was one of the valuable items that could be equated with gold or other valuable items. Piso is usually the result of men's work which is a symbol of strength to work the land and weapons to defend themselves against the enemy (Nainggolan, 2014: 73-74). Piso is not only understood as material goods, but also in the form of valuables such as money, livestock, gold or rice. The handover of the piso by the hula to the hula is a sign of respect and surrender of the boru to the protection of the hula. The giving of piso can be seen at the manortor (dancing) event, where boru gives money to the hula-hula. If there are 50 manortors from the hula-hula group, the borua will be worshiping and give money to each member of the hula-hula clan group. The more money the boru gives to the hula-hula group, it will show the boru's higher social status.

Tumpak comes from the word manumpak which means to help or support or manumpahi (to give help). Tumpak in the form of nominal money that is put into an envelope to be greeted at the time of giving the batch or by means of manurat (recording) the name at the treasurer of the Helping Union (STM). The giving of tumpak is carried out by family friends, village friends, boru and colleagues, to families who carry out traditional ceremonies. The incoming tumpak became assistance to cover the party costs. The number of relatives who give tumpak makes the family party respectable, because people will think that the partying family has a broad association. Thus the social class of families who carry out traditional ceremonies are in a high social class.

4. CONCLUSION

The life of the Toba Batak people in the Lake Toba area is regulated by the *dalihan na tolu* system, where this kinship system becomes the guideline for the community in social activities, especially in the implementation of various traditional ceremonies. Everyone involved in traditional ceremonies is separated in position and role through the *dalihan na tolu* system. Their presence in traditional ceremonies to carry out obligations and receive all the rights that have been determined. These obligations and rights are described in the form of giving and receiving traditional objects which are a means of giving and receiving both parties in traditional ceremonies, these traditional objects are meaningful symbols.

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