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## DECISION MAKING IN MAPALUS RUMAH CULTURE AS A FORM OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT MANAGEMENT

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### ABSTRAK

Pemberdayaan perempuan dalam budaya lokal mampu memberikan peluang bagi perempuan dalam perannya di ranah domestik dan publik yang juga berdampak pada ekonomi keluarga dan masyarakat yang berkelanjutan. Pemberdayaan perempuan ini mampu mengangkat derajat perempuan untuk berdiri sejajar dan bermitra dengan laki-laki dalam kesetaraan untuk bersama-sama berperan dalam pembangunan ekonomi keluarga dan masyarakat yang berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana pengelolaan pemberdayaan perempuan dalam budaya Mapalus rumah melalui perannya dalam pengambilan keputusan. Penelitian ini dilakukan di Desa Tombatu, Minahasa Tenggara dengan 10 informan perempuan dan dianalisis menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan fenomenologis. Penelitian ini membuktikan bahwa pemberdayaan perempuan dalam budaya lokal mampu memberikan peluang bagi pemberdayaan perempuan dalam perannya di ranah domestik dan publik yang juga berdampak pada ekonomi keluarga dan masyarakat yang berkelanjutan. Dalam pemahaman yang mendalam, memberikan waktu, ruang dan kesempatan bagi pemberdayaan perempuan mampu mengangkat status perempuan untuk berdiri sejajar dan bermitra dengan laki-laki dalam kesetaraan untuk bersama-sama terlibat dalam peran pembangunan ekonomi keluarga dan masyarakat yang berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini menempatkan keunggulannya pada kemampuan melakukan perubahan paradigma masyarakat tentang pentingnya peran perempuan dalam pembangunan ekonomi keluarga melalui home Mapalus. Dengan demikian penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi berkelanjutan dalam upaya mencari dan menemukan, membangun dan mengembangkan bentuk-bentuk pengelolaan pemberdayaan perempuan di berbagai bidang.

**Kata kunci:** Pengambilan Keputusan, Pemberdayaan Perempuan, Budaya Mapalus Rumah, Manajemen

### ABSTRACT

Women's empowerment in local culture is able to provide opportunities for women in their roles in domestic and public areas which also have an impact on the sustainable family and community economy. This women's empowerment is able to raise the degree of women to stand on an equal footing and partner with men in equality to jointly engage in the role of sustainable family and community economic development. This study aims to identify how the management of women's empowerment in the Mapalus rumah culture through its role in decision making. This research was conducted in Tombatu village, Southeast Minahasa with 10 female informants and analyzed using descriptive qualitative with a phenomenological approach. This research proves that women's empowerment in local culture is able to provide opportunities for women's empowerment in their roles in domestic and public areas which also have an impact on the sustainable family and community economy. In a deep understanding, providing time, space and opportunities for women's empowerment is able to raise the status of women to stand on an equal footing



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and partner with men in equality to jointly engage in the role of sustainable family and community economic development. This research places its superiority on the ability to make a change in the community paradigm about the important role of women in family economic development through home Mapalus. Thus this research provides a sustainable contribution in efforts to seek and find, build and develop forms of women's empowerment management in various fields.

**Keywords:** Decision Making, Women Empowerment, Mapalus Rumah Culture, Management

## INTRODUCTION

Women's empowerment is very instrumental in improving the quality of women themselves and how the role of women is able to increase income contributions in an area (Imran<sup>18</sup>, 2022). This research is linking women's empowerment<sup>6</sup> and regional culture which is a form of local wisdom of the local community. That is why this research aims to show that the pattern of women's empowerment in the Mapalus rumah culture needs to be known to be able to have a positive influence on other women so that it also has an impact on the family and community economy (Imran, T, 2018). With this extraordinary potential of women, it can certainly provide an accurate picture and information to the government to be able to provide attention and encouragement and also provide opportunities and space for women in increasing their empowerment.

