

**BUGIS CAPITALISM: BUSINESS ETHICS BASED ON LOCAL WISDOMS**

Ahmadin

Faculty of Social Science and Law, Universitas Negeri Makassar

e-mail: ahmadin@unm.ac.id

**ABSTRACT**

**Abstract** - For quite a long time, the world community has generally only known two main types of motivation for capitalism, namely the Protestant Ethic, which was written about through Max Weber's book, and Tokugawa Religion, which was introduced through the writings of Robert N. Bellah. This book discusses the spirit of capitalism which originates from local wisdom, namely siri' in the Bugis community in South Sulawesi, Indonesia, which is extracted from the book Bugis Capitalism. In contrast to the two spirits of Weber-style capitalism and the Bellah style which are motivated by religious values, Bugis capitalism is actually motivated by local wisdom which originates from messages from ancestors or wise people. The practice of ancestral messages as a social system has made the Bugis people successful as entrepreneurs both in their own villages and in overseas areas.

**Keywords:** Bugis, capitalism, business ethics, local wisdom

**INTRODUCTION**

In the foreword to the book Bugis Capitalism, capitalism is explained deductively in various literature both in the context of terms and ideology, historical categorical, and other types of study approaches. However, the term Bugis Capitalism still seems unfamiliar among world academics and society in general. Next, an analytical question is asked, namely what was the motive and how did Bugis capitalism appear and develop? Is it something like the spirit of Calvinism (Protestant Ethics) (Weber & Kalberg, 2013) as in England and western Europe or the Tokugawa Religion (Bellah, 2008) in Japan as the spirit of capitalism possessed by the Bugis people that is so interesting? Starting from this question, I tried to organize historical curiosity by exploring the local wisdom behind the Bugis business ethics. Apart from that, did Bugis capitalism also create imperialism or colonialism as was the case in European countries? A series of questions are explained nicely in this book study.

The book Bugis Capitalism, which has been published in Indonesian since 2008, was initially just a collection of short papers for reading purposes for the Study of Noble Values and Local Culture of South Sulawesi since 2005. However, a few years later the idea arose to make one entitled "Kapitalisme Bugis" (Ahmadin, 2015) in Indonesian. To clarify the position of the discussion regarding Bugis capitalism, in the first part of this book a conceptual explanation of capitalism and its history refers to Fernand Braudel's book "Civilization and Capitalism 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>" (Braudel, 1981) consisting of three volumes, has described in

a historical-spectacular manner the origins and development of capitalism. In volume I (The Structure of Everyday Life), it is explained that the prerequisite for the emergence and growth of capitalism is the emergence of cities dominated by the civilized bourgeoisie and free from pressure from the nobility. That is what Braudel meant by the time category "structure". In Volume II (The Wheel of Commerce) this leading figure from the "Annales School" presents the trade mechanism in Europe which has a market and cheap credit system as its core. In volume III (The Perspective of the World) the producer of this structural historical writing model links the European economic system with other trading areas through giant trading companies such as the VOC and EIC. This is what is then referred to as "conjuncture". Next, we discuss the profile of the Wajo Bugis tribe starting from their origins, Wajo spatial structure (Farid, 2017), historical and cultural heritage, socio-cultural system and literature.

## **DISCUSSION**

Starting the study in this book, I deliberately described the meaning of capitalism, its concept and a bit of its history. Apart from enriching the meaning it contains, it also helps the process of inductively narrowing the meaning so that it appears as a character of its own. Without intending to deny the various meanings that exist in it, the Bugis capitalism referred to in this context is the understanding of capital, namely the orientation of business or production that pursues profit or a form of life based on capital.

The following sections of this book each describe the profile of the Bugis (Wajo), which is intended as an introduction to the characteristics of this ethnic group. The importance of the philosophy of life as a source of motivation for the Bugis people, then a separate discussion describes several messages of predecessors (wise people). Just mention the importance of hard work (*reso*) which determines a person's success in life, as in the expression: "*resopa temmangingi namallomo naletei pammase dewata*" (only hard work and truly get grace from the gods/almighty).

