



## Perceptions of the Indigenous Community of Bungku Owi Singkalong, Taloto Village, North Luwu Regency on Forest Resources

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to describe the relationship between the Bungku Owi Singkalong Indigenous Law Community and forest sustainability in the Singkalong Traditional Area, Taloto Village, Seko District, North Luwu Regency. The research was conducted by means of observation, interviews, and literature study. The results showed that the customary law community of Bungku Owi Singkalong depended on natural resources for their livelihoods. The existence of customary regulations keeps natural resources preserved. The community still upholds customary law as a guide for life. Communities obey customary laws with all the rules and consequences of violations. The role of Customary Institutions and Tokey is very important to regulate the order of life of the community.

**Keywords:** *Indigenous Law; Natural Resources; Sustainability*

### **1. Introduction**

The success of forest management is highly dependent on the perception of the parties directly related to the forest. A person's perception reflects the way of seeing, admiration, satisfaction and the desired expectations (Edmund & Letey, 1973 in Surata, 1993). Pranowo (1985) states that people's perceptions of forests will be influenced by community needs such as the need for firewood, building wood, animal feed and others as well as culture, namely beliefs, customs, folklore and so on. This condition is very influential on forest areas that have high interaction with the community around the forest, this is proven by the many forest area tenure conflicts involving the community with the government and forest area managers.

One form of forest area management that has high interaction with the community around the forest is customary forest management. According to the Regulation of the Minister of Environment and Forestry Number: P.17/MENLHK/SETJEN/KUM.1/8/2020 concerning Customary Forests and Private

Forests, customary forest management is carried out by Customary Law Communities (MHA) whose existence has been recognized through Regional Regulations and The decision of the local government, while the Customary Forest itself is determined through a Decree (SK) of the Minister of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia.

The results of preliminary research at the Sulawesi Regional PSKL Center and the North Luwu Regency Government yielded information that one of the areas of main concern is the Singkalong customary area and even now it is in the process of Proposing Customary Forest Permits and waiting for the administrative verification process from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia. Indonesia.

One of the first steps to see the feasibility of customary forest management is to look at community perceptions of forest resources. Through the perceptions shared by the community, it will be clearly illustrated how the level of community dependence on forest areas and all this information plays an important role in the formal follow-up process for the management of customary areas in this area. This is what underlies the researchers to conduct a study of the perception of the Bungku Owi Singkalong indigenous community towards the surrounding forest resources.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1. Type of Research**

This research was conducted with a qualitative phenomenological approach which aims to determine the perception of the Bungku Owi Singkalong Indigenous People towards Forest Resources.

### **2.2. Time and Place of Research**

This research was conducted during March 2021 in Taloto Village, Seko District, North Luwu Regency, South Sulawesi Province. The research location specifically focuses on the Bungku Owi Singkalong Indigenous Community management area.

### **2.3. Data Collection and Analysis**

This research was conducted with a qualitative phenomenological approach that aims to understand the meaning of something, which in the context of this research is the community's perception of forest resources, based on experience and everyday understanding (Subadi, 2006). The data collected were categorized into 3 research variables, namely indigenous peoples' institutions, indigenous peoples' livelihood systems, and indigenous peoples' perceptions of state forest areas.

To collect data based on this approach, we conducted a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) process which was deepened through a semi-structured interview process. The FGD was conducted to obtain information about the institutions of indigenous peoples in Taloto Village, North Luwu Regency, the community's livelihood system and its relationship with the state forest area. Next, we triangulated the data from the FGDs by conducting semi-structured interviews with people who admit that they are part of the indigenous peoples group.

The data obtained above is then enriched with some secondary data that has been collected, namely a copy of the North Luwu Regency Regulation No. 12 of 2004, a copy of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry Regulation No. P.17/MENLHK/SETJEN/KUM.1/8/2020, and a copy of the data from the Central Bureau of Statistics of North Luwu Regency.

### 3. Result And Discussion

#### 3.1. Bungku Owi Singkalong Indigenous People Organization

The Bungku Owi Singkalong Customary Law Community is administratively located in the administrative area of Taloto Village, Seko District, North Luwu Regency. Currently they have been recognized as Indigenous Law Community (MHA) based on the Regional Regulation of North Luwu Regency No. 12 of 2004 concerning Empowerment, Preservation, Development of Customs and Customary Institutions and the Decree of the Regent of North Luwu No. 300 of 2004 concerning Recognition of the Existence of the Seko Indigenous Peoples.

