

LOCAL WISDOM AND CONSERVATION OF BUGIS STAGE HOUSE AS A SACRED PLACE IN WAJO REGENCY

Naidah Naing¹, Abd.Karim Hadi², Asdar Djamereng³

1. Architecture Department, Engineering Faculty, Universitas Muslim Indonesia,
jl. Urip Sumoharjo, Makassar, Indonesia
Email: naidahnaing@yahoo.com

Abstract

Stage house is a traditional house of Bugis Tribe in South Sulawesi, one of which is in Wajo Regency. The stage house for the Bugis is more than a shelter for its inhabitants, but house is a sacred place where people are born, married and died and in this place also social activities and rituals are held. Along with the development of the era, the Bugis traditional house has changed generating the tendency to lose the meaning and identity of architectural culture. The study aimed to discover and expose the values of local wisdom on the architecture of the Bugis traditional house, as embodiment of inhabiting culture in Bugis Wajo society, so it can be preserved hereditary. The method used in this research is descriptive-evaluative by using Morphological, Behavioral and Architectural Approach. The data analysis in this research is done by using spatial analysis technique and descriptive analysis. The research is expected to provide inputs for the government and community of Wajo regency in particular in order to restore the existence of the Bugis house as a sacred place for its inhabitants.

Keywords: local wisdom, conservation, Traditional stage house, sacred place.

Abstrak

Judul: *Kearifan Lokal Dan Konservasi Rumah Panggung Suku Bugis Sebagai Ruang Sakral Di Wajo*

Rumah panggung adalah rumah tradisional Suku Bugis di Sulawesi Selatan yang salah satunya terdapat di Kabupaten Wajo. Rumah panggung bagi masyarakat Suku Bugis lebih dari sekedar tempat berteduh bagi penghuninya, tapi Rumah adalah ruang sakral di mana orang lahir, kawin dan meninggal dan di tempat ini pula kegiatan-kegiatan sosial dan ritual tersebut diadakan. Seiring dengan perkembangan zaman, rumah panggung suku Bugis telah mengalami perubahan dari waktu ke waktu sehingga cenderung kehilangan makna dan identitas budaya arsitektur. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengangkat dan mengungkapkan nilai-nilai kearifan lokal pada arsitektur rumah panggung Suku Bugis sebagai pengejawantahan budaya menghuni pada masyarakat Bugis Wajo, sehingga dapat dilestarikan turun-temurun. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah deskriptif-evaluatif dengan menggunakan pendekatan Morphological Approach, Behaviour Approach dan Architectural Approach. Analisis data dalam penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan teknik analisis spasial dan analisis deskriptif. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberi masukan bagi pemerintah dan masyarakat kabupaten Wajo khususnya, sehingga dapat memperhatikan dan mengembalikan eksistensi rumah panggung suku Bugis sebagai area sakral bagi penghuninya.

Kata kunci: *lokal wisdom, konservasi, rumah panggung tradisional, ruang sakral*

Introduction

Architecture of the suspended house is Bugis traditional house in Wajo occupying almost all the land in South Sulawesi, in addition to Makassar, Mandar and Toraja tribes. The Bugis suspended house has distinctive characteristics in accordance with the cosmological view of the Bugis.

The cosmological view of the Bugis, including in Wajo, considers that this universe (macrocosm) vertically consists of three levels, namely *Botting langi'* (upper world), *Ale kawa* (middle world), and *Uri liyu* (lower world), and the center of those levels is *Botting langi'* (the highest sky) where *Dewata SeuwaE* (Almighty God) resides. This view is manifested in Bugis traditional stage house as a microcosm which vertically consists of three parts, namely *rakkeang* (roof), *ale bola* (the body of the house as a place to live) and *awa bola* (the space under the house floor) (Naing, 2011).

According to Yunus (2012), this cosmos model is associated with the Bugis community's belief that there are four natural substances, namely: air, water, fire, and soil which are inseparable from human life. Besides, the model of the cosmos is also a classification of the four directions (north, south, west and east) representing the definition of *sulapa eppa wala suji* (rhombus rectangle). Therefore, the house for the Bugis is considered perfect if it is rectangular (Naing, 2011)

Furthermore, the concept of *sulapa eppa walasuji* is projected on the principle of human life which consists of four:

1. The principle of life about the existence of human knowledge
2. The principle of life about the existence of human presence
3. The principle of life about the existence of human service in macrocosm and,
4. The principle of life about human death.

The four principles of the Bugislife are also reflected in the traditional house model commonly called *bola ugi* (Yunus, 2012).

The principle of Bugis community associated with the concept of *sulapa eppa wala suji* is illustrated by the function of the Bugis suspended house not only as a comfortable place to live but also as a sacred space to give birth, marry and die (lay down the body), as Robinson described (2005). The sacred rituals such as the process of giving birth, getting married and laying the dead body are carried out in the Bugis suspended house with various traditional processions, because the Bugis people think that the house is themselves, because in their houses, they live happily with their families, from birth, marriage to death. It is in the house that the Bugis live and fight for their goals (Data, 1985).