Based on initial observations, the existence of women in Southeast Minahasa Regency is closely related to local wisdom, especially the concept of Mapalus<sup>15</sup> in daily life. Women's involvement in this tradition reflects their ability to adapt and play an active role in the preservation of local values. Unlike the implementation of Mapalus, which is often associated with formal programs or projects, in Southeast Minahasa, this tradition grows naturally and becomes an integral part of community life. This tradition is based on the noble philosophy of "Sitou Timou Tumou Tou," which means that humans live to humanize others (Sondakh, 2004). This philosophy shows that Southeast Minahasa women not only maintain traditions, but also become drivers of social harmony based on collective and human values. Modern development does not affect the existence of Southeast Minahasa women as they remain loyal to the Mapalus house. Southeast Minahasa women still exist in carrying out domestic and public functions because the Mapalus culture is still strong in Southeast Minahasa. Southeast Minahasa women still exist even though in most parts of Minahasa women are facing the problem of powerlessness in meeting the demands of modern work standards that are getting higher and higher.

The human empowerment-oriented Mapalus tradition provides space for women to develop themselves and explore their potential according to their choices and conscience. As a work culture, Mapalus does not differentiate between men and women, but emphasizes the development of individual abilities based on the values contained in the Sitou Timou Tumou Tou philosophy, which means that human life must give life to others. Mapalus also plays an important role in encouraging women's active participation in various community and religious activities. Women's awareness to continuously improve their abilities and capacities is at the core of the concept of empowerment. Harry Hikmat (2001) explains that community empowerment is an effort to develop existing abilities and potential, so that people can actualize their identity, dignity, and worth. Effective empowerment will only be realized if it is rooted in local culture and respected as the wisdom of indigenous people (Armada, 2009). Thus, Mapalus is not only a cultural heritage, but also a strategic tool to build women's capacity in an inclusive and sustainable manner.<sup>2</sup>

Mapalus is a typical Minahasa local wisdom that has existed since ancient times, and the noble values in this view are realized through the cultural practice of Mapalus

(Andriani, 2024). Supit (1983) explains that Mapalus is a form of collective consciousness of the community, especially in rural areas, which is manifested in a work system with a helping ethos for the common good. As a tradition that is deeply rooted in community life, Mapalus remains relevant and preferred, especially by women, as an empowerment program that can survive in the midst of various changing times. The forms of Mapalus implementation cover various aspects of life, such as Mapalus in agriculture, grief assistance, fundraising, and community group activities. The continuation of this tradition is proof that Mapalus is not only a cultural heritage, but also functions as an effective empowerment model in improving the welfare of local wisdom-based communities. Despite being open to various government programs aimed at empowerment, the Minahasa community still upholds the Mapalus tradition as an ancestral heritage based on the *Sitou Timou Tumou Tou philosophy*. This philosophy emphasizes the importance of humanizing and supporting one another, making Mapalus a tradition that not only preserves cultural values, but also strengthens social cohesion and sustainable community empowerment.

The North Sulawesi Regional Medium-Term Development Plan 2021-2024 emphasizes the role of women as active partners of men who will participate in the process of sustainable regional development. Thus it is clear that the position of women is no different from men, gender equal and even women who are in rural areas even with the potential possessed by them. Based on this background, the main focus of this research is to identify the role of decision-making in the Mapalus rumah culture as one of the mechanisms to empower women in Southeast Minahasa. This research aims to explore how the decision-making process in the Mapalus tradition can facilitate women's empowerment, given that in this culture every individual, both men and women, have equal rights to engage in activities that benefit their community.

Decision-making, according to George R. Terry, is the process of choosing one alternative from two or more available options. Terry emphasizes that decision-making involves the selection of various options available to achieve certain goals. In contrast, Sondang P. Siagian provides a slightly different definition, where decision-making is seen as an action that must be taken quickly and precisely, according to the conditions at hand. Decisions must be made in an efficient time, given the urgency of the situation. James A.F. Stoner, in his view, defines decision-making as a series of processes used to select the best step or action to solve a problem. This process involves the evaluation of various alternatives, careful consideration, and the selection of a course of action that best suits the objectives and situation at hand. These three definitions illustrate that decision-making is an important process that can influence the outcome of an action or policy, both in individual and group contexts. In decision making, women express their opinions and decisions, starting from the beginning of the formation of the Mapalus Rumah group, the making of the bylaws, and the process of Mapalus Rumah activities until the achievement of organizational goals. According to Terry, George R., and Brinckloe (2010), decision making involves several things, namely intuition, experience, facts, authority, and logic. Women in the Mapalus home culture group are given voting rights to provide opinions and decisions in the organization. Women have experience, and according to the facts, they provide opinions and decisions that are certainly based on logic because it will be a joint decision for all members.