The formal recognition above is in line with the government's desire, especially the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK) to follow the applicable regulations, especially P.17/MENLHK/SETJEN/KUM.1/8/2020

#### 3.2. Indigenous People's Perceptions of Forest Areas

##### 1. Location and History

The Bungku Owi Singkalong Customary Law Community has a customary area bordering; West: Hono and Turong Customary Law Community Areas; To the North: Central Sulawesi Province; To the East: Rampi Customary Law Community Area; South: Lodang Customary Law Community Area. The Seko Indigenous Peoples consist of 3 (three) regions, namely Seko Padang, Seko Tengah, and Seko Lemo. The Bungku Owi Singkalong Customary Law Community is included in the Seko Padang Area.

The history of the formation of the Bungku Owi Singkalong Indigenous Law Society starting from the 1700s AD is estimated to be the beginning of the arrival of the Rampi people in the Bungku Owi Singkalong Traditional Territory. It is said that 5 (five) hunters from Iowa hunted from Rampi to Ruwai. Ruwai was eventually made Tangkona Rampi by Tokey<sup>2</sup>) Iowa. In the 1860s AD, Makole Baebunta and Tokey Iowa heard the news that the natural conditions in Ruwai were good for living in, so they visited the area.

In the 1980s, Makole Baebunta (narrated as Puang Tosiri) married the son of Tokey Iowa who is a Rampi person, and became the ancestor of the Bungku Owi Singkalong Customary Law Society. The philosophy of life that is firmly held stems from Tokey Iowa's message before Makole Baebunta and his wife left the land of Rampi. The message conveyed is as follows:

*"Ane wute mokey wae ino'o imbo pe oha'a mi, Ewa kei wae bungkuna owi, ale ane hawa key wato'o hawa' kei into maroho metoti'i, nolou humei kei into no parowohi hey modungka"* which means: "When you arrive at your destination, be like a bunch of sugarcane trees, because if you don't do that, you will be easily swayed, unable to stand and will fall. The Bungku Owi Singkalong Indigenous People are descendants of Puang Tosiri (Makole Baebunta) and his wife (child of Tokey Iowa who is a Rampi). This affects the everyday language of the Singkalong people who use the Rampi language, in contrast to the other Seko Indigenous Peoples.

Based on the history of the origin of the Singkalong people who were born from the Rampi and Baebunta ethnicities, the customs of the Singkalong people are often combined from the two. In addition, the customs of the Singkalong people are also influenced by the customs of the Hono Indigenous People because of their adjacent customary areas and frequent interactions. The merging of these two different customs is called assimilation and/or acculturation. Assimilation can be defined as a social process characterized by efforts to reduce the differences that exist between individuals or groups of people and also includes efforts to enhance the unity of actions, attitudes and mental processes by taking into account

the interests of people. common interests and goals (Koentjaraningrat 1980). Acculturation can be defined as a social process that arises when a human group with a certain culture is confronted with elements of a foreign culture in such a way that the elements of the foreign culture are gradually accepted and processed into their own culture without causing the loss of cultural personality. itself (Koentjaraningrat 1980).

## 2. Customary Law and Institutions

The Bungku Owi Singkalong Indigenous Law Community was officially established as an indigenous community after receiving recognition from the North Luwu Regency Government. As an Indigenous Law Community, the Bungku Owi Singkalong community has an Indigenous Leadership System and Customary Institutions as follows:

Table 1. Bungku Owi Singkalong’s Indigenous Leadership System and Customary Institutions

Term	Meaning	Responsibilities
Tokey	The Highest Leader of Indigenous People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible inside and outside the custom</li> <li>• Responsible for all applicable customary law</li> <li>• Establish work/political relations with other institutions</li> <li>• Establishing customary instruments at the Tokey and To Matodi Bola' levels based on community proposals</li> <li>• Sign all letters issued by traditional institutions</li> </ul>
Kabilaha	Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preside over all traditional congregations</li> <li>• Convey all aspirations that come from the community to Tokey</li> <li>• Reporting the results of the trial conducted to the community and Tokey</li> <li>• Provide advice and consideration to Tokey in policy making</li> <li>• Making custom rules</li> </ul>
Balolae	Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervise and assist Tokey in carrying out his duties</li> <li>• Give advice or views to Tokey</li> <li>• Set Tokey activities (protocol)</li> <li>• Represent Tokey in the absence of Tokey</li> </ul>
Suro	Public Relation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering Tokey's commands to the public</li> <li>• Receive and accommodate people's aspirations and convey them to Tokey</li> <li>• Facilitating public relations with other communities as well as relations between Tokey and other communities or institutions</li> </ul>
Topokorehi	Blacksmith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing agricultural tools</li> <li>• Providing war tools</li> </ul>

