

## *The Body of Women as Property in “Uang Panai” Movie*

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### **Abstract**

Every place, especially in Indonesia, have their own ritual in order to propose the marriage to the woman. As one of the most famous phenomenon in Indonesia, Uang Panai as Bugis-Makassar tradition is referring to the money which provided by the man who will marry the woman in South Sulawesi. Further, this phenomenon is always being talked not only by the society of South Sulawesi but also out of South Sulawesi. On the other hand, the phenomenon of Uang Panai is always related to the the position of men, then it is stereotyped as a burdensome thing for men to propose Bugis women. Therefore, this research aims to analyze the role and position of woman through the script movie of “Uang Panai” (2016) by using the Patriarchy theory of Sylvia Walby. Movie is a visualization and representation of society, as showed in “Uang Panai” movie which tells that Bugis women can be married based on the nominal of Uang Panai that provided by men. Thus women no longer have rights over themselves, and ultimately their bodies are considered to be property by men because of the ownership of men to women. Then it breaks the essence of Uang Panai as a form of an appreciation.

Keywords: Uang Panai, Bride Pricing, Woman, Patriarchy

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## Introduction

Marriage is dreamed of being once-in-a-lifetime moment because it unites a man and woman, then both families. As explained by Royal Anthropological Institute cited in Terian (230) that marriage is a union between a man and a woman such that children born to the woman are recognized legitimate offspring of both parents. Subsequently, Terian says that marriage could be seen as a set of rights that gives access to the spouse's sexuality, labor, and property, although not all of these aspects are necessarily present in all marriages. As a very sacred ritual, marriage becomes one of life event that still involves the traditional ritual in this development of an increasingly advanced era. Different places will have the different ritual toward marriage. One of the most famous marriage ritual phenomenon in Indonesia is from South Sulawesi regency because it is very thick and complex with the custom of Bugis-Makassar; it has a series of very long processions and requirements which is very tight as known as *Uang Panai*.

*Uang Panai* or bride pricing is referring to amount of money that should be provided by the man who will marry the woman in South Sulawesi. Syarifuddin and Damayanti in their paper (2015: 82) say that *uang panai* is not the dowry; dowry or known as *sompa* in Sulawesi is a gift in the form of money or property as the legal requirement of marriage according to the teaching of Islam. While *uang panai* or bride pricing is money submitted to the parties family of bride, in order to finance the wedding party procession. Both dowry and bride price are including as an obligation, dowry is an internal obligation based on the Islamic teaching, while bride price is based on the local custom of community. However, *Uang Panai* is often been an obstacle to marry *Bugis* (as one of ethnic group in south Sulawesi) woman because the amount of money determined by the family of the bride is usually more than the required number of dowries. It can reach hundreds of millions rupiah based on the several factors influenced; offspring, educational degree and etcetera (Syarifuddin and Damayanti, 2015: 83). Therefore, the phenomenon of *uang panai* had been social reality which also had drawn the attention of society from other regency in Indonesia. *Uang panai* or bride price is always related to the position of man because it stereotypes men as the parties whom burdened or even harmed.

This stereotype then makes the position and the role of women be questioned. It also arises an assumption whether the phenomenon of bride price has undermined the system of patriarchy that still exist in Indonesian society, as expressed by Yuniyanti as representative of the chief of The National Commission on Violence Against Women, in Erdianto (2017) the most cases of violence occur because a patriarchal culture that places the position of men higher than women is still thick in society. Subsequently, Yuniyanti pointed out the position of women is clearly placed unequally in Law no. 1 year 1974 about Marriage. Article 4 of the Marriage Law states that a husband is permitted to have more than one wife if the wife cannot perform her duties and cannot produce offspring, then get a body disability or an incurable disease. However, no article regulates if the situation is actually experienced by the husband. Bride price is not only referring to the position of men or illustrating the difficulties that faced by the prospective bridegroom, but also how the female body is perceived as a property capable of being controlled and exploited.