This is in line with what Yunus (2012) also stated that the area that is most widely used for various sacred ceremonial activities, such as giving birth, marriage and funeral ceremonies is in the body part of the house (*ale bola = ale kawa*). *Ale bola* has three areas in which each area has its own function, namely: front area (*lontang ri saliweng*), central area or living room (*lontang ri tengngah*), and back area (*lontang ri laleng*). In the Bugis mystical concept, this area is used to worship *Mallino* deity and is considered a meeting place between the upper and

the under worlds or between *Botting langi* and *Uri liyu*.

However, in its development, the Bugis house in Wajo has changed and shifted in form and function, especially its function as a sacred area to give birth and hold marriage ceremony, where the Bugis house is no longer the only place for both occasions. This phenomenon is especially found on the Bugis in Wajo who live in urban areas, where houses as the sacred areas for childbirth are now rarely found. It is different from the villages in Wajo, most people still make the house a sacred place.

The aim of the research is to discover the meaning behind the sacredness of certain areas in the Bugis house in performing the rituals of giving birth, marriage and funeral in order to to conserve the function of the Bugis house as a sacred place. Several studies on the Bugis houses have been previously conducted, such as the orientation of Bugis houses (Hamka, et al., 2015), the meaning of symbolic forms and decorative arts of Bugis houses (Yunus, 2012), The Changing of the Form and Function of Bugis Houses (Abidah, 2010), Tradition of building houses in South Sulawesi (Robinson, 2005), The level of Bugis houses in South Sulawesi (Hartawan, 2015), but there has been no research discovering the meaning of the Bugis house as a sacred space. This is interesting to be expressed and discussed to enrich the knowledge of the Bugis people, especially in Wajo, about the meaning of the sacred space in traditional Bugis houses as an effort to conserve the physical cultural heritage of the Bugis community.

The Conservation of Bugis House Architecture

The tradition of building Bugis houses has been known since it appeared in records in the 17th century, in the form of wooden stilt houses, two-sloping roofs, 'H'-shaped frame with poles and beams assembled without nails. The pillar supports the floor and roof, while the wall is tied to the outer pole. These characteristics make the Bugis stage house (*Bola ugi*) easy to move and dismantle (Pelras 2006), as in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1. Bugis Suspended House in Wajo Source: Personal Sketch, 2018

The Bugis Houses and Microcosm

In relation to the suspended house (*Bola ugi*) as a microcosm, Bugis people view that the house is a form of the man himself (*rupa tau*), where humans have 3 body parts, namely head (*ulu*), body (*ale*) and leg (*aje*), manifested in the house structure vertically consisting of the roof (*ulu = head in humans*), the body of the house (*ale = body in humans*) and the lower part of the house (*aje = leg in humans*) (Data, 1985). This causes the dimensions of the Bugis house (the length, width and height of the house) to be based on the size of the parts of the owner's body (husband and wife) (Shima, 2006). Vertically, the Bugis house as a reflection of the human body can be seen in figure 2 below.

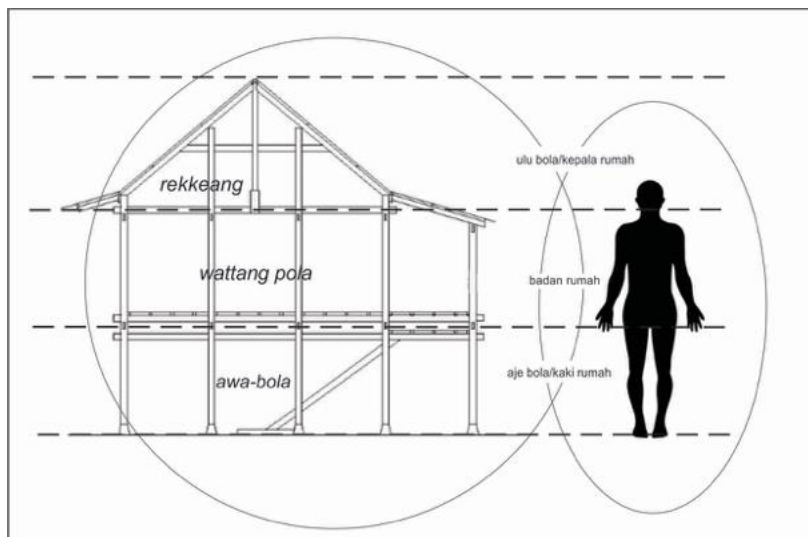


Figure 2. Bugis House as the Reflection of Human Source: Personal Sketch, 2018

Besides, horizontally, the area in the Bugis house consists of three called *latte'/lontang*, each of which has a function. The three areas are: first, the front area, which is located at the front of the body of the house, and is usually called *lontang risaliweng*. It has several functions for Bugis everyday life such as the area for reception of guests and deliberation. Besides, it is used to store seeds and to lay the body before the burial. Based on the above function, the front area seems to have an important meaning for the house owner to communicate with outsiders. Therefore, the front area should also meet the requirements of cleanliness, beauty and breadth. The breadth factor is necessary to fulfill because the front area functions for deliberation or certain ceremonies that require a wider place. It seems that family activities are not much done in this room (Shima, 2006). The areas in the Bugis House frame in general are shown in Figure 3 below.

