

## Social Dynamics in the Determination of *Doi Balanca* in Bugis Marriage Traditions

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### ABSTRACT

*This article aims to systematically examine the social and cultural dynamics of the Doi Balanca practice in Bugis marriage traditions, as well as its impact on the sanctity of marriage amid shifting social values. The primary objective of this study is to understand the function of Doi Balanca as a social mechanism, the factors influencing its monetary value, and the conflicts that may arise from its rejection. This research adopts a qualitative case study approach, employing observation and in-depth interviews. The findings reveal that Doi Balanca is perceived as a symbol of a man's commitment to his prospective wife, with its value and meaning shaped largely by Bugis society's social constructs. It serves to uphold family honor and ensure social stability, yet the amount is determined by various factors such as social class, customary traditions, the role of the families involved, and inter-family communication. Rejection of this practice may lead to serious consequences, including family disputes, emotional tensions, and social exclusion—often culminating in broken engagements, elopements, or premarital pregnancies. The study concludes by emphasizing the importance of understanding the social and cultural complexities surrounding Doi Balanca in order to develop inclusive solutions to emerging conflicts. It recommends strengthening inter-family communication in determining the amount of Doi Balanca and promoting more flexible approaches that mitigate potential conflicts without eroding traditional values.*

**Keywords:** Bugis society; Doi Balanca; marriage customs

## INTRODUCTION

The essence of human life lies in the preservation of existence, encompassing both reproduction and the transmission of values from one generation to the next (Firda et al., 2023). As such, humans tend to form intimate partnerships that ultimately establish family structures through the institution of marriage (Walidin & Saifullah, 2021). What sets humans apart from other creatures is the unique unifying process for procreation, known as marriage (Rahim et al., 2020). This distinction arises from the noble status of human beings in creation, coupled with the capacity for reason that enables them to act morally (Samsudin, 2017). In Indonesia, the practice of marriage varies widely in its requirements and procedures, shaped by local customs and religious influences that color the associated rituals (Elvira, 2014).

Indonesia, with its multitude of ethnic groups and distinct cultural identities, offers a rich diversity of marital systems. For instance, the Bugis people of South Sulawesi—along with other ethnic groups such as the Makassar, Toraja, and Mandar—possess marriage traditions that reflect the unique values and social structures of each community (Alamsyah, 2022). From symbolically rich rituals and intricate procedures to strongly defined gender roles, this diversity constitutes a vital part of Indonesia's cultural identity (Fajarni, 2020).

The Bugis community places great emphasis on the customary principle of *siri*, which encompasses the most sensitive aspects of life such as dignity, reputation, and honor (Megawati et al., 2022). Marriage, being an integral part of their lives, is upheld and cherished in accordance with these values. This underscores the importance of maintaining personal and collective integrity, as marriage is not merely a union between two individuals but a reflection of family and communal identity and honor (Kahar et al., 2018).

The marriage system in South Sulawesi, particularly among the Bugis, is characterized by a complex cultural structure rooted in strong traditional customs (Badewi, 2015). The wedding process is elaborate and governed by stringent conditions closely linked to the cultural code of shame, known as *siri*. This concept plays a crucial role in shaping the community's value system, especially within the context of marriage. Ceremonies are carried out according to well-established customs and rules, perceived as a central cultural institution that formalizes the social contract between families. The role of the family in determining the wedding date is essential, and all arrangements are guided by local customs, cultural norms, and religious beliefs held by the Bugis community (Veranita & Dwirakhmawatia, 2023).

In Bugis society, the purpose of marriage is often closely tied to the preservation of cultural values and traditions (Fitriani, 2022). One of the key aspects is the maintenance of family honor and dignity through the value system of *siri*, a concept of self-respect that underpins social ethics in Bugis life. Marriage is viewed as a union not only between two individuals but between two extended families, each bearing its own identity and social status. It is often aimed at sustaining a lineage with a respected reputation and social position. In Bugis culture, this kinship-based framework is referred to as *asseajingen*, a concept denoting equality or parity in status between marrying parties. Marriage is considered the pinnacle of an individual's social journey. Thus, the expression *elo'ni ripakkalepu*—"one has become *kalepu*"—is used to describe someone who has married, implying that marriage completes one's identity as a whole, honorable, and mature person (*kalepu*). In Bugis culture, marriage signifies one's transformation into a complete and respectable human being.