## **METHODS <sup>8</sup>**

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative with a phenomenological approach, which focuses on how people experience certain phenomena which is an experience and talks about the reality of consciousness contained

in the person's experience (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009). The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative with a phenomenological approach, which focuses on how people experience certain phenomena which is an experience and talks about the reality of consciousness contained in the person's experience (Creswel, 2019). This research was conducted in Southeast Minahasa Regency, especially in the Tombatu District area where the cultural tradition of Mapalus Rumah is still very strong. Mapalus cultural traditions that are still very significant are carried out by several villages as research samples, namely Betelen village, Kali village and Kali village. Indicators as a pointer in the research location there are several groups of Mapalus house construction.

In this study, there were 10 female informants who were directly involved in Mapalus cultural activities, namely those in Mapalus tani, Mapalus rumah. These informants were selected based on the criteria that they experienced and felt themselves in the Mapalus rumah culture so that they could be explored and expressed by themselves as they were or in other words that the informants themselves explained their interpretations correctly. Data collection methods used in qualitative research. The documents collected to be utilized by researchers are official documents, both internal documents related to the findings of interviews with informants, external documents related to data on women's empowerment. Checking the validity of the data in this study, the following researchers put forward a framework of criteria and data inspection techniques that become a reference for researchers in carrying out data validity checking tasks, namely:

Credibility is a term chosen to replace the concept of validity and is intended to summarize the discussion regarding the quality of qualitative research (Fardani, 2024). Furthermore, triangulation is carried out, namely checking the trustworthiness of data by utilizing sources of information, methods and theories. According to Denzin (in Paton, 1990). By realizing that the results of this research must be transferable, the description of the setting and context of research on women's empowerment in the local culture of Mapalus is full and detailed. This refers to the transferability standard, that there is only one way to meet the transferability standard, namely by enriching the description of the setting and context of the research focus by providing a detailed description' Sanapiah (1990: 32). Dependability is whether the research results refer to the researcher's consistency in data collection, forming, and using concepts when making interpretations to draw conclusions. Dependability is broader, reviewing it in terms that the concept of everything that exists in reliability, in addition to related factors or factors that may experience changes or interfere with reliability because of the reliability of the research.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Women's role in decision-making in home Mapalus culture

Mapalus Rumah is a culture that has a very strong kinship system, with the main purpose of strengthening the sense of brotherhood between families, including women (Rumengan, 2024). This culture does not only focus on building houses, but also aims to empower all group members, both women and men, so that they can own their own homes. The main goal of women's participation in Mapalus Rumah is to get a decent home for themselves and their families. A house here is not just a place to live, but also a symbol of family empowerment and stability. By having a decent house, be it semi-permanent or permanent, the community is considered to have reached a level of welfare and economic stability. It is important to note that in the Mapalus Rumah culture, owning one's own house is not only a matter for men, but also for women. Women's empowerment in this context is highly visible through their participation in the Mapalus Rumah process, which

allows women to play a role in the achievement of common goals. Thus, women are not only increasingly empowered, but also able to contribute to the collective work of Mapalus and obtain a house as proof of their achievement and independence. At the same time, women are increasingly playing a significant role in improving the well-being of their families and communities.

