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***Sompa Tanah* in Makassar Bugis Customary Marriages:  
Legal, Religious, and Cultural Perspectives**

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## SOMPA TANAH IN MAKASSAR BUGIS CUSTOMARY MARRIAGES: LEGAL, RELIGIOUS, AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

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### Abstract

*The submission of dowry in the form of land (Sompa Tanah), as practiced by the Bugis community in Bone, reflects the flexibility of local mechanisms in addressing real-world challenges based on the ideal values of tradition. This study is important in the broader discourse on dowry, which often highlights cultural legitimacy in perpetuating violence and the subordination of women. The provision of Sompa Tanah in Bugis society serves as a cultural, legal, and religious mechanism to establish legal certainty regarding rights and obligations in marital relations. This descriptive qualitative research draws on observation and interview data, which are then analyzed contextually to understand their relevance to social management within the community. The findings indicate that Sompa Tanah functions as a legal mechanism that not only regulates rights and obligations in marriage but also provides legal certainty within the marital bond. The legal security afforded to women serves as a safeguard for their rights as wives and mothers within a patriarchal society. As a legal mechanism, Sompa Tanah ensures social order and gains customary and cultural legitimacy, which strengthens the position of women in the Bugis social structure. Additionally, marriage, as a social bond, carries the risk of divorce, which is also legally acknowledged. Consequently, this paper recommends further comparative studies to explore the practice of Sompa Tanah across different regions to gain more comprehensive and in-depth knowledge.*

**Keywords:** Sompa Tanah; Bugis; Local Wisdom; Gender Equity; Religion.



## A. Introduction

The existence of tradition within a community reflects its cultural capacity to uphold ideal values amidst the strong current of change. This flexibility of tradition, even under global pressures, demonstrates the resilience of local culture, as evidenced by the *Sompa Tanah* practice within the Bugis Bone community, which has endured for generations. The practice of *Sompa Tanah*, which began before the arrival of Islam in Bugis Bone in 1611 AD, continues to be observed today. *Sompa* (dowry) not only serves as a source of livelihood for the family but also acts as the legal foundation of a marriage. As highlighted by Abbas et al., *sompa* holds a crucial position in society—not only as a required marriage element but also as a basis for resolving conflicts and legal issues related to divorce (Abbas et al., 2018; Rasyid et al., 2024).

Studies on dowry in cultural contexts often focus on its role in reinforcing cultural values in a marriage regulations (Belur et al., 2014; Bravo et al., 2014; Srinivasan & Bedi, 2007; Yohana, 2023). Bravo et al. suggest that, in many instances, families choose husbands for their daughters based on wealth, reducing women to tradable commodities (Bravo et al., 2014; Sugitanata et al., 2023). Research on dowry practices in various societies reveals that dowry not only legitimizes certain cultural values but also enables harmful practices against women. Other studies have reported dowry-related violence (Fernando et al., 2024; Montasir et al., 2023; Avita et al., 2022; Sekhri & Storeygard, 2014; Babu & Babu, 2011), showing how dowry can create unequal relationships due to the flow of wealth from men to women. However, these studies often neglect the legal dimension of dowry, focusing predominantly on economic and cultural perspectives. This underscores the importance of exploring the dowry tradition through legal and religious lenses.

This paper aims to address the gap in understanding women's material rights to dowry in marriage as per Islamic customs. In Islamic teachings, the dowry must be material and hold significant economic value as a symbol of respect for women (Setyawan et al., 2023). Several ethnic



traditions include valuable dowries, such as in the Bugis Bone community, where land, known as *Sompa Tanah*, is often included as part of the dowry. However, in practice, the land mentioned during the wedding pledge (*ijab qabul*) as dowry (*sompa*) does not necessarily become the property of the bride. This article examines why *Sompa Tanah* has become a model for dowry practices in Bugis Bone marriages. To explore this issue, the article focuses on three main questions: (a) how is the marriage custom of *Sompa Tanah* practiced in the Bugis Bone community in South Sulawesi?; (b) what factors underlie the provision of *Sompa Tanah* to women in marriage?; and (c) how does the granting of *Sompa Tanah* affect the recognition of women's rights and equality?