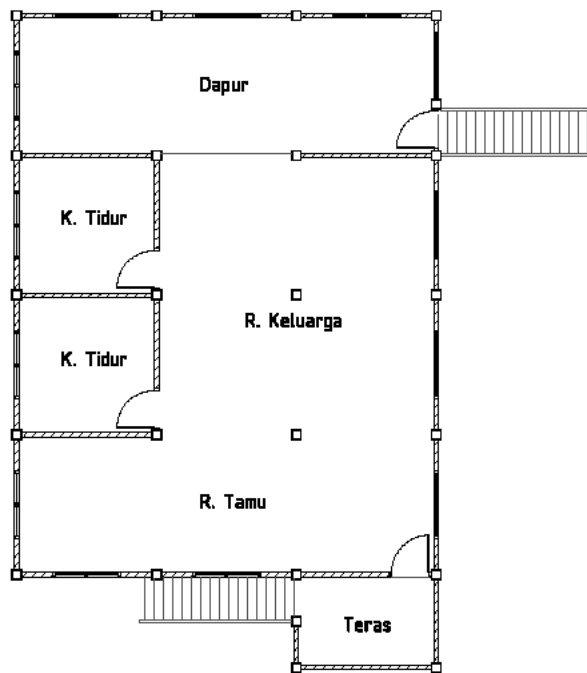


Figure 3. Horizontal Bugis House Area (*Ale Bola*) or sketch Source: Personal Sketch, 2018

Second, the central area or living room, which is located in the middle part of the house called *lontang ritengnga* or *latte ritengnga*. This area serves as a bedroom for the head of the family, his wife and young children, the dining room and a mother's room to give birth. The interaction among the family members are frequently done in this middle area.

Third, the back area, which is the third room at the Bugis house called *lontang rilaleng* or *latte rilaleng*. This room serves for the young girl, the grandmother or the grandfather. It functions to provide security for the family members. The elderly people or young girls need better protection by nature. The back area is safer and protected from attacks or disturbances compared to the central or front areas (Yunus, 1999: 108-109). The horizontal distribution of area / *lontang* / *latte*' in the Bugis house can be seen in Figure 4.

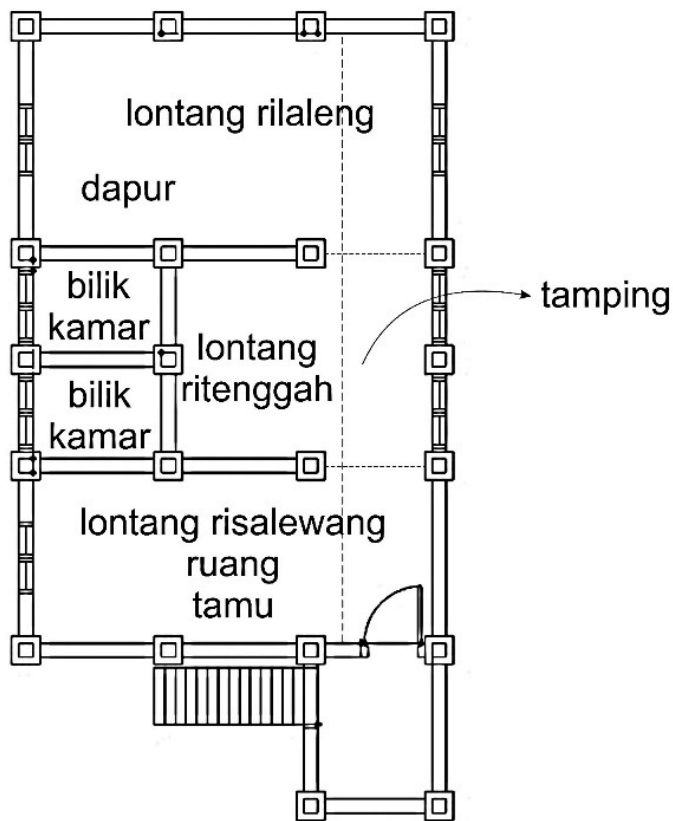


Figure 4. Horizontal Distribution of area / lontang / latte' in the Bugis House (*Ale Bola*)

Source: Personal Sketch, 2018

The Sacred Area in Bugis House

Sacred areas are places having a sacred function related to religious activities, as a place for worship / ritual activities. The activity done in this area shows the function that distinguishes it from other areas. It generally has a form, specific boundary. In a particular social order, the ritual function is a cultural attribute which is a very important factor in producing a setting that is both public and private and produces a certain spatial structure (Knowles, 1996). In addition, Broadbent (1980) states that the sacred area in traditional houses is an expression form of local cultural identity.