Regarding to the position of women that is perceived as a property capable of being controlled and exploited is placed by the society. Women and men have different roles in society; women are placed inferiorly inferior to men, both in domestic and public spaces. A special role as superior to the male party as if to make women as "goods" owned by men who are entitled to be treated arbitrarily (Sugihastuti dan Saptiawan, 2010: 176). The arbitrariness that men commit to women is rooted in a patriarchal culture. Patriarchy is a system of structures and social practices that place men as groups that dominate and exploit women (Walby, 1998: 20). Furthermore, Bhasin in Sugihastuti and Saptiawan (2010: 177) states that in patriarchy is inherent ideology which states that men are superior to women, that women should be controlled by men, and women are part of men's property. Thus, by having the power held by men, women only have the obligation to submit and obey the men who control it. Women therefore do not have a good bargaining position in determining what should be done and earned. Even in decision-making, women also cannot be separated from the control of the power of men who are considered authorized. This is because men are able to think about themselves without women, while women cannot think of themselves without men (Michelet in Beauvoir, 2016: xi-xii).

Finally, the researcher assumes that this theory is appropriate to analyze position of men and women which has the case that men dominance and make the positions of women are subordinate. The concept of patriarchy is indispensable for an analysis of gender inequality as it captures the depth, pervasiveness and interconnectedness of different aspects of women's subordination within the household, family and society (Walby, 1990:1).

Based on the background, the researcher formulated the research questions as follows:

1. What is the structure of patriarchal system in Uang Panai movie?
2. How does the patriarchal system in Uang Panai movie illustrate the position and role of woman?

In regards to the research questions, the researcher decided some objectives of the research are:

1. To find out the structure of patriarchy system in Uang Panai movie.
2. To describe the position and role of woman in Uang Panai movie as the property.

Sylvia Walby in her book "Theorizing Patriarchy" (1990) defines that patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women (1990: 20). In patriarchal system, men dominate women in many aspects. Thus, it directly places women as subordinate. The subordination of woman varies over time among different social groups depends on the culture in society. Generally, women become the object of patriarchy; they are dominated, oppressed, and exploited by men in so many ways. This patriarchal system refers to domination of men in domestic and public sphere, as introduced by Walby (1990: 24) that the patriarchal system has two types; patriarchy of private sphere which based upon household production as the main site of women's oppression and patriarchy of public sphere that based principally in public sites such as employment and the state. Thus, this ideology keeps women away from the system which is fought for through construction of private and public sphere. This system make a benefit for men and make women are more subordinated. Furthermore, Walby (1990:1) provides six

structures of patriarchy system; paid employment, housework, culture, sexuality, violence, and the state.

*Paid employment* focuses on women in works area. This structure is about discrimination of earning money from the job, unfair treats, and getting a little contribution rather than men. Secondly structure is *housework*. This structure is about women should be work in the house under control of her husband. Thirdly, *Culture* structure is about the representation of society such as media, religion, education, etcetera and the result of this structure is the representation of women position as subordinate. The forth structure is *sexuality*. This structure is about the application of gender in society which connects with sexuality. The fifth structure is *violence*. This structure is about a violence which is done by men to women. The last structure is *the state* that is as a law from the state who control the role of men and women in the nation.

## Conclusion

Patriarchy is definitively established: it is males who write the codes. It is natural for them to give woman a subordinate situation (Beauvoir, 1949: 114). This dominance of men that make the women as property becomes the core of patriarchy. The dominance can be seen from the six structures which introduced by Walby (1990).

**Paid Employment;** this structure is about the differences of salary and the contribution of woman which cannot as big as man. There are three parts of this structure. First, woman has a lower wages than man. Second, woman only get a job with low salary. Third, woman gets a different job from man. Walby states that:

*“...a complex of form of patriarchal closure within waged labour exclude women from the better forms of work and segregate them into the worse jobs which are deemed to be less skilled.”* (Walby,1990: 21)

This structure is not shown in *Uang Panai* movie. Both man and woman are paid based on their skill, they all have the same opportunity to have a job and there is no more discrimination based on the gender in work world. For more, it becomes the reflection of the society in Indonesia today where man and woman are not divided in a work based on their gender. They could contribute based on their skill. Further, as proved that Indonesia had woman as a president.