One of the key values instilled by parents in their children is the authority of the family, particularly in the context of marriage. Families or parents often play the leading role in deciding their children's marriage arrangements. These values are transmitted across generations, forming a strong and deeply rooted system. Socially, this manifests in the *botting* ceremony—a ritual of gift-giving and formal agreement between families—and *mappabotting*, the formal event where the groom's family delivers symbolic items to the bride's family. These traditions are held in high esteem, and parental involvement makes the marriage process highly complex in Bugis culture.

Bugis marriage customs involve a series of steps before the formal contract is made (Rahim et al., 2020). One such step is *mammanu-manu*—an initial observation phase of the prospective partner—followed by *massuro* or *madduta*, the official stage of proposing and negotiating between families. Within the *massuro* stage, there is a bargaining process concerning the *doi balanca* (also referred to as *doi menre*, *uang panai*, or *doi pateka* in Mandar language)—a form of bridewealth paid by the groom to the bride before the wedding can take place.

The tradition of *doi balanca* is culturally rooted and can be traced back to the historical origins of *uang panai*. A well-known story tells of a noble Bugis woman who was so captivating that a Dutchman fell in love with her and wished to marry her. The king, unwilling to see his daughter marry anyone, imposed the requirement of *uang panai*. From a cultural perspective, *uang panai* is considered a man's way of honoring the woman he loves—a willingness to do anything, including paying a significant sum, as an expression of love and respect. It holds profound meaning, serving as motivation for many to pursue their marital goals. Thus, *uang panai* is no longer seen as a social burden but rather as a symbol of appreciation and a man's earnest effort. However, controversy often arises over the required amount, which can vary greatly depending on the bride's social status, significantly influencing the *doi balanca* value.

It is essential to note that *doi balanca* is part of the cultural value system and does not originate from religious teachings (Rinaldi et al., 2022). For Muslims, it is distinct from the *mahar*—the Islamic bride wealth required for a valid marriage (Saleh, 2020). In Bugis traditions, *doi balanca* is not equivalent to *sompa*, the term for *mahar* in Islamic context. It often serves as a platform for economic display, with the requested amount sometimes used as a means to showcase social status. Consequently, grooms may fall into debt trying to meet these demands. Failure to meet *doi balanca* expectations is considered shameful and dishonorable (*siri*). In practice, high *doi balanca* demands are sometimes employed as a means of rejecting a suitor, particularly one disapproved by the bride's family. These demands are also perceived as a test of the man's ability to provide for the future family (Elvira, 2014).

Within Bugis society, *doi balanca* is understood as part of the engagement process intended to cover wedding expenses. The amount is usually determined by the bride's family's social status, including nobility, education level, occupation, and economic standing. The higher the status, the more substantial the *doi balanca* expected from the groom. This cultural norm often burdens young men, leading many to perceive the process as transactional—where tradition outweighs romantic considerations. Materialism, such as prestige and family reputation, is often prioritized, prompting some youth to reject the *doi balanca* tradition. This materialist mindset contributes to a culture of commercialism, where wealth is used as a measure of worth, displacing communal values and mutual assistance.

Effective communication and mutual agreement during premarital interactions are therefore crucial. Through open dialogue, both parties can negotiate an agreeable arrangement that avoids excessive burdens. This interaction also facilitates the creation of shared norms governing the marriage process, balancing the traditional expectations of parents with the evolving values upheld by younger generations (Abbas et al., 2018).

To explore the complexity of *doi balanca* in the Bugis context, this article employs three sociological approaches, each with distinct structures and functions. Symbolic interactionism is used as the primary analytical framework, focusing on how the Bugis people interpret and negotiate the meaning of *doi balanca* through everyday social interactions. Drawing on the ideas of Herbert Blumer and George H. Mead, this approach sees meaning as fluid—constructed and reshaped through symbolic communication between social actors, particularly within families and customary communities.

Additionally, structural functionalism is applied as a complementary lens to examine how *doi balanca* functions to maintain social stability and reinforce normative structures within Bugis society. This approach follows the perspective of Talcott Parsons, who emphasized that social institutions such as customs and family play a vital role in sustaining social order and transmitting values across generations. At the same time, conflict theory is selectively integrated to analyze inequality and power dynamics in *doi balanca* practices. Rather than adopting a radical Marxist stance, this study refers to Lewis Coser's constructive conflict approach, which sees conflict as an inherent aspect of social structures that can lead to transformation, value renewal, and renegotiation of societal arrangements.

Through this theoretical composition, the author affirms an epistemological stance rooted in the interpretive paradigm, where symbolic interactionism serves as the core analytical tool. Structural and conflict theories are employed contextually to enrich the understanding of social structures and the dynamics of value tensions in Bugis society.