In traditional Bugis houses, the sacred (holy) area in the vertical structure is in *rakkeang*. It is a space above the body of the house starting from the ceiling to the slope of the roof. It is used to store rice and other agricultural products. According to *Lontaraq Galigo*, rice is Sangiang-Serri, the incarnation of We Oddang Riu, the daughter of Batara Guru. Therefore, the Bugis people in the past considered that rice sacred so that the *rakkeang* was a symbol of *botting langi* (the upper world) where Sangiang-Serri (rice) resided (Shima, 2006). In a horizontal structure, the area of *ale bola* (the body of the house) in the Bugis house is a sacred area in carrying out various traditional ceremonial activities such as marriage ceremonies, birth to funeral initiations and so on (Yunus, 2012). In connection with the birth initiation ceremony in the Bugis house, the ceremony most strongly maintained by the Bugis is a life-cycle ritual, especially relating to before and after the birth

of a child (Pelras, 2006)

In Balinese traditional houses, the most sacred area is in the direction of *kajakangin* or Northeast which is *Pamerajan* area, a holy place. *Pamerajan* is an area to worship ancestors and gods, and perform daily ritual activities and at each religious ceremony. This sacred area is more open and separate from other spaces / buildings and has clear boundaries (Prajnawrdhi, 2018)

Methodology

The research used a qualitative method (Creswell, 2008) because the research was conducted in the natural environment of traditional settlements which still firmly holds to the traditions and customs in building houses. The approach in this study used the Case Study Approach model (Creswell, 2012), with descriptive research (Groat & Wang, 2002).

The data collection methods in this research used survey, observation, archives / documents and interview. The population of this research is the Bugis people who live in Tosora Village, Wajo Regency. The research sample was chosen deliberately according to the typical house that still retained the characteristics of the traditional suspended house.

The data analysis method used was Discovering Cultural Themes to discover the meaning of the sacred area in traditional house in Tosora, Wajo regency. The analysis collected the focus of the culture, values and the physical culture meaning of the sacred areas of Bugis house in Tosora, Wajo.

Results and Discussion

1. History of the Research Location

The research took place in the traditional village of Tosora, Wajo Regency, South Sulawesi. Tosora is a village that still maintains cultural values in living. Tosora is the region of the former capital of Wajo Kingdom in the 16th and 17th centuries, where various historical relics are found.

The settlement of Tosora as Bugis traditional settlement, is the forerunner of existing settlements in Wajo Regency today. James Brooke (in Pelras, 2006) during his visit to Tosora in 1840 described the center of Bugis Kingdom of Wajo in Tosora as a large city with the remains of the fence ruins covered this area with a circumference of several miles. According to Brooke, Tosora is a settlement which is a combination of several Bugis villages. Tosora traditional settlement still has a long history. The existence of historical sites around the settlements such as the Old Mosque gives an important meaning to the existence of traditional settlements in Tosora in Wajo regency.

2. Bugis House as a Birthplace

For the Bugis People, a house is not only a place to settle, shelter from all natural conditions, but also a place to perform sacred things in their life. One function of the Bugis house in *Ale Bola* (the middle area, horizontally) is as a place to

perform important and sacred rituals, namely giving birth.

Most Bugis people in Tosora-Wajo have believed that the events related to human birth are considered sacred that only happen on the blessing, will and power of God. The organs of the human body as individual beings consist of a combination of four types of natural substances: soil, water, wind, fire. They transform into a human body structure in harmony in order to create the body with a complete organisms composition along with the concept of *sulapa eppa* (rectangular) in the Bugis house and the concept of the universe as a unified whole.

Therefore, for the Bugis in Wajo, the sacred ritual that has been maintained for a long time is related to before and after the childbirth.

2.1. Bugis House as a Ritual place of *Massapu Bebbua* (ceremony of seven-month pregnancy)

Bugis houses have public, private and service areas like other traditional houses in general. One of the functions of the private area which is located in the middle of the house is as a place to perform sacred rituals as a series of ritual births, namely a seven-month pregnancy program (*Massapu Bebbua*) which means touching or rubbing the stomach. This ritual is carried out in the middle of the house (*Lontang ri tengngah*), a rectangular space with a room size of about 4m x 4m. If it has a room , the ceremony is carried out in

a smaller size room, usually 3m x 3m square. The ritual of seven-month pregnancy is a private activity so it must be done in a private area (middle area/living room).

Some rituals are performed in this ceremony in order that the prospective mother can safely give and birth and expel the evil spirits assumed to interfere with the labor process. In addition, the prospective mother can be calm and give a birth safely. After performing the ritual, it is continued by serving meals to guests and families in *lontang ri saliweng* or the front area (public area).

The organization of the areas in Bugis suspended house which separates between the middle and private areas is usually limited by the wall as a physical divider and the function of the space as a non- physical divider. The divider made of wood material which is familiar and warm makes the area functions very well. Therefore, the middle room which functions as a place to perform the seven-month rituals in provate is considered a sacred area sacred spac because various traditional rituals based on Bugis beliefs in Tosora are carried out in this space. It is limited to the public, especially guests to access this private space.

The size of the private area commonly called *lontang ri tengngah*, is longer than the living room. If the living room is 3 meters long, the size of the private space is 3.05 meters. This is in accordance with the belief of the Bugis that the middle and back areas of the house have to be larger than the front so that life will be getting better.

The area of *massapu bebbua* ceremony in Bugis house can be seen in Figure 5 below.