Transfers made at the time of marriage between families can take two forms: transfers from the bride's family to the groom, known as dowry (Laiphrakpam & Aroonsrimorakot, 2016; Santoso et al., 2023). This practice has roots in ancient Greco-Roman traditions and continues in many developing countries today. The exchange of dowries varies globally, reflecting different socio-cultural systems (Fernando, Galuh Larasati, et al., 2023; Michaleas & Sergentanis, 2019). The dowry is traditionally intended to help newly married couples start their life together more easily (Monani & Gerry QC, 2017; Fauzan et al., 2023). However, Nasrin (2011) argues that dowry practices have shifted, making women victims rather than beneficiaries. Although women are rarely involved in discussions about dowry payments, they often become the direct victims of this practice.

The Dowry system has been linked to several societal problems. Academics have conducted studies related to this issue, highlighting concerns such as: (1) parents' reluctant to educate their daughters due to the financial burden of marriage costs (Ferdous & Mallick, 2019); (2) instances of mothers killing their baby daughters (Spies, 2024); (3) high mortality rates among young married women (Meera et al., 2015; Utsany et al., 2022; Nasution & Muchtar, 2024); and (4) domestic violence (Kamruzzaman, 2015; Lestarini et al., 2019; Menezes et al., 2016). Despite the introduction of the Dowry Prohibition Act in 1961, the practice



remains prevalent and has done little to prevent its negative consequences (Mohindra, 2019). The dowry system, particularly in India, has been extensively studied, and much literature focuses on its detrimental effects on women. However, some studies also explore positive aspects of dowry practices. For instance, in the Song Dynasty, a bride's land dowry was not joint but instead belonged solely to the wife (Lü, 2010; Alfarisi et al., 2023; Mujiburohman et al., 2023).

Primyastanto et al. (2013) define local wisdom as "...life values inherited from one generation to generation, the form of religion, culture or customs, in general in oral form in a social system form a society" (p.13). The presence of local wisdom in society results from a lengthy process of adaptation within a specific environment, whether inhabited or frequently interacted with (Qudsy, et al., 2024; Primyastanto et al., 2013; Wuysang et al., 2024). Each ethnicity and community possesses unique local wisdom which functions primarily to maintain balance in socio-cultural life (Hidayat, 2024; Revita et al., 2019; Salleh et al., 2024). Recent studies on local wisdom often focus on community empowerment through sustainable tourism (Cahyaningrum, 2017; Mokhtar et al., 2024). Other research examines the potential of local wisdom to prevent future challenges, such as health issues (Fernando et al., 2021; Sistiarani, 2019), natural resource management (Devarapalli, 2018; Kalista et al., 2024; Muassomah, 2023) and environmental concerns (Imamah et al., 2024; Zuhriah et al., 2023; Sangha et al., 2018).

Several academics have explored the potential of local wisdom to empower women (Fatirahwahidah & Mansur, 2018; Revita et al., 2019; Suminar, 2017; Yusriani & Khidri Alwi, 2018). For instance, Revita et al. (2019) identified three forms of local wisdom in the Minangkabau community that help prevent violence against women: (1) *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*, (2) *Bundo Kanduang*, and (3) *Alam Takambang Jadi Guru*. Suminar (2017) highlighted the local wisdom of the Samin tribe, which promotes gender equality in domestic life, where women contribute to family aspirations by managing the household economy. Similarly, Mustadjar and Dirawan (2017) found that the Bugis-

Makassar tradition of *Sipakatau Sipakalebbi'* emphasizes mutual respect and shared rights and responsibilities between husbands and wives, allowing women to participate in both domestic and public spheres.

Gender equity has been a topic of academic discussion for a long time, and its prominence in policy making has grown over the past 30 years (Payne & Duffy, 2010; Sofiana et al., 2024). However, the term is often confused with gender equality and gender parity. The global discourse on gender issues frequently uses these terms interchangeably, leading to confusion in policy and practice (Fernando, Galuh Larasati, et al., 2023; Lindgren et al., 2024; Monkman & Hoffman, 2013). According to McDonald (2013), gender equality is relatively straightforward as it can be measured by comparing outcomes for men and women across education, employment, wages, participation, health, and so on. Chisamya et al. (2012) define gender parity as a zero-sum game, when success is measured by an even distribution of resources or opportunities across groups. While gender parity assumes equal distribution, gender equity is more nuanced, allowing for different outcomes for men and women as long as the results are perceived as fair. Gender equity is about “...perceptions of fairness and opportunity rather than strict equality of outcome”. (McDonald, 2013, p. 983). Ropers-Huilman et al. (2017) argue that gender equity is part of a broader agenda for educational justice. In patriarchal societies, achieving gender equity is particularly challenging and may take a considerable time (Abdillah et al., 2023; Baynes et al., 2019).