These theoretical approaches are essential in analyzing marriage arrangements, especially in *doi balanca* tradition, which not only reflects a significant social function but also keeps tension and conflict potentials in the changing society. Therefore, this article aims to understand social and cultural dynamics of *doi balanca* and offers a solution to maintain the sanctity of marriage amidst changes of existing social values.

The *doi balanca* tradition in Bugis society is a significant phenomenon. *Doi balanca* is one of the requirements that must be met by the groom who wants to give customary bridewealth in the specified amount mentioned by the bride's family. The amount of customary bridewealth given to the bride varies, depending on the social stratification in the community (Mansour Fakih, 2010). A man of bigger wealth will give bigger customary bridewealth compared to those who have less wealth. In Bugis society there are three main groups of social stratification: the royal class, the *tumaradeka* class (a group of society who are independent or free, but not royal society) and *ata* class (the lowest level in the traditional Bugis stratification system, namely slaves or servants). This classification is based on the wealth level of the society. Therefore, monetary value is very much related to social stratification of Bugis society (Abbas, 2013)

The phenomenon of '*doi balanca*' opens the door to excessive materialism, which in turns will diminish the sanctity of marriage (Abdullah, 2015). Such aspects as simplicity, sanctity, and marriage substances are sometimes neglected in pursuing social prestige, pride and dignity. Some even dare to debt to meet the '*doi balance*' and maintaining dignity of the groom family. '*Doi balanca*' often becomes a source of conflict in the marriage process. This is a sensitive problem because it is related to a financial matter. Occasionally demand for *doi balanca* can create tensions between the groom- and the bride-to be. Decisions based on materialisms such as prestige, social status, family prestige, can trigger conflicts and disturb marriage sanctity. The result often makes social status entities become more dominant to set up *doi balanca*. This shows how important it is to balance the traditional values and social development to maintain the marriage sanctity (Aini, 2017).

Some sociological perspectives and facts that have been presented confirm that *doi balanca* as a part of marriage arrangements in Bugis society is an interesting research subject. It is because *doi balanca* has shown a tendency to become cultural reality which is more hedonistic, in which marriage is often used as an opportunity for a feast and celebration for performing social status (Muslih et al., 2021). Articles concerning *doi balanca* are important because they can give deep understanding the relation between social status and determination of the amount of customary bridewealth in Bugis society. Understanding these dynamics can make us see how factors such as social, economy, and culture interact with one another in the marriage arrangements, and how *doi balanca* can reflect social dynamic more in Bugis society.

This research aims to explore the tradition of *doi balanca* in Bugis society, and the existing materialism impacts in the marriage context. Especially, this research wants to review how *doi balanca* tradition is put into practice and understood by Bugis society in South Sulawesi, and the social role and cultural values are reflected through this tradition. Additionally, this research also analyses how the *doi balanca* concept affects relation between families and social status, and to what extent materialism and social stratification play a role in the practice. Amidst the modern social challenges, this research will explore how Bugis society can balance traditional value preservation with the existing social development. As a result, this research is expected to provide deeper insight about the phenomenon of *doi balanca* as well as offering solution relevant to maintaining the sanctity of marriage amidst changes in existing social values.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach grounded in the constructivist paradigm. This paradigm was chosen based on the understanding that social reality is not objective and singular, but rather constructed through social interactions, subjective experiences, and negotiated meanings among individuals within a society. The primary aim of this research is to gain an in-depth understanding of the social and symbolic dynamics underlying the practice of *doi balanca*, a customary mechanism within Bugis marriage traditions. A single case study strategy was employed, as *doi balanca* possesses unique, locally embedded characteristics and sociocultural complexities that cannot be adequately captured through statistical or quantitative approaches. The study was conducted in Barru Regency, South Sulawesi, a region known for preserving traditional marriage customs, including the culturally embedded mechanisms for determining customary bridewealth (*mahar adat*) that remain actively practiced to this day.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, based on their level of direct involvement in the *doi balanca* practice or their depth of knowledge regarding customary values and structures. Informants represented diverse social backgrounds, including parents of prospective brides and grooms, customary leaders and local value holders, young men and women who have undergone traditional marriage