Topekoalo	Spiritualist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socializing all customary rules</li> <li>• Saying prayers in every event in the village</li> <li>• Organizing rituals in the village</li> </ul>
Tadulako	Judge and Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserving all customary rules</li> <li>• Serving as security in the community</li> <li>• Enforce all customary law in its implementation</li> </ul>
Towolia	Agricultural Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observer of the state of the community's agricultural business</li> <li>• Carry out community business plans</li> </ul>
Paroke Lopo	Forestry Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determining the management of forest functions</li> <li>• Maintaining forest sustainability</li> <li>• Determining land use</li> </ul>
Sando	Paramedic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treating sick people</li> <li>• Designing the prevention of a disease</li> </ul>

The Bungku Owi Singkalong Customary Law Society has clear institutions that regulate every area of government. Deliberation for consensus is the highest decision in the institutional system of the Bungku Owi Singkalong Indigenous Law Community, both in terms of certain rituals, to judicial decisions in the context of violating customary law.

### 3. Management of Forest Resources in the Bungku Owi Traditional Area of Singkalong

The Bungku Owi Singkalong Indigenous People depend on natural products for their livelihoods, in the form of agriculture, plantations and animal husbandry. An overview of the livelihoods of the Bungku Owi Singkalong Customary Law Community can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. Bungku Owi Singkalong's people livelihoods

No	Livelihoods	Number of Family
1	Rice Farmer	253
2	Cacao Farmer	164
3	Cow's Cattleman	83
4	Coffee Farmer	79
5	Sugarcane Farmer	79

The Bungku Owi Singkalong Customary Law Society views the forest as a source of collective livelihood, where daily needs can be met. The principle of common ownership of natural resources is the basic philosophy inherent in the customs of the Singkalong people. The Bungku Owi Singkalong Customary Law Community has special local wisdom that must be carried out and carried out by outside

customary members who are active in the Singkalong Traditional Territory. If a violation occurs, customary sanctions will be imposed in accordance with deliberation and consensus and based on the provisions of customary principles.

The Singkalong Customary Law Community divides land use into several parts, namely: (lopo') which means garden, (kinete') which means former garden, (pukineteang) which means rice field, (lembo) which means pond, and (wuhu) which means a place of grazing. The Singkalong Customary Law Community also believes in an area in the forest called wana'. Wana' is a forest area that is believed to be a buffer for protected areas and should not be managed by anyone. Until now, the Singkalong Customary Law Community believes that if wana' is managed, it will not produce anything because it is not intended for exploitation.

Wana' is located in Kampung Kaloto, around the coordinates of  $-2^{\circ}15'50''$  South Latitude and  $119^{\circ}57'23''$  East Longitude with an area of 1 hectare. Inside the wana' there is a large banyan tree and a large rock, which is believed to be the place of origin of the ancestors of the Hono Indigenous Law Community. Wana' should not be entered by just anyone, except for certain people who have certain abilities, for example Tokey. If there is a violation, the Hono Indigenous Law Community still believes that the violation will result in a prisoner. With this belief, the beauty of the wana' area is maintained and can become an ecological buffer for the ecosystem next to it.

The Bungku Owi Singkalong Indigenous Law Community also stipulates a 'ruai' area, which is land that can be used on a limited basis by indigenous peoples. This area is estimated to be  $\pm 400$  hectares. Ruai should not be used arbitrarily, but only limited to water sources, places to collect wood, and places to collect rattan. In terms of the utilization of forest resources, the Bungku Owi Singkalong Indigenous Community has its own regulation, namely the utilization of forest products must be known and approved by Paroke Loppo. Forest resources that are used can only be used according to need, in the sense that there will be no wasted wood or rattan. Utilization of forest products is limited to meeting primary needs, namely housing, clothing, and food.

The prevention of conflict over the use of forest areas has been anticipated by the Bungku Owi Singkalong Customary Law Community. In the right of ownership of Lopo' Lea (land that may be opened for gardens) that has been opened, it cannot be moved or taken by another person, because it has been determined that the first to clear the land is the owner. If someone else will manage it, it is obligatory to ask permission from the person who first cleared the land and with the approval of the Customary Institution. This has been mutually agreed to prevent conflicts of land ownership claims in the Singkalong Customary Area.