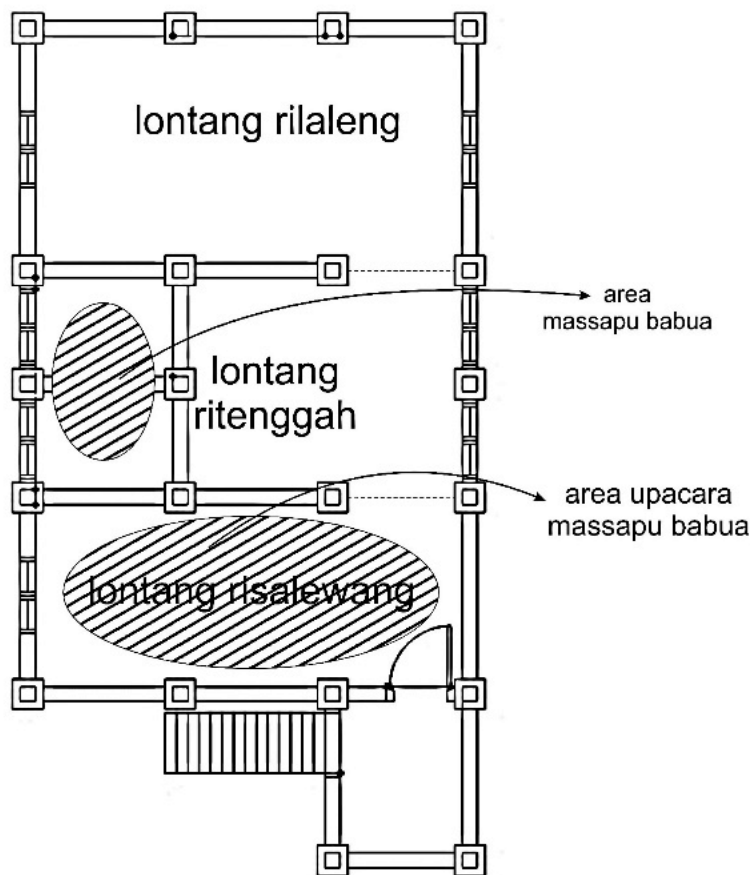


Figure 5. The sacred area for *Massapu Bebbua* in Bugis House
 Source: Personal Sketch, 2018

2.2. A House for the Ritual place of *Mattajeng Esso* and *Memmana*

As the center of all activities, the Bugis house in Tosora Village is prepared for sacred rituals, especially to welcome the birth of a baby. The spatial planning of this ritual is carried out after the pregnancy reaches 9 months and awaits the birth period (*Mattajeng Esso*: waiting for the birth due date). The ritual is done in the middle of the house (*lontang ri laleng*) and is usually attended by families to wait for the birth process. The birth process is assisted by the midwives / shamans who have been selected before giving birth, and the area considered sacred for the delivery process is in the room of *lontang ri tengnga*. The room for a married couple in the Bugis house of Wajo is in *lontang ri tengnga*, adjacent to *possi bola* (navel) which is considered sacred by the Bugis of Wajo. The size room for the delivery is usually 3 x 3 meters and is made of wood / bamboo. The whole process of the baby's birth is done in *Lontang ri tengnga* (middle area) as a sacred area to give a birth. The area forgiving birth (*memmana'*) is shown in Figure 6 below.

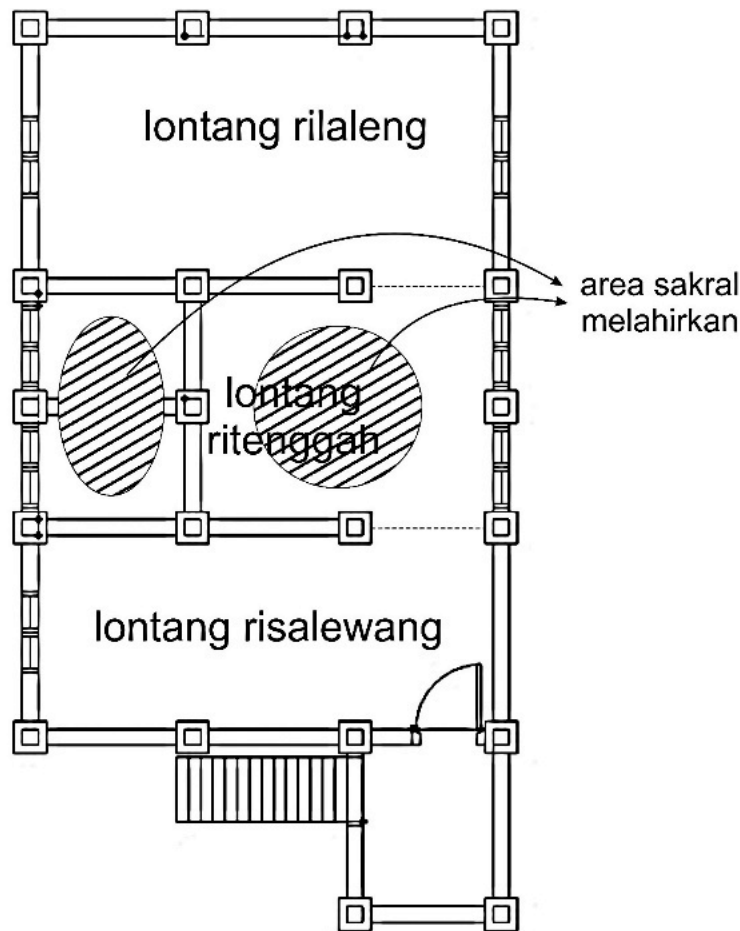


Figure 6. The sacred area for giving birth (*memmana'*) in the Bugis House
Source: Personal Sketch, 2018