processes, and community figures with influence over customary decision-making. In total, 15 informants were interviewed. Data collection continued until saturation was reached, which occurred by the 12th interview, when no new significant information emerged and recurring patterns began to appear. Data collection was carried out through three primary techniques. First, in-depth semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to explore informants' narratives and social interpretations concerning the values, symbols, and family strategies involved in the *doi balanca* negotiation process. Second, non-participant observation was conducted during family interactions and informal gatherings where customary bridewealth was discussed. This provided contextual insights into gestures, body language, and social expressions during negotiations. Third, documentation included family archives, recordings of local traditions, and relevant publications or records from local media and Bugis customary sources. In all phases, the researcher functioned as the primary instrument—not only collecting data but also interpreting field experiences through reflective and interpretive engagement.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles et al. (2014), consisting of three iterative and interconnected stages: (1) data reduction, in which relevant information from interviews and observations was selected and organized; (2) data display, presented in thematic narratives and direct quotations to reveal patterns linking customary structures, symbolic meanings, and social relations; and (3) conclusion drawing and verification, conducted through theoretical reflection to ensure that findings were not merely descriptive but also conceptually meaningful. The findings are not intended for statistical generalization but for conceptual mapping that reflects the dynamics of values, social structures, and symbolic conflict in Bugis customary marriage practices.

This study aims to explore and understand the key factors influencing the nominal value of *Doi Balanca*, such as the bride's family's social class, value systems, marriage customs, the dominant role of the family in determining the bridewealth amount, and communication among family representatives. Through this deep understanding, the research seeks to offer a comprehensive perspective on the *Doi Balanca* cultural practice and its contribution to the social structure of the Bugis community. Ultimately, the study proposes an alternative conceptual discourse on the social status stakes embedded in the negotiation of *Doi Balanca* in Bugis society.

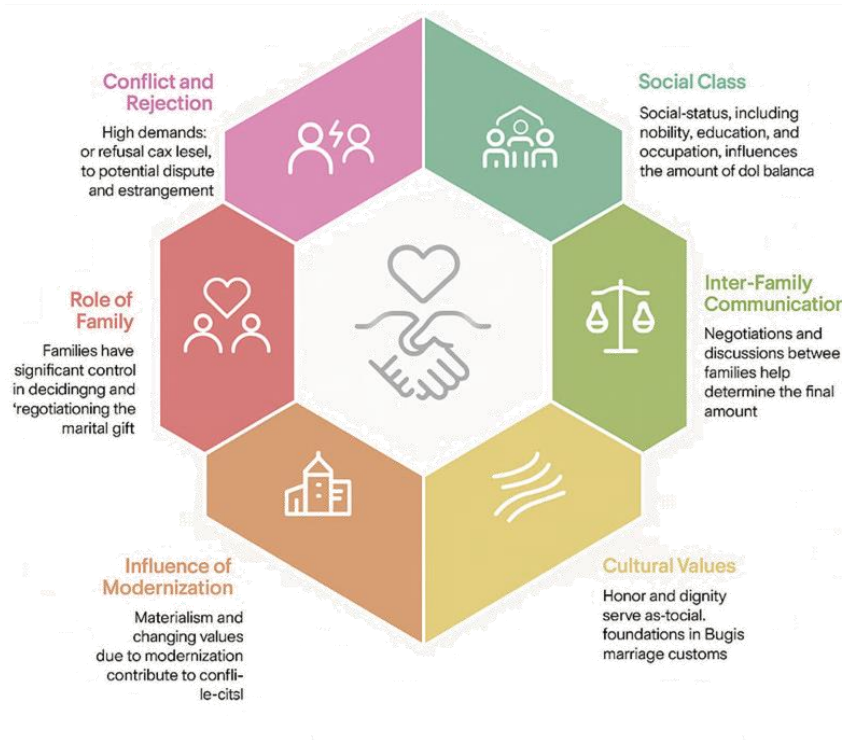
## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Sociocultural Context and Origins of *Doi Balanca*

Barru Regency, located in South Sulawesi, is one of the regions predominantly inhabited by the Bugis ethnic group. The local sociocultural system places strong emphasis on customary values, family honor (*siri'*), and social hierarchy. In Bugis society, the family is not merely a domestic unit but a central institution for reproducing values, symbolizing social status, and nurturing collective dignity. This cultural orientation is especially visible in traditional marriage practices, where the process of courtship and wedding involves not only the bride and groom but their extended families and, often, the wider community. One of the most important elements in Bugis customary marriage is the negotiation and determination of *doi balanca*.

Literally translated, *doi balanca* means “balancing money” or “compensatory payment,” which must be fulfilled by the groom's side in traditional marriage arrangements. However, its symbolic meaning goes far beyond its nominal value. It represents the dignity of the bride's family, their social status, and the groom's commitment and ability to ensure the sustainability of the household. In practice, *doi balanca* functions as a benchmark of honor and social prestige. Consequently, determining the amount of *doi balanca* often becomes a highly sensitive point of negotiation between the families involved.