Grace and Eng (2019) conducted a study at the school level and identified three stages of gender equity awareness: (1) superficial, (2) transitional, and (3) transformational. At the superficial level, the dominant discourse is the simple notion that “boys and girls are equal”. In the transitional stage, individuals begin to change their belief systems but are still trying to understand and navigate this change without a clear strategy. Finally, at the transformational level, individuals recognize the complexities of women’s empowerment, informed by personal experience. Gender equity has been used to explain various issues, including violence (Gomez



et al., 2011; Islam et al., 2021), women's health (Payne & Duffy, 2010), and education (Liao, 2020). Scholars has also called for policies facilitate the implementation of gender equity, such as in family planning programs, where gender equality allows women to choose from a range of contraceptive methods, empowering them to make decisions about their reproductive health (Garg & Singh, 2014; Kamarudin, 2022).

This paper is based on three assumptions: (a) Land holds significant value for the Bugis ethnic, not only economically but also socio-culturally. These socio-cultural values give land an essential role in social transactions among the Bugis people. (b) Land can serve as a means to ensure justice for women, as it provides economic capital that enables women to sustain their livelihoods. Control over land offers women the freedom to derive economic benefits, supporting themselves with or without a husband's financial provision (c) *Sompa Tanah* is a carefully formulated mechanism of local wisdom designed to protect women's rights. *Sompa Tanah* carries sacred values, and omitting it, would diminish the sanctity inherent in this local wisdom that aims to safeguard women's rights.

## **B. Method**

The field research was conducted in Bone, South Sulawesi, an area where *Sompa Tanah* is still practiced. Bone serves as a cultural hub for the Bugis community, where traditional customs and rituals play a significant role in daily life. This descriptive qualitative research is based on observation and interview data, which are then analyzed contextually to assess their relevance to social structures within the community.

In addition to interviewing customary and religious leaders, the study involed community and youth leaders, as well as five Heads of the District Religious Affairs Office (KUA) in Bone Regency. The selected KUA offices for the sample include those in Ulaweng District, East Tanete Riattang District, West Riattang District, Barebbo District, and Ponre District.

The data collection involved visiting key informants, such as Head of the Religious Affairs Offices, religious leaders, community leaders, customary



leaders, and youth leaders. The interview questions focused not only on the history and application of *Sompa Tanah*, but also on the dowry's function within society and the philosophical foundations of *Sompa Tanah* in South Sulawesi.

The data collected were processed thematically, based on the research questions (Fernando et al., 2024; Abdullah, et al., 2023; Galuh Larasati et al., 2023). Three main themes emerged: the history of *Sompa Tanah* implementation, the legal mechanisms that support its use as a marriage, the function of *Sompa Tanah* in relation to women's status, and the evolving dynamics of its use in society. The analysis involved restating field findings from various sources, followed by a description that identified cultural patterns in the practice of *Sompa Tanah*. This was accompanied by an interpretation process to reveal the explicit and implicit meanings of *Sompa Tanah* within the husband-wife relationship and intergroup relations in Bone society.

## **C. Result and Discussion**

### **1. Result**

#### **a. The practice of *Sompa Tanah* in Bugis Bone customary marriages**

*Sompa* in its various forms has been a crucial element in Bugis Bone customary marriages since pre-Islamic times, serving as a requirement for marriage validity. In these customary practices, land and gold are the most common forms of *sompa*. Based on marriage registration at five Religious Affairs Offices in Bone in 2019, 42.94 percent (657 out of 1,530 marriages) involved *Sompa Tanah* (land dowry), 42.75 percent used *Sompa Emas* (gold dowry), 11.90 percent involved prayer equipment, 2.09 percent used coconut trees and cloves, and the rest included motorbikes, canoes, and money. While gold dowries are typically handed during the wedding pledge, *Sompa Tanah* is often only mentioned but considered valid. The significance of *Sompa Tanah* in Bugis Bone customary marriages is evident in its role at three distinct stages.

First, *Sompa Tanah* refers to the submission of a marriage dowry in the form of a plot of land, which could include rice fields, gardens, or



yards, with the size not being strictly specified. The offering of land to the wife is seen as a gesture of sincerity from the men in his proposal. Additionally, land as a form of dowry is regarded as prestigious. As a result, the family of a Bugis man will "...try to give land as a dowry even if it is not too large or only as large as a water buffalo puddle.. (na mauni siallakuang tedong)" (H. Latif, personal communication, February 2, 2023). This signifies that land is valued not merely as an economic asset, but as a symbol of social status. A person who gives land as a dowry is considered honorable and prestigious.