**Household Production;** the patriarchal system also applies within the divisions of tasks in household. These divisions of tasks are based on the gender. The women have to do household things such as cleaning the house and parenting. As shown in *Uang Panai* movie, both mother of Risna and Ancha do the household things even they are from different class status in society. These tasks have to be done even though they had their own jobs outside, it is represented by Ancha’s mother who has a job in online shop but she still should do her job as a wife and mother. Moreover, this movie also shows how the wives are placed in private sphere. They stay and do their activity at home, especially in the kitchen, while their husbands are able to go outside to do many things. The men as husbands will make decision for everything. They control women as his wife for doing their job. Everything in household is under men’s control. As Walby states:

*“it is through these that women’s household labour is expropriated by their husbands or cohabitantes. ...Housewives are the producing class, while husbands are the expropriating class”* (Walby, 1990:21).

Furthermore, this structure can also be seen by parenting system where parenting is not only for women but also men as fathers. Ancha and Risna’s father have the role for making the decision for their children. However, there is always a discussion between Ancha and his father before make a decision. While Risna is never asked about her opinion, her father decides a thing without asking the agreement of Risna, including about her marriage.

**Culture;** there are three factors which relate to this structure. First, there is a dominant ideology which constructs about the equality of gender. Second, there is an essential difference between man and woman. Third, there is a difference between individual thought and society ideology. This structure is related to the difference of gender in society. There are differences between femininity and masculinity which are constructed by society then later become culture. Walby states that:

*“Ideas about masculinity and femininity are to be found in all areas of social relations; they are part of the actions which go to make up the patriarchal structures”* (Walby, 1990:90).

Culture makes the differences between how should female and male act. In *Uang Panai* movie, there are also the differences based on this structure and it relates with the phenomenon of *uang panai* or bride pricing. Man should propose and give *uang panai* to marry the woman whom he loves. While, woman waits for a man who wants to marry through giving her *uang panai*. Moreover, man should get the effort for providing *uang panai*, however woman is not justified to help a man in order to give *uang panai*. Further, woman should follow the agreement on the amount of *uang panai* which her family has agreed upon. Woman also could be mated by another man who undertakes the amount of *uang panai*. Based on it, it could be seen although the society assumes that *uang panai* make a man as the oppressed and exploited party, the domination of man as a father makes a woman be oppressed and placed as not superior. Woman is oppressed and exploited by her family.

**Sexuality** discussed about the issues of sexuality as a part of individual happiness, sexuality as man’s control over woman, and sexuality as basic of social inequality. The relationship between heterosexual couple is patriarchal (Walby, 1990). It is because of the hierarchy of the position in that relationship which is man’s position is above woman. Woman first discovers herself in patriarchy as wife since the supreme creator is male. Before being the mother of humankind, Eve is Adam’s companion; she was given to man for him to possess and fertilize as he possesses and fertilizes the soil; and through her, he makes his kingdom out of all nature (Beauvoir, 1949: 206).

The sexuality has become the core of segregation of gender. Sexuality becomes an instinct or drive which is biologically inherent in all human beings. This structure tells about the reasons for sexual orientation as heterosexual, lesbian or homosexual. The old feminism focuses to heterosexual. They focus to woman’s position in heterosexual relationship. While in *Uang Panai* movie, the relation between Risna and Ancha as heterosexual relationship does not show the domination of Ancha. Ancha’s position is

not above Risna. Moreover, the decision in their relationship does not always come from Ancha, but also Risna has a role for deciding something. On the other hand Risna is portrayed herself as a figure who hangs her happiness on Ancha as a man, thus she does not want Ancha to leave her again. Moreover she showed her inferior side at scene 00.24.14 when confronted with her problem with Ancha.

**Violence** by man to woman shows about the patriarchal system. This structure discusses about kinds of violence such as raping, sexual assault, and household and work violence. It is from the motive of an individual and make a traumatize effect to woman. Walby states that:

*“male violence exists in a myriad of form, which may be placed on a continuum, with rape and wife beating and child sexual abuse at one end and sexual harassment and wolf whistles at the other”* (Walby, 1990: 129)

In *Uang Panai* movie, there is a scene about violence which is done by Risna's Father. In the scene at 01.33.40 Risna does not accept the decision of her father who wants to marry off his daughter with the son of his friend. Therefore, Risna's father is mad of her, then chasing, dragging and slamming her to the mattress. He also prohibits Risna to meet Ancha. This scene shows that the domination of man can drive him crazy when there is something which can make his power down. As said by Risna's father at 01.40.47 that “You embarrassed me, you are lowering my pride”. Thus, it is the motive of man doing the violence.