Historically, the tradition of *doi balanca* has long and dynamic roots. Some literature indicates that its emergence can be traced back to the Dutch colonial period, during which unequal power relations allowed European men to marry local women and subsequently abandon them without assuming responsibility (Badewi, 2015). In response, *doi balanca* evolved as a social and cultural mechanism designed to protect Bugis women from unjust treatment. By establishing a specified sum of money as customary bridewealth, the bride's family demanded tangible responsibility from the groom's side. This practice became part of the local community's adaptation to and resistance against colonialism, while simultaneously serving as an internal safeguard for maintaining communal honor. The following section elaborates on the structure and dynamics of *Doi Balanca*.



**Figure 1.** Structure and Dynamics of Doi Balanca

From this historical context, the value of *doi balanca* has undergone significant transformation. It no longer functions merely as a form of protection or guarantee, but has become a symbol of family pride and social status. In communities that continue to uphold class-based social structures and lineage hierarchies, the nominal amount of *doi balanca* is often treated as a social benchmark. This is especially evident in cases where the marriage involves a woman of noble descent (*ana' karaeng*), one with high academic credentials, or from a prominent family. In such cases, a high *doi balanca* is considered not only reasonable but necessary to uphold the family's honor and reputation.

This shift cannot be separated from the changing value orientations brought about by modernization and globalization. In recent decades, Bugis communities—including those in Barru—have experienced cultural penetration through education, mass media, and the expansion of market economies. Yet traditional wedding customs remain resilient and serve as a crucial marker of cultural identity. In this situation, *doi balanca* occupies a dual position: it is retained as a symbol of tradition while also being negotiated according to modern economic conditions. This creates a space of tension between traditional values and the realistic limitations of contemporary society.

The role of the family in this process is central. In Bugis culture, marriage is not seen as a personal decision made solely by the couple, but as a collective decision of the extended family. The negotiation over the *doi balanca* value involves multiple actors—from the parents of the bride and groom, to siblings, and even senior relatives. In some cases, customary leaders or respected community elders may also be involved to mediate or provide guidance. This process, known as *musyawarah keluarga* (family deliberation), occurs in an atmosphere of kinship but is often loaded with social pressure.

Field observations reveal that determining the *doi balanca* amount may require several meetings. During these sessions, the proposed figure from the bride's side is discussed, negotiated, and at times contested, with considerations given to economic background, social status, and family history of the groom. Sometimes, the groom's family may express concern or disagreement about the proposed amount; however, such objections are often implicit and conveyed with extreme caution. A direct rejection of the *doi balanca* amount may be perceived as an insult to the bride's family and can potentially damage familial relationships.

The value of *doi balanca* is highly contextual. On one hand, the bride's family may perceive a high amount as a form of protection and recognition of their daughter's worth. On the other hand, the groom's family may see it as an economic burden and a reflection of status inequality. Within Bugis communities, the amount often follows "unwritten standards" shaped by communal norms. For example, if a woman

in the village is married with a *doi balanca* of 100 million rupiah, her sister or cousin may feel that they cannot be married for less, to avoid being seen as of lower value. In this way, *doi balanca* becomes a social metric that generates symbolic pressure and power relations.

This tradition also serves as a performative arena where families display honor and economic capacity. Some interviews revealed that a high *doi balanca* may be used by the bride's family to demonstrate to the community that they are of high standing and strong reputation. However, in social reality, not all groom's families can afford the requested amount, often leading to failed proposals or even fractured family ties. In this context, *doi balanca* becomes a symbolic site of conflict with the potential to trigger social tensions.

Based on data and literature analysis, it can be concluded that *doi balanca* in Bugis society cannot be understood merely as a customary requirement in marriage. Rather, it is part of a multilayered value system. It serves as a symbol of honor, a device for negotiating status, a mechanism for sustaining social structures, and a representation of the value tensions between tradition and modernity. Therefore, understanding the sociocultural context and historical roots of *doi balanca* is essential for analyzing the dynamics of this practice in contemporary Bugis society.