The role of women in Mapalus Rumah is crucial in building harmonious relationships between members, which is reflected in the strength of kinship ties that exist in this culture. In the context of Mapalus, principles such as cooperation, mutual help, mutual support, and mutual encouragement and appreciation are the main elements that drive the social process. The strength of these kinship values accelerates the process of achieving a common goal, namely home ownership for each member. Women's empowerment in Mapalus Rumah activities is further strengthened through their contribution in fostering and maintaining high kinship values, which create emotional and social closeness between members. With the establishment of close relationships between members, Mapalus Rumah functions as a means of sustainable social empowerment. Through the active role of women, Mapalus culture not only survives but also thrives, despite the challenges of modernization and globalization that often encourage individualism and egocentrism. The sustainability and strengthening of the Mapalus Rumah culture in this modern era shows the ability of local culture to adapt to global dynamics without losing its essence. The prominent role of women in maintaining solidarity and kinship in the community is the main key in maintaining the collective values underlying Mapalus amidst the challenges of the times. The results of interviews with research subjects also reveal how these kinship values emerge and develop in various interactions that occur, and will be further described as follows:

1  
"kalu torang iko Mapalus membangun rumah berarti torang ada saling kerja sama ada toleransi ada gotong royong, sepenanggungan dan ketika torang iko ini arisan membangun rumah ini didasari dengan anggaran dasar supaya organisasi itu tetap berjalan dengan baik sebab didalam organisasi membangun rumah termasuk kalo tidak ada anggaran dasar pasti porak-poranda mar ketika torang ada anggaran dasar yang pasti organisasi ini terpimpin terarah satu arah mulai dari awal sampe akhir"

(kalau ikut Mapalus rumah berarti ada saling kerja, tidak boleh santai, ada toleransi, ada gotong royong, sepenanggungan sesuai anggaran dasar yang harus diikuti. Kalau organisasi hanya berbicara tentang keuangan tetapi di organisasi membangun rumah ada tenaga, uang dan bahan bangunan yang harus disediakan)

"kan torang mo bekeng sandiri nda mampu mar kalo mo Mapalus ja baku bantu. Kan dorang ba maso pa torang baru brikut-brikut ba tubus pa dorang".

(karena ingin membangun sendiri tidak mampu, tetapi kalau ikut Mapalus maka ada saling baku bantu di dalamnya sampai selesai)

1  
ya kan kalo Mapalus itu mo baku bantu mar kalo nda Mapalus nda mo dapa ba diri rumah, yah pentinglah, orang itu kalo misalnya torang iko Mapalus seperti ini sangat lah penting karna torang punya tujuan kedepan, sangatlah penting kalo torang merasa tidak penting itu bukannya kalo boleh di kata tidak mau berorganisasi lagi"

1  
(kalau di dalam Mapalus rumah itu ada saling baku bantu sehingga kalau kalau tidak ikut Mapalus, mungkin tidak mampu mendirikan rumah sendiri)

Women show high interest in participating in Mapalus Rumah, which can be seen from their active participation in this culture. The high interest of women can be explained by the fact that in Mapalus Rumah, women are given maximum decision-making space. Group names such as Masawang Sawangan or Berkasih Kasihan, although they sound simple, contain deep meanings, which illustrate the value of togetherness, mutual support, and cooperation in achieving the common goal of ensuring that every member, without exception, is able to own their own home. Women's participation in Mapalus Rumah not only impacts the achievement of this goal, but also reinforces the central role of women in community life. In addition to performing domestic functions as companions to their husbands and caregivers of their children, women also take on the important role of replacing their husbands in Mapalus work. This shows that women have a very significant place in the social and economic life of the community, and their involvement in Mapalus Rumah contributes to improving the standard of living of families. This reality confirms the importance of women's position, especially in the context of gender-specific functions that include employment, culture and economy. Women's active involvement in these various sectors has a huge impact on improving the quality of family life. This phenomenon has also led to the emergence of the feminism movement, which focuses on empowering women and eliminating all forms of gender-based discrimination. This movement emphasizes the importance of equal rights and opportunities for women in various aspects of life, including in the Mapalus culture which clearly accommodates the role of women in achieving collective welfare.