Second, the determination of *sompa* takes place during a proposal process called *Madduta*, which involves several visits by the prospective groom's family to the bride's family. The first visit is typically made by the core family of the prospective groom to inquire about the status of the woman (whether she has received any prior proposals) and to confirm her willingness to be proposed. After some time, a second visit is made to reconfirm the marriage and negotiate the time, the amount of money, and the dowry. During this second *Madduta*, the groom's family usually brings a larger group and includes dignitaries from both families.

Third, *sompa tanah* is more symbolic compared to the *sompa* of gold or other forms. While the gold *sompa* is physically presented and handed over during the wedding pledge ceremony, *Sompa Tanah* is only verbally mentioned, including details about the location and size of the land. This announcement is made during the sacred *ijab qabul* (wedding pledge), fundamental ritual in Islamic marriages. Since it is an essential part of the marriage declaration, it draws the primary attention of the audience. This moment is the most sacred and anticipated part of the ceremony, as it marks the beginning of a new family unit. The solemnity of the atmosphere ensures that the details of the *sompa* are not only remembered by the audience but also formally recorded by the government through the KUA, which oversees marriage registrations and validates the legal aspects of the union.

b. Factors underlying the provision of *Sompa Tanah*

The tradition of giving land as dowry is shaped by historical and sociological experience unique to the Bone community, where customary marriage plays a central role in the social structure. Three key foundations underlie this practice: the philosophical, cultural, and legal bases. These considerations can be explained as follows:

First, philosophically, women are viewed as sacred and central figures in the development of the Bugis Bone ethnic family. They play significant roles in household management, economic affairs, and passing down values through children's education. The high regard for women in Bugis tradition is reflected in how they are referred to. Unmarried women are called *ana' dara*, which connotes purity, while married women are referred to as *'baine'* and *'indo ana'*.

*... baine in Bugis language means seed, she is a seed that will grow the best generation. Meanwhile, indo ana' means mother of a child. This implies the mother's central role as a prospective successor educator who always accompanies the child's growth and development. Therefore, a Bugis woman must uphold the siri culture and have sipakalebbi, sipakatau, sipakatau manners when married, namely maintaining the honor and rights of her husband (H. Amir, personal communication, February 6, 2023).*

These roles make women worthy of the highest respect, reflected in the giving of an esteemed dowry.

Second, land is highly valued both economically and culturally, serving as capital and as a symbol of familial bonds. Economically, land holds a considerable worth and typically appreciates over time. However, the tradition of giving land as dowry is primarily tied to its symbolic meaning as a bond. The gift of *Sompa Tanah* in a Bugis Bone marriage is intended:

*As a symbol of bonding affection and the union of love "...because like the nature of soil, it is solid and able to bind – mamuare mattana pappojinna, means that the feeling of love will unite like soil is able to bind some of the elements in it" (S. Latif, personal communication, February 2, 2023).*



Furthermore, land often carries historical and emotional value, as it is commonly passed down through generations. "...it's not a joke, the land contains the history of the struggle of the ancestors, it is the same as submitting complete trust, surrender, and obedience" (I. Lukman, personal communication, February 8, 2023). This underscores how Bugis society holds land in high regard as a foundation for family-building, beyond its material significance.

Third, the legal basis for the obligatory submission of *Sompa Tanah* in a Bugis Bone customary marriage, which is deeply intertwined with Islamic tradition, is an essential part of the most important marriage rite, the *ijab qabul* (wedding pledge). The giving of dowry or *sompa* in marriage is mandatory, as explicitly stated in the Qur'an, Surah An-Nisaa (QS 4:4), and reinforced by the hadith of Prophet Muhammad, narrated by Bukhari (no. 5149), Muslim (no. 1425), and Abu Daud (no. 3111), which all emphasize the obligation of providing a dowry. This legal basis was later formalized in the Compilation of Islamic Law, ratified through Presidential Instruction No. 1 of 1991. Article 30 clearly states, "The prospective groom is obliged to pay a dowry to the prospective bride which amount, form and type are agreed upon by both parties".