### **Family Interaction Patterns in Determining *Doi Balanca***

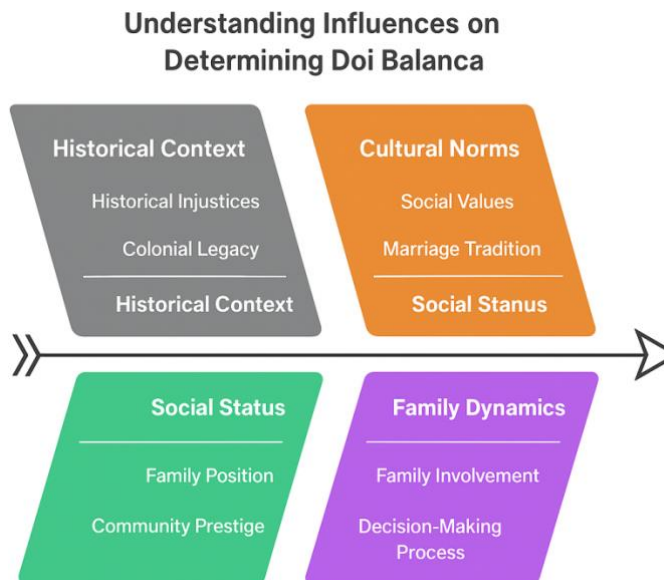
Sociologically, *doi balanca* is understood as a symbol of social exchange embedded with meanings of status, honor, and power relations within the Bugis family structure. It functions not merely as a marriage dowry but as a cultural representation negotiated in the realm of extended family interactions. *Doi balanca* acts as a metric that reflects the social position of the bride's family and the socioeconomic capacity of the groom's family. As a symbolic entity, it is constructed and given meaning through communication between social actors, rather than being defined solely by its monetary value.

The origins of *doi balanca* are often linked to colonial-era social practices. (Badewi, 2015) notes that during the Dutch colonial period, marriages between Dutch men and Bugis women frequently occurred, often ending with the women being abandoned. These incidents produced gender and social injustices that led to the institutionalization of *doi balanca* as a form of protection for women and their families. However, *doi balanca* had already been known within Bugis customary structures long before colonialism. Oral histories suggest that symbolic bridewealth has existed in Bugis customs since the 17th century, functioning to uphold family dignity and legitimize inter-clan relationships (Cristian Pelras, 1996; Mattulada, 2000) Colonialism did not cause the emergence of *doi balanca*, but rather reinforced and expanded its formal role as a social system.

In Bugis culture—particularly within communities with pronounced social stratification—the practice of *doi balanca* is significantly influenced by the social status of the family. For instance, when a man from the *tumaradeka* (commoner) class wishes to marry a woman from the noble class (*ana' karaeng*), the *doi balanca* required is often substantially high. This not only reflects the class difference but also serves as a symbolic form of "payment" for social legitimacy within the marriage. In some cases, additional fees referred to as "blood payment" (*pembeli darah*) are demanded, symbolizing that a noblewoman cannot be equated with someone of lower rank. This phenomenon aligns with broader studies on the symbolism of dowries within patriarchal social structures. Goody (1967) argues that dowries are not merely economic instruments but mechanisms for the reproduction of social status and symbolic tools of patriarchy.

This study finds that the nominal value of *doi balanca* is influenced not only by the social status of the woman being proposed to, but also by community prestige and patterns of social comparison. In several cases, if a family member is proposed to with a certain amount, that value becomes a reference standard for future marriages within the extended family. For instance, a *doi balanca* of 100 million rupiah may become a prestige benchmark maintained as a symbol of collective family honor. This illustrates the internalization of social values through symbolic comparison between families—what Bourdieu (1984) calls a form of *habitus* that is inherited and capitalized upon.

This diagram visualizes the interrelated sociocultural factors shaping *doi balanca* decisions in Bugis families. These include class status, kinship norms, symbolic comparison, traditional authority, and cultural reproduction—demonstrating how individual marriages become sites for broader social negotiation and identity performance.



**Figure 2.** Influencing Factors in the Determination of Doi Balanca

### **Family Interaction Patterns in Determining the Value of *Doi Balanca***

Family interaction plays a central role in determining the value of *doi balanca*. Based on in-depth interviews with informants, this study reveals variations in deliberative patterns among families. Fajarni (2020), states that within the Bugis family structure, major decisions such as the *doi balanca* amount are generally discussed collectively. Soetomo (2013), recalls that after the passing of his parents, he and his spouse took on a dominant role in determining the value of *doi balanca*, while still involving both paternal and maternal relatives. Similarly, Munirah (2020) and Kamriani (2020) confirm that although the core couple often plays a central role, the extended family’s deliberation remains the primary decision-making forum. This illustrates that, in Bugis culture, personal autonomy in marriage remains under the influence of broader social structures and collective norms.