The Bungku Owi Singkalong Customary Law Community also determines land to be used communally by family groups within the Indigenous Community which is categorized as common property. This communal land is called 'woi popampaha'. The use of communal land is regulated by the elders in the clump.

Management of forests and natural resources in the Singkalong Customary Area still holds the principle of sustainability. This is in accordance with the principle of the Bungku Owi Singkalong Customary Law Society which reads:

*Lopo iyomo ko tuwu anta*

(forest is our life)

*Ko roba lopote' iko bola ikei tuwu*



(our forest is wide to give life)

*Pekahi mokei maentu hei ikuya mei manoba*

(take care and manage well)

*No uwa to ko tuwu i maawa*

(to be a supporter of life together)

*Ale ane mesaliompa kei into hai nirewahi manoba mampohupa komahia*

(if you neglect to manage it and don't take care of it then you will bring hunger)

The principles of natural resource management in the Singkalong Customary Area are then elaborated in the customary rules of the Bungku Owi Singkalong Customary Law Community. The determination of customary fines is applied as a reference in carrying out consensus deliberation as follows:

- The fine for the forest arsonist is one pig worth IDR 2.000.000 to restore the spirit of the forest that has been damaged by fire
- The fine for loggers along the river is IDR 100.000 per tree
- The fine for rattan fellers but not used is IDR 100.000 per tree
- The fine for perpetrators of motuwo (poisoning fish in rivers and ponds) is IDR 500.000
- The fine for armed hunters is IDR 200.000
- The fine for environmental polluters is one pig worth IDR 2.000.000 to restore the spirit of the environment that has been damaged and polluted.

The Bungku Owi Singkalong Customary Law Community has a traditional party as a form of gratitude for the gift of natural resources obtained. This traditional party is called 'masusa'. At the masusa event, all indigenous people wear traditional clothes called 'koliwu'. The entire Bungku Owi Singkalong Indigenous Peoples came to bring the harvest and enjoyed it together.

Strict customary regulations regarding the management of natural resources in the Singkalong Customary Area have good benefits for the ecological sustainability of the forest in and around it. This can be seen, one of which is in the wana' area which is maintained in its beauty and is still being closed in the form of dense forest. In terms of managing the use of forest resources, it also has a good impact with the absence of landslides and the water needs of the Bungku Owi Singkalong Indigenous Peoples are always fulfilled.

The Bungku Owi Singkalong Customary Law Community in Taloto Village, Seko District, North Luwu Regency is one of the social groups that have customary regulations and believe in the same way of life. The naming of Seko District comes from the Seko language which means nine friendly indigenous communities. Seko District is located about ± 156 kilometers west of the capital of North Luwu Regency. Meanwhile, Taloto Village, where the Indigenous Law Community resides, is located about ±9 kilometers from the Seko District Capital (BPS, 2019). Road access to Seko District is currently still under construction, so during the rainy season it can only be reached by 2-wheeled vehicles with special modifications. However, there is a pioneer aircraft from one of the airlines in Indonesia that has opened a flight path from the capital of North Luwu Regency to Seko District. Taloto Village consists of 6 hamlets, namely Singkalong Hamlet, Tadoyang Hamlet, Katu Hamlet, Lore Hamlet, Lengkong Hamlet, and Patoroang Hamlet with a total population of 1067 people, the average population density is 8 people per square kilometer (BPS, 2019). The entire area of Taloto Village is the territory of the Bungku Owi

Singkalong Customary Law Community. Most of the Bungku Owi Singkalong Indigenous Peoples work as rice and cocoa farmers.

Forest areas which are included in the Singkalong customary area are currently still preserved. There is a forest area that is still a dense forest that is not being used. The forest area around this dense forest has been used for both rattan and wood products. However, utilization is only done traditionally on a small scale. This can be seen from the unopened forest land cover. As a traditional community that still depends on forest products, the Bungku Owi Singkalong Customary Law Community is still able to maintain forest sustainability. It is interesting to do further research, in terms of the relationship between the Customary Law of the Bungku Owi Singkalong Customary Law Community and the sustainability of the Singkalong Traditional Area.

### **Conclusion**

Based on observations and interviews with the Bungku Owi Singkalong Indigenous Law Community, it can be seen that the Bungku Owi Singkalong Indigenous Law Community depends on forest resources for their livelihoods, thus establishing customary regulations regarding their management. This customary regulation is binding on members of the Indigenous Law Community so as to bring about good ecological benefits to the ecosystem in the Customary Territory and in the surrounding area.

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