#### c. The Influence of *Sompa Tanah* on the Position and Rights of Women in Society

The provision of land as a dowry in marriage can be seen as a cultural mechanism that structures social relations, particularly between men and women. Marriages bring together two families and generations, and this justifies the use of *Sompa Tanah* in the community. The provision of *Sompa Tanah* can be viewed from three perspectives. First, land received as dowry can serve as capital for women, providing economic security for family life. In the Bugis Bone community, land is viewed as having greater value than other goods because, regardless of its size, land can generate economic benefits by being cultivated or used as a business site. Therefore, during the *Madduta* event (the proposal process), this *Sompa tanah* is always inquired about.

... every time someone comes to propose, usually, they will immediately be asked what the dowry is? *Eengka muga sompa tana na?* It means, 'is there any form of land that can be used as a sompa?' If the person who proposes understands the tradition, they usually prepared well in advance. However, if the person who comes to apply does not have a piece of land that can be used as a sompa, they will then switch to another form of sompa, for example, in the form of plants such as coconut trees or clove trees. If even that is not available, then switch to other types of dowry such as gold, money and a set of prayer tools (B. Arisman, personal communication, January 19, 2023).

Second, the submission of *Sompa Tanah* symbolizes a transfer of power and responsibility to women. In Bugis Bone tradition, land holds not only economic value but also symbolic, historical, and emotional significance. Thus, giving *Sompa Tanah* demonstrates a man's (husband's) readiness, sincerity and seriousness to build a household alongside the woman (wife) he is marrying.

... although in practice there has never been a mention of the *Sompa Tanah* accompanied by the submission of a certificate of ownership, but what needs to be underlined is that the woman benefits from the exploitation of the land. The surrender of the *Sompa Tanah* is not a joke, it is a symbol of surrender because the land has a history, as well as a symbol of men's commitment to the welfare of women which is glorified in Bugis customs. Yes, the problem is that in the future the guarantee must be legally strengthened (I. Lukman, personal communication, February 8, 2023).

Third, the handover of *Sompa Tanah* serves as protection of women's rights and as a means to honor their dignity. In Bugis tradition, reinforced by Islamic law, *sompa* (equated with dowry) represents a guarantee of the fulfillment of women's rights.

... *Sompa Tanah* is a symbol of the husband's readiness to provide for his wife, meaning that he is ready to cultivate the land to support his wife. In addition, land is a proof of sincerity to take a big responsibility because in Bugis custom women are a glorified figure and must be properly guarded because it is in women that the quality of future generations can be maintained. A mother is not only a regulator of the economy, but more importantly an educator who introduces children to the values of religion and Bugis customs (H. Amir, personal communication, February 6, 2023).



In this way, the *Sompa Tanah* handover connects the high value of land with the preservation of the dignity and purity of Bugis women.

## 2. Discussion

The practice of handing over *Sompa Tanah* holds a sacred and central role in Bugis Bone customary marriages. This tradition has existed since before Islam was introduced to Bone, and after the arrival of Islam, it was adapted into the customary marriage process and equated with dowry. *Sompa* in the form of land is regarded as having the highest value in Bugis Bone culture, a community dominated by agrarian characteristics where land serve as the primary mode of production. In this society, land is not only an economic asset but also a symbol social and historical status. Land ownership signifies power and influence, making the handover of *Sompa Tanah* more than just an economic exchange but also an exchange; it also represents an exchange of power and social ties. Therefore, the submission of *Sompa Tanah* affirms the seriousness of both parties in forming that encompasses social, economic, and political exchanges, all legitimized by custom and religion.

In the Bugis traditional conception, land is referred to as *asseleenna rupa tauwe* or “the origin of life”. In Lontara, land is often described metaphorically as a mother (*indo*), representing the origin, the foundation to lean on, and the place to return to. As a result, in Bugis tradition, selling land or discussing its inheritance while parents are still alive is considered taboo. Land must be protected because it embodies family history, having often been passed down through generations. This concept is clearly articulated in the *Lontara Tanah*, which includes moral teachings related to the transfer of land rights. Given the high value placed on land, its use as *sompa* also signifies sincerity and respect.

Religion (Islam) and custom are the two main domains in the cosmology of the Bugis Bone community. Custom serves as a source of local wisdom, typically reflecting the community’s response to the actual conditions they face. When Islam began to influence Bone in the 17th

century, it introduced a new religious foundation that shaped socio-religious practices (Syatar et al., 2023; Santoso et al., 2022). The encounter between custom and religion resulted in adaptations to various social institutions, including marriage. In the Bugis Bone traditional marriage processions, *Sompa Tanah*, determined during *madduta* by both families is included as the most sacred part of the Islamic wedding event: the *ijab qabul*. This reflects an Islamic influence on Bugis Bone marriage customs.