This condition is consistent with the framework of symbolic interactionism, which emphasizes that social meaning is constructed through interpersonal interaction (Blumer, 1969). In family deliberations, the value of *doi balanca* is negotiated through symbolic communication laden with cultural significance. Agreements are not based solely on economic capacity, but also on social expectations influenced by local values, family reputation, and communal status. Family deliberation is not merely a technical meeting—it is a social ritual where symbols and honor are at stake.

Deliberation tends to proceed more smoothly when the bride’s family does not demand a high amount—typically when they are less invested in social image or when extended family involvement is minimal. However, when the extended family is actively engaged, concerns about honor, social status, and public perception often drive up the expected *doi balanca* amount. In such instances, *doi balanca* becomes a non-neutral symbol of social exchange, charged with symbolic interests.

The categories of social action in this process may be analyzed using Parsons’ theory of pattern variables, which refers to orientations of action based on values, affectivity, and achievement (Parsons, 1951). Some family decisions are driven by the desire to maintain inherited status (ascription), while others are based on academic or social accomplishments (achievement). All these categories influence the construction of *doi balanca* value, turning it into a site of symbolic interaction as well as a compromise between differing value orientations.

From this perspective, it can be concluded that the determination of *doi balanca* is a complex social process in which symbols, values, and social structures intersect within the family interaction space. Using the lens of symbolic interactionism, this study reveals that *doi balanca* should not be viewed merely as a material figure, but as a social discourse negotiated through symbolic communication—serving as a reflection of power dynamics, honor, and social position within the Bugis community.

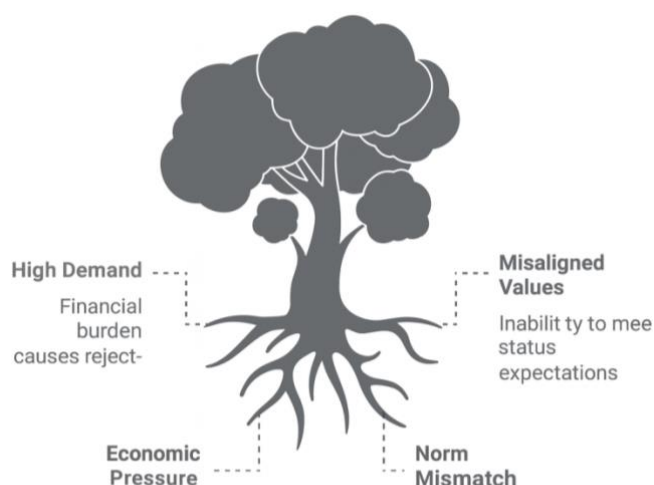


### Resistance in the Determination of *Doi Balanca*

Resistance in the determination of *Doi Balanca* can emerge from various parties involved in the marriage process (Lestari, 2023). One common form of resistance comes from the groom or his family, who may perceive the requested *Doi Balanca* amount as excessively high or beyond their financial capacity. They may view such demands as a heavy financial burden or as incompatible with modern social and economic realities.

Resistance may also arise from the bride or her family, especially if they disagree with the amount proposed or feel that it does not reflect their perceived worth or dignity. In some cases, resistance emerges from a concern that overly high *Doi Balanca* demands could place undue pressure on the groom's family, potentially undermining the goodwill and harmony that the marriage is intended to foster.

This form of opposition is often nuanced and negotiated within family deliberations, yet it reflects broader tensions between tradition and socioeconomic pragmatism. The following figure illustrates a conceptual model of the different forms and sources of resistance that may arise during the negotiation of *Doi Balanca*.



**Figure 3.** Resistance in the Determination of *Doi Balanca*

Resistance to the *Doi Balanca* arrangement may arise not only from the families of the bride and groom but also from the wider community (Kesuma et al., 2015). Members of the public may view excessive dowry demands as unreasonable or unjust, criticizing them as exploitative or materialistic and inconsistent with the shared cultural values of fairness and dignity. In such cases, negotiation between both parties becomes essential in reaching a fair and acceptable agreement. Compromise and open dialogue are required to reconcile differing perspectives while upholding the cherished traditions of Bugis society.

Based on narratives and insights from multiple sources, several significant consequences of such resistance have been observed. These include rejection or cancellation of a marriage proposal due to the groom or his family's inability to meet the requested *Doi Balanca* amount. For the groom's side, this can lead to feelings of failure, disappointment, and a loss of social standing. On the other hand, the bride and her family may feel insulted or disrespected by the refusal, resulting in strained family relations and social tension. Excessive *Doi Balanca* demands often lead to emotional stress and heated disputes, ultimately damaging inter-family ties and affecting the psychological well-being of those involved.