Women take part in efforts to maintain Mapalus rumah to survive in this era of globalization and modernization. Organizational mechanisms and ways of communicating in Mapalus rumah have changed with the use of Smart Phone technology, especially in the Covid 19 era with social distancing policies, many Mapalus rumah meetings are conducted online using smart phones. They are involved in various activities and events and become a driving force and motivation for the progress and welfare of the family and even a community with the appearance of house buildings that were once only very simple and even uninhabitable to become semi-permanent and permanent houses. In rural Mapalus, the target for women is change, the meaning of Tou makes women active and productive. The results of participation in Mapalus Rumah make women active in various community activities in the village. In Mapalus, women's capacity and insight develop in addition to work capacity and insight in the Mapalus Rumah management organization.

Women play a central role in decision making to lead the Mapalus Rumah tradition before a person is appointed as a leader he is whipped first. The process is intended to ensure organizational sustainability through the achievement of organizational goals and objectives in the Mapalus Rumah Culture, namely justice. The purpose of whipping law for the development of discipline and resource development concept of capacity building personal abilities as human resources.

#### B. Space for women in decision-making in home Mapalus

The results of research on Mapalus rumah groups in tombatu and its surroundings show the following. Mapalus rumah provides space for increasing individual capacity, women, women become adaptive reflection and make decisions as a condition of empowerment and this must also have a positive self-image and self-confidence, Women

also have good rationality just like men as a form of empowerment. Women have the thinking power and ability to be able to solve problems faced by the community and not only depend entirely on men. In various efforts to be able to demonstrate the abilities and skills of women, the existence of women must be seen. All forms of restrictions on the possibility of developing optimal abilities are a violation of women's individual rights. It also states that women must be able to go out in public, dare to show their existence and develop their abilities.

Women strengthen feminist culture in the home mapalus thereby dismissing the notion that women are only people who are in a position in the household as house-waiters, they cannot go out because their exit from the house will cause immorality (Ristiana Yudhanti 2014). In Mapalus culture, women are active partners of men in overcoming social, economic, legal and political problems directed at equitable development. In addition, the low quality of women also affects the quality of the next generation, considering that they have a reproductive role that is very instrumental in developing future human resources.

Mapalus culture highly values the different natures, roles, functions, duties, responsibilities and positions of men and women, both directly and indirectly. In this context, the position and role of each gender is recognized as part of the social structure that has long been formed in society. However, the impact of government policies and laws and regulations applied in society often cause injustice, because they are rooted in existing customs, norms and social structures. These policies, although aimed at regulating social life, are often unable to change long-established views and practices in society. The word "gender" itself refers to the social roles shaped by society, as well as the behaviours instilled through the socialization process relating to the female and male sexes. Biologically, there are clear differences between men and women, but in many societies, including the Tounsawang ethnic community, there are social demands that dictate how women and men should act, speak or even dress. The behaviors that are considered "appropriate" or "inappropriate" for each gender are heavily influenced by the norms and values that prevail in that society. In Tounsawang, as in many other communities, gendered role restrictions often lead to inequalities in opportunities and recognition of women's roles, despite their active role in Mapalus culture and in various aspects of social life. These inequalities create challenges in empowering women and in achieving true gender equality.

Mapalus rumah as constructing capacity is a process of building women's capacity in relation to their resources and potential. Capacity building is an effort intended to develop and improve women's resources in order to make women productive. The dimensions of women's resource development in Mapalus rumah are very clear with a focus on: developing personnel and professional skills. The technical ability of building work, which is usually only owned by men, is owned by women with Mapalus houses. Activities carried out include: direct practice in building houses, calculating building materials, working climate conditions, work such as stirring cement, lifting sand and so on. In Mapalus, the dimension of strengthening the role of women in the organization, with a focus on: management systems to improve the success of roles and functions, tasks assigned in Mapalus houses.

### 15 C. Women's Role in the Development of Women's Resources in Home Mapalus

In the context of human resource development, women are trained to work directly in home mapalus work activities. Mapalus rumah changes women's mindset to save money to manage their husband's income and think for the betterment of the household. This is what is meant by capacity building. Capacity building when women participate actively in home mapalus. Mapalus has been practiced from one generation to another in the Minahasa region and has become local wisdom. Every member, group, both men and women have the same rights and obligations and position in the Mapalus work system. Along with modernization, Mapalus began to fade in some parts of Minahasa except in Southeast Minahasa which still exists with house mapalus. The existence of Mapalus in Tounsawang ethnicity is due to the strong meaning of Tounsawang ethnic women about Mapalus in empowering themselves.