2.3.A House as a Sacred Place for Aqiqah Ritual (*Mappano' lolo*)

In Bugis house, this ritual is performed in the sacred area around the door in *lontang ri saliweng* (front area), which is done after seven days from the birth of the child. According to the customary tradition and Islam in Bugis, the aqiqah ceremony is viewed as a sign of gratitude for the birth of a baby by performing the ceremony of slaughtering the goat and cutting the baby's hair. The ritual is witnessed by relatives with various kinds of food served in the middle area. The ceremony then is continued at *possi bola* which is located in *lontang ri tengnga* by serving various foods as offerings. *Possi bola* is a sacred center and orientation in the Bugis House of Wajo. This ritual is led by a shaman or ustad attended by family and relatives.

The sacred area as a place to give birth is performed in *lontang ri tengnga*, oriented to *possi bola* as the central pillar of the house and in *lontang ri saliweng* (front space). In Bugis mystical concept, this space is used to worship the *Mallino* deity and is considered a meeting place between the upper world and the underworld or between *botting langi* and *uriliyu*. *Lontang ri tengnga* and *lontang ri saliweng* as sacred areas to hold ceremony before and after giving birth, and the sacred area for *mappano' lolo* (aqiqah) ceremony in the Bugis house are shown in Figure 7 below.

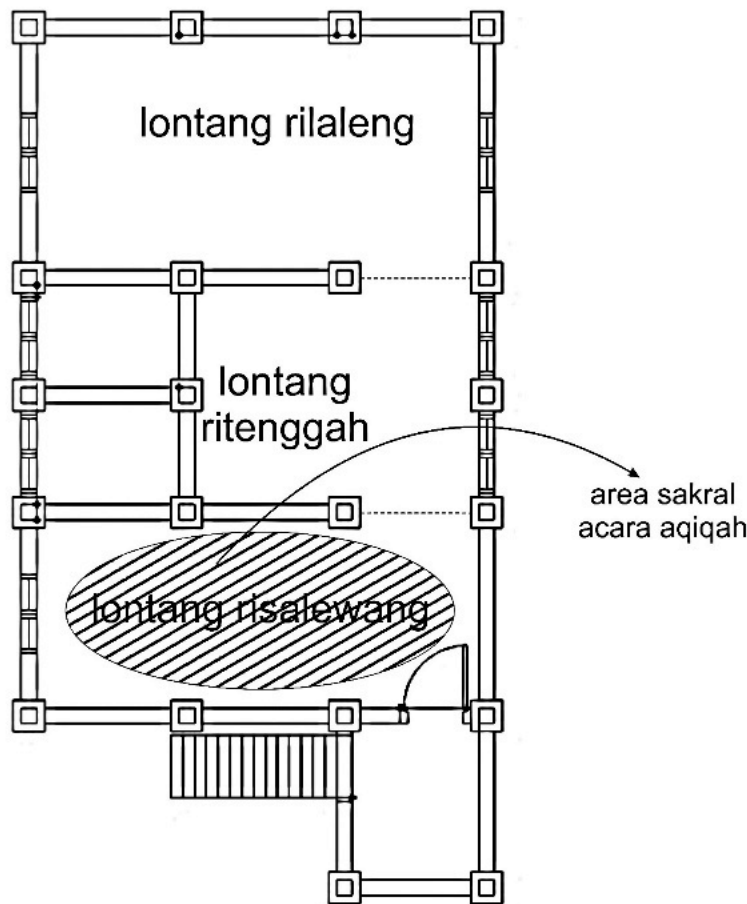


Figure 7. Sacred area for *Mappano' Lolo* (Aqiqah) ceremony in the Bugis House
 Source: Personal Sketch, 2018

3. Bugis House to Host Wedding Ceremony

The area inside the Bugis house that is used for marriage rituals is the front area (*Lontang ri saliweng*) and the middle area (*Lontang ri tengnga*). For the Bugis, the wedding ceremony either in villages or in towns is hosted in the house, because it is considered as a sacred place to carry out the process. The marriage process itself is started by *Mappettu Ada* (deciding the luckiest day for the wedding), *Mappacci* (wedding ceremonial initiation), and marriage processions until wedding party.