This principle of hard work is also supported by another ancestral message that reads: "*aja mumaelo natunai sekke, naburuki labo*" (don't be insulted by stinginess and destroyed by wastefulness). Therefore, the Wajo Bugis people generally adhere to the principle of *Tellu Ampikalena To Wajo, E* (three principles of life), namely: *Tau'E ri Dewata, siri'E ripadata rupatau, siri'E watakkale* (Piety towards Allah Swt, shame towards people others and to oneself). It is even equipped with a definition of success and wealth according to the message contained in the *Lontarak* text.

Apart from the meaning of siri' which is connected with the business motivation and business ethics of the Bugis people, the habit of migrating is also seen as a great opportunity. In fact, this habit can be categorized as an economic strategy. Because of this, several historical records regarding the progress of the Bugis people in overseas areas have become an important part, especially as they are linked to the principle of "*Tellu Cappa*" (three ends) as a pattern of adaptation and integration mechanism. The strategy of assimilating the Bugis people through the principle of "*Tellu Cappa*" namely the tip of the tongue (diplomacy), the tip of the *badik* (conquest or war), and the tip of the penis (marriage) is what will lead us to one fundamental question, namely whether this can be categorized as imperialism (or expansion)?. Is it true that the power established by Bugis migrants in various places was motivated by a capitalist spirit or was there another motive? At the end of the study, the symptoms of the waning

capitalist spirit and its prospects are described, as well as possible preventive measures that should be taken.

This book contains material starting from a discussion of the philosophy of life (Grayling, 2011) as a source of motivation for the Bugis people (Pelras, 1997). The scope of the discussion is: the source of the philosophy of life, the implementation of the philosophy of life, social capital and the principles of hard work, criteria for success according to Bugis philosophy, as well as Bugis philosophy within the framework of functionalist structural theory (Bachtiar, 2006). Next, we discuss the meaning of Siri' values as a work ethic, which is complemented by a study of the various meanings of *siri'* (Nurdin, 2020) and the process of implementing these Siri' values to create a work ethic.

Another important study from this book is the ways in which the Bugis people use the act of migrating as a business opportunity and economic strategy. This part of the book explains the meaning of migrating in the eyes of the Bugis people, migrating as a way of life for independence in a broad sense including freedom to develop business, as well as narratives about Bugis people who were successful overseas.

## **CONCLUSION**

The book Bugis Capitalism discusses other dimensions of the Weberian spirit of capitalism and the Bellah style, although several contexts are similar. The strength of the Bugis spirit of capitalism comes from the local wisdom of the people of South Sulawesi which is connected to a value system called Siri' (self-esteem leading to motivation). Another important thing is that the messages of their ancestors, which constitute a philosophy of life, have greatly influenced the Bugis people's views about themselves and their environment. In fact, the interesting thing about implementing the business spirit of the Bugis people is that they make migration an opportunity to improve the quality of life.

## **REFERENCES**

- Ahmadin, A. (2015). *Kapitalisme Bugis: Etika Bisnis Berbasis Kearifan Lokal*. Rayhan Intermedia.
- Bachtiar, W. (2006). *Sosiologi klasik: dari comte hingga parsons*. PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Bellah, R. N. (2008). *Tokugawa religion*. Simon and Schuster.
- Braudel, F. (1981). Civilization and capitalism 15th-18th. Century, I, *The Structures of Everyday Life*. London: Collins.
- Farid, A. Z. A. (2017). *Capita Selecta: Sejarah Sulawesi Selatan*. CV. Social Politic Genius (SIGn).
- Grayling, A. C. (2011). *The meaning of things: Applying philosophy to life*. Hachette UK.
- Nurdin, I. (2020). Implementation of Siri'Na Pacce's Local Wisdom Values to Create Good Governance and CorruptionFree South Sulawesi, Indonesia. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, 12(3), 54–64.
- Pelras, C. (1997). *The Bugis*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Weber, M., & Kalberg, S. (2013). *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*. Routledge.