**State** can defined as social institution, which there is a law that control society in the specific territory. State can be patriarchal such as the law which restricts woman access in certain jobs. The law also control about woman reproduction with the law of abortion and contraception. *Uang Panai* movie is told about the marriage and marriage is never separated from the state. Marriage is arranged of state as Law no. 1 year 1974 about Marriage that described in introduction. However, this structure does not exist in *Uang Panai* movie.

The sense of ownership of man to woman make the woman as property and it becomes the core of patriarchy, as known that patriarchy in practice controls and makes women as the property rights. Therefore men are able to dominate and exploit women. It also make women be only obedient and submissive the man. Moreover, women do not have a right over their bodies because they have been controlled as the property of men. From the structure of patriarchal system explained above, it could conclude that women are still dominated by men, including man as a father still has the full control to his daughter. Father makes a decision everything for his daughter without asking for her agreement. Then culture constructs an ideology that supports the positions of domination and women are subordinate. Thus, as said by Walby that the structures of patriarchal system have a relation one and another.

Moreover, the ritual of *uang panai* in movie shows the existence of an economic process. As explained by Syarifuddin dan Damayanti (2015: 80) that regarding to talk about bride pricing, we are actually talking about the aspect of price accounting. It is seen at 00.43.43, when the family of Risna asked for a two hundred million of *uang panai*. There is a process of negotiation over the conversation as follows:

Abu : They request two hundred millions  
 Acha : It's very expensive.  
 Abu : Wait a minute, it is still negotiated! Now, it's a hundred and fifty million.  
 Ancha : It's still expensive.  
 Abu : Be calm. It is negotiated again!  
 Ancha : Then, how much now?  
 Abu : A hundred and twenty.  
 Ancha : It's still very expensive, so how's this?  
 Abu : It has been final!

(Uang Panai, 2016: 00.43.43)

The quotation above shows how the body of woman is considered as property or goods that can be priced. Moreover, there is a negotiation process to determine the amount of bride price or *uang panai*. The pricing also based on the background of woman, as estimated by Tumming at 00.38.22: "Risna is a bachelor degree, right? She has also gone to pilgrimage? Then she is a descendant of nobility! It must be expensive!" Those words provide stereotypes that the quality of women; level of education, social class, are directly proportional to the amount of bride price. Then, it is similar with the words; the better quality of an item, the more expensive it will be cost.

The agreement of the nominal of *uang panai* is referring to the labeling or pricing Risna. It is also realized by Risna, as she said in the following quotation:

"What do you say? Pride? That is my price! I am used price tag! A hundred and twenty million ". (Uang Panai, 2016: 01.19.16)

Another thing that shows the body of woman is considered as a property when the parties of the bride and groom have agreed to the amount of *uang panai*. However, the bridegroom declares that the agreement does not mean that the application has been officially accepted because if someone proposes Risna with higher harvest money, their deal will be void. The statement explains that Risna as a woman has no right to make a choice about her mate or with whom she will be married because her marriage is based on the nominal of money. As seen in quotation below

"I do sorry, I apologize you again. We agreed the nominal is one hundred and twenty million, but it does not mean it has been official. It's not binding and legit. Because we don't know, maybe there is still someone who interested in proposing our daughter with more that this nominal!" (Uang Panai, 2016: 00.44.23)

Furthermore, the large number of *uang panai* seemed to be as a proof of social class. Risna is also become as a tool by her father who is in debt, "Crisis! Since the barn is on fire, I have a lot of debt! Lately, debt collectors often come "(Uang Panai, 00:49:00). Therefore, Risna's father cannot longer give Ancha time to collect money, so he matches her daughter to a son of his business friend. As seen at 01.43.19 Risna's father said to Ancha "But, if I am waiting for you, when is your money enough?"

Shortly, phenomenon of *uang panai* that stereotyped men as the parties whom burdened or even harmed is still perpetuate patriarchal culture. Women are dominated by men as a father. Father has a full control to his daughter and he could decide everything without asking the agreement or even the opinion of his daughter. Further, *uang panai* shown in movie is related to the aspect of price accounting. It is strongly illustrate that the domination of men make him be capable to make women are being controlled and exploited. Therefore, the essence of *uang panai* as a form of appreciation and proof of the prospective groom to prospective brides shifted into standardization of social class proof.

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## Resources

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