3.1. A House as A Place for *Mappettu Ada*(Proposal)

The areas considered sacred to perform *Mappettuada* (proposal) is *lontang ri saliweng* (front area) and *lontang ri tengnga* (middle area). If the Bugis house has a divider between *lontang ri saliweng* and *lontang ri tengnga*, it will be temporarily removed in order to make the two areas into one. *Mappettu Ada* is a ceremony where the family from the prospective groom meet the family of the prospective bride to propose and talk about all the wedding preparations. *Lontang ri saliweng* is a sacred area to accept *duta* or proposal from the prospective groom (*Menre' duta*) and is also used to welcome guests. It is used as a meeting place between the families of the two brides for of its nature as a public area. In this ceremony, a larger area, *lontang ri tengnga* (middle area) is required to host the

family of the prospective groom. The sacred area for *Mappettuada* ceremony is in Figure 8 below.

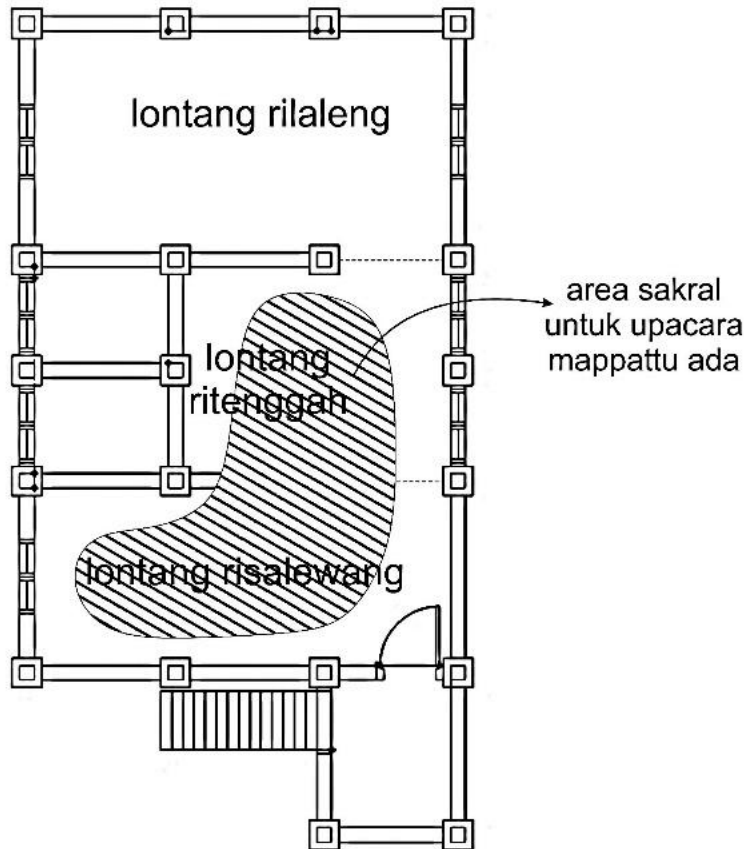


Figure 8. The sacred area for *Mappettuada* ceremony is in the Bugis House
Source: Personal Sketch, 2018

3.2. A House as A Place for Marriage Covenant Ceremony / *Mappa'botting*

The place used for the marriage ritual is the front area. The ceremony starts from the process of the marriage covenant (*mannikka*) at the front space (*lontang ri saliweng*) by the prospective groom and the bride guardian. When it is done, the ceremony continues in the middle space where the bride is. *Lontang ri saliweng* and *Lontang ri tengnga* are more frequently used to hold the wedding ceremony, whereas *lontang ri monri* is used as the preparation spot, such as preparing food, party equipment, etc. The sacred area for marriage in Bugis house can be seen in Figure 9 below.