The handing over of *Sompa Tanah* to women in Bugis Bone marriage can be understood as a form of appreciation for women, who are regarded as sacred figures with a central role in life. This differs from studies on marriage dowries in other regions, which often depict women as objects of exchange with little power over themselves (Bravo et al., 2014; Iwan et al., 2024). In many cases, giving dowry is associated with the creation of unequal and subordinate power relations towards women (Khan, 2024; Sekhri & Storeygard, 2014). In such instances, men who provide the dowry assume full control over the woman, even though the dowry amount is decided by both families (Anitha et al., 2018; Jumarim et al., 2024). This subordination occurs as women are often excluded from the negotiation process regarding the dowry, which is conducted between the families.

This does not happen in the Bugis Bone customary marriage process, which is influenced by Islamic patterns. In the Bugis Bone marriage custom, there is a clear division of domains between individuals and families. Therefore, the prospective bride's voice can still be heard, even though it is conveyed within a family meeting (Larasati & Abdullah, 2023; Mustadjar & Dirawan, 2017). The determination of the dowry, as in the Islamic tradition, is an individual matter between the prospective bride and groom. It is at this moment that the man must demonstrate his sincerity by offering something valuable, even though the woman may not specifically request land. In Bugis culture, where land holds the highest value, it is often the first consideration, and the question, "Is there any land that could be used as *sompa*?" is commonly asked. This question gives the male family an opportunity to show their respect and honor for the woman. Typically,



determining *sompa* is not complicated. The real negotiation between families occurs over *panai'* money, which is related to the financing of the wedding celebration.

Prioritizing land as *sompa* in Bugis Bone marriages can be seen as a wise practice of local wisdom aimed at protecting women (Fatirahwahidah & Mansur, 2018; Revita et al., 2019; Suminar, 2017; Yusriani & Khidri Alwi, 2018). Land is an economic asset that can be immediately utilized to generate income, but it is also a durable asset that can ensure the fulfillment of long-term needs. With land ownership, women can be empowered to manage the household economy and educate the younger generation on traditional and religious values, whether or not the husband is present. Thus, the institutionalization of *Sompa Tanah* in Bugis Bone customary marriages provides a strong foundation for women's empowerment based on gender equality (McDonald, 2013). The provision of *Sompa Tanah* serves as a cultural mechanism to ensure justice for women and protect their rights.

#### **D. Conclusion**

The practice of giving *Sompa Tanah* as dowry in Bugis society is not merely a cultural mechanism for resolving issues in the relationship between men and women. This study demonstrates that *Sompa Tanah* serves as a legal mechanism that not only regulates the rights and obligations within marriage but also provides legal certainty in the marital bond. The legal certainty supports women's position and rights as wives and mothers in a patriarchal society. *Sompa Tanah*, as a legal mechanism ensuring regularity, receives customary and cultural legitimacy, which strengthens the status of women within the social structure of Bugis society. Marriage, as a social bond, carries the risk of divorce, which is also legally acknowledged. In the context of divorce, *Sompa Tanah* becomes even more meaningful for women, as Bugis customs emphasize a woman's responsibility as a mother more than the father's. Thus, the customary law mechanism provides legal certainty by protecting women's rights as both wives and mothers.



This research enables us to view dowry not only as a functional mechanism binding men and women but also as a form of social security for women and their families in a broader context. Women occupies central roles in the socialization of children and in cultural interactions, with *Sompa Tanah* offering material legitimacy for these roles. The material foundation highlighted in this study functions as a structural force in societal relationships and provides women with the ability to manage their lives at both the family and community levels. The legal approach taken in this study enhances the perspective of marriage as a customary law institution, ensuring rights and obligations while securing the symbolic legitimacy of Bone customs and culture.

This paper is limited to analyzing dowry in relation to gender equality within a single Bugis customary area in Bone. Since Bugis culture is widespread throughout South Sulawesi, it is crucial to map and understand the practice of *Sompa Tanah* more broadly. Research conducted in Bone alone is insufficient to fully explain the practice and significance of *Sompa Tanah* in South Sulawesi as a whole. To analyze the position of women and the relationship between *Sompa Tanah* and women's rights in Bugis society comprehensively, a comparison across multiple regions is necessary to ensure representativeness in the practice of *Sompa Tanah*. Based on these limitations, this paper suggests the need for a comparative study that examines the practice of *Sompa Tanah* across various regions to achieve a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding.

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