This study is to look from an ethnographic angle at the empowerment of Tounsawang ethnic women themselves in Mapalus houses in Southeast Minahasa so that they are able to develop their potential and become more empowered according to their nature. There are two problems that underlie this research, namely: First, the fading of Mapalus in most parts of Minahasa due to modernization and the decline of women's meaning of Mapalus. Second, the powerlessness of Minahasa women from the socio-economic point of view which is characterized by the increasing open unemployment of women in several areas in Minahasa. This research starts from the phenomenon of women in Southeast Minahasa who continue to exist in Mapalus and progress as individuals so that they are able to be economically independent and play an active role in family and community life. The form of Mapalus developed in the context of the Tounsawang ethnicity is the Mapalus of the house or Mapalus of house construction that continues to survive until now. Minahasa women are generally seen as individuals who have the ability to develop themselves so that the Mapalus culture does not limit the movement of women in this group. Minahasa people, in this case also women, are seen as individual human beings, namely tou Minahasa, who must live, grow, develop and be strong so as to be able to sustain family life and also participate in community activities. The word Tou in the Minahasan vocabulary refers to people, both individually and as a group of people (Tinggogoy, 2016).

Minahasa culture was built by three figures namely Lummiut, a woman who came from China, Toar, and Karema as a female priest, Minahasa people are called tou Minahasa. Man or Tou must live empowered and develop according to the philosophy of the Minahasa people, namely Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou, which was initiated by Dr. Sam Ratulangi which means that humans live to humanize others. This philosophy animates the Mapalus culture where Minahasa people realize that every individual is capable of becoming a qualified human being, having resources, growing and developing (Sondakh, 2004). The empowerment of Minahasa women has been in the history of Minahasa which was started by a woman named Lumimuut and her son Toaryang who passed on the Sitou Tumou Tumou Tou culture. Women's awareness, consciousness, of the concept of Sitou Tumou Tumou Tou in Mapalus makes women as individuals able to be independent and women try to help or revive others or empower each other. Gold et al (2012) state that empowerment is the individual feeling of increased power and the capacity to influence forces that affect one's life space, with less of a focus on changes in the social structure. The essence of women's empowerment is individual awareness which is the power and capacity to influence the lives of the surrounding community. The philosophy of Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou underlies the mindset and character of Minahasa people including women to work hard. The Mapalus work culture raises awareness of the meaning of Tou, which starts with oneself, where both men and women, have the same role and

opportunity to be able to advance themselves, can play a role and innovate and contribute to every family and community activity. In practice, Mapalus is a work culture that emphasizes togetherness, brotherhood and help.

## CONCLUSIONS

The role of women in decision-making in Mapalus Rumah is very strong, starting from the initiative of women who invite families who do not yet own a house to jointly own a house for their future. Research shows that the main motivation for women to get involved in Mapalus Rumah is the desire to live a prosperous life, with the view that they do not want to be left behind or experience difficulties compared to other women or families. Women's roles are further strengthened as Mapalus Rumah provides space for them to develop and be empowered. Women, especially those who are forward-thinking, take advantage of this space to actively participate in the culture of the organization, which not only provides values for their own advancement, but also for the advancement of the family. By participating in Mapalus Rumah, women not only strengthen their personal abilities, but also become a stimulant for their families to improve their welfare. Women's innovation also develops, especially in finding ways to increase income to improve the family's economic standard of living. In addition, the organizational culture in Mapalus Rumah opens opportunities for women to develop organizational potential, such as giving suggestions and opinions. Women are trained to work in a way that is equal to men, and are even given the opportunity to replace men's roles under certain conditions, such as when they are sick or have other matters. Thus, women's empowerment in Mapalus Rumah is strongly supported by an open and inclusive organizational culture for women.

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