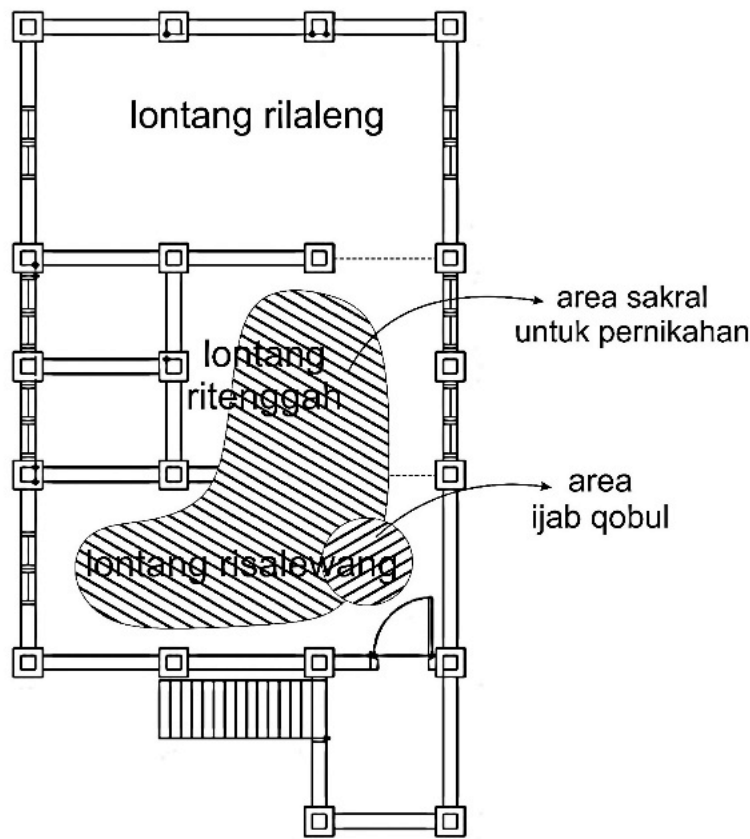


Figure 9. Sacred area for wedding ceremony (*Mannikka*) in the Bugis House

Source: Personal Sketch, 2018

The use of *lontang ri saliweng* and *lontang ri tengngah* in the Bugis house for the marriage process shows that vertically, this area is *Ale kawa* (Middle world) / *Ale Bola* (the body of the house) which is located in the middle as the center (orientation) where *Botting Langi* meets (upper world / shelf / roof) with *Uri liyu* (underworld / under the house / leg). To start a new life in the Bugis household, it must be done at the center of the house which is considered to represent the balance and happiness of life.

4. Bugis House as a place to die

For the Bugis, a sacred place to die in is inside the house even though no one knows where and when they die. In funeral process of Bugis house, firstly the body is laid in state at the front area (*lontang ri saliweng*) to make it easier for relatives to come to mourn because this area serves for public. After that, the body is taken to *lontang ri tengngah* (middle area), which is more private and bathed by the family of the deceased. The body then is brought back to *lontang ri saliweng* (public area) to be enshrined. If the mosque is a little far, the funeral prayer is performed in the house, in *lontang ri saliweng* (public area) by the relatives or neighbours.

The use of *lontang ri laleng* and *lontang ri tengnga* for the funeral ceremony in the Bugis house shows that both areas have sacred values to perform the ritual. The sacred area for funeral ceremony in the Bugis house is shown in Figure 10 below.

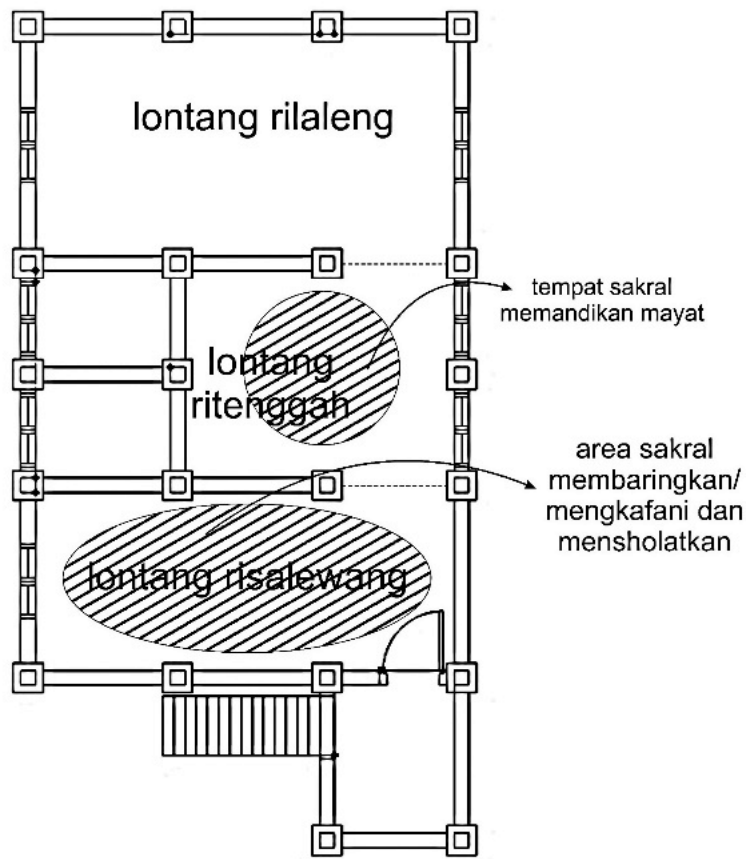


Figure 10. Sacred area for the funeral ceremony in the Bugis House

Source: Personal Sketch, 2018

Conclusion

The Bugis House of Wajo, especially in Tosora has an area that is considered sacred to give birth, marry and die. The area that is considered sacred for the birth process is located in *lontang ri tenggah* – middle or private area – such as *massapu bebbua* and *memmana'* and *lontang ri saliweng* (front / public area).

For wedding ceremony, the Bugis of Wajo use *lontang ri saliweng* and *lontang ri tengnga* during the procession of *tudang penni / mappacci* (marriage initiation) and *mappettuada* (determining the lucky day). These two areas are physically integrated both by functions and boundaries, but do not change the nature of both areas as public and sacred private areas. Whereas, for the funeral ceremony, the sacred area used in Bugis house is *lontang ri saliweng* (laying, enshrouding, and performing prayers for the deceased) and *lontang ri tengngah* is used to bathe the body. The separation of these areas occur because the function and nature of the area cannot be altered.

The area that is most frequently used in the Bugis house is *lontang ri tengnga* because it is considered as a meeting spot between the upper and the lower worlds or between *bottinglangi* and *uriliyu*. Therefore, it is considered to represent the notions of safety, balance and harmony with the universe, so the owner of the house can live happily and stay away from any dangers.

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