In extreme cases, broken kinship ties between the two families may occur following a rejected proposal, leading to long-term social fragmentation. Such ruptures contribute to isolation and emotional distress for both parties, further undermining social cohesion and community stability. The emotional wounds caused by failed negotiations over *Doi Balanca* may leave lasting scars, affecting mental health and family unity.

Additionally, young women may face the risk of becoming socially stigmatized as “spinsters” (Ilyas, 2019) due to prolonged difficulties in securing a marriage agreement—either because of unmet dowry expectations or perceived incompatibility with the groom’s family’s economic status. This contributes to psychological and emotional distress, as well as feelings of social exclusion and undervaluation.

In some cases, couples who genuinely love each other may resort to secret marriages (*pernikahan rahasia*) if their families disapprove of their union due to status differences or unmet dowry expectations (Hanafi et al., 2024). These situations can cause deep emotional suffering and social alienation for the couple. Furthermore, the lack of accessible marriage pathways can increase the risk of premarital pregnancy (Saraswati & Subudi, 2017). In such instances, individuals may engage in unprotected sexual relationships outside of wedlock, which could result in unintended pregnancies or the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. These risks underline the importance of addressing *Doi Balanca*-related disputes through inclusive and culturally respectful solutions.

From a structural functionalist perspective, every social element plays a role in maintaining societal balance and cohesion. Within this framework, *Doi Balanca* functions to preserve social values and uphold family honor. However, when the dowry amount becomes excessively high, it leads to social dysfunction (Merton, 1968)—where a cultural element that once served a stabilizing role begins to generate negative consequences, such as inter-family conflict, social exclusion, and marital breakdowns.

From the standpoint of symbolic interactionism, such breakdowns reflect a failure of symbolic consensus (Blumer, 1969)—a collapse in the shared understanding of *Doi Balanca*’s social meaning. Families, viewed as units of action, act upon shared goals and values. Like society at large, families operate as systems of interaction, with decisions often tied to broader social, emotional, and economic functions (Tawakkal & Subekti, 2023). For instance, in rural contexts, children commonly participate in agricultural labor alongside parents, or assist with household tasks. These practices nurture interdependence and value transmission within the family.

With the advancement of industrialization, traditional social structures have shifted significantly. Activities once considered productive within the home are now externalized. Nonetheless, households still attempt to retain productive functions, such as childrearing, as an adaptive response to technological change (Tawakkal & Subekti, 2023). This reflects the family’s ongoing transformation as a dynamic social unit responsive to external forces—including technology and the economy—while preserving internal functions that sustain the social fabric.

## CONCLUSION

The cultural complexity and social dynamics involved in determining *Doi Balanca* among the Bugis community reflect a long-standing historical legacy and deeply rooted social values. This tradition is not merely a marriage custom but a product of colonial history and an effort to uphold women’s rights in the face of past gender injustices. *Doi Balanca* symbolizes social values, class, and customary norms in Bugis society, functioning as a marker of honor and social stability for the bride’s family. Its impact extends beyond the union of two families, carrying broader psychological and social consequences, including inter-family conflict, emotional strain, and even social isolation.

Family interaction patterns play a crucial role in the *Doi Balanca* negotiation process. Both nuclear and extended families actively participate in reaching an agreement between the two sides. While there is variation in interaction styles among Bugis families, collective deliberation (*musyawarah keluarga*) remains the primary mechanism for arriving at fair and mutually acceptable outcomes. However, resistance toward *Doi Balanca* may arise from multiple parties—including the bride, the groom’s family, and members of the community. Such resistance can trigger conflict and emotional strain, affecting both familial and social relationships.

Furthermore, the family’s role in this tradition extends beyond the negotiation of *Doi Balanca* itself. It also involves preparing the bride to meet expected social standards, such as *malebbi* (modesty or refinement). Families also contribute by adjusting *Doi Balanca* expectations to match the groom’s family’s economic capacity. When *Doi Balanca* demands are perceived as excessive, serious consequences may follow, including rejected marriage proposals, fractured family relationships, and increased risk of premarital pregnancy due to limited opportunities for formalized union. Therefore, understanding the socio-cultural dynamics and complexity of this process is essential.

An inclusive and dignified approach is necessary to address the potential conflicts and tensions that emerge from *Doi Balanca* negotiations. This approach ensures that the tradition remains culturally relevant while avoiding injustices or undue burdens on those involved.

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