

Inter-Cultural Communication: *Sipakatau-Sipakalebbi* Among Bugis-Kaili Couples in Palu

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates intercultural marriage from the perspective of communication between ethnic Bugis (migrants) and ethnic Kaili (natives) in Palu City, Central Sulawesi. This study seeks to analyze and investigate the cultural principle of *sipakatau-sipakalebbi* (mutual respect and humanization) among married Bugis and Kaili couples in Palu City. Through an examination of the patterns and practices of intercultural communication and family communication through the lens of Indonesian local culture, this research contributes to the Relational Dialectic Theory using a case study methodology. The empirical findings of this study indicate that the *sipakatau* culture (mutual humanization) and the *sipakalebbi* principle (mutual respect), which are the guiding principles and communication strategies of Bugis ethnics, are still adhered to in their interactions with others, even though many of them are married to individuals of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This study also found that Bugis and Kaili inter-ethnic marriage partners understand the dynamics and communicate all the dynamics concerning these cultural differences, allowing for the resolution of problems and estrangement, including those that contribute to marital conflict. Due to a lack of comprehension of the *sipakatau sipakalebbi* principle on the part of Kaili couples, this principle has yet to satisfy Bugis couples in practice.

Keywords: Bugis; Kaili; Ethnic Marriage; Inter-cultural Communication; Sipakatau-Sipakalebbi; Palu Municipality

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini mengkaji pernikahan antarbudaya melalui pandangan komunikasi antara etnik Bugis (pendatang) dan etnik Kaili (penduduk asli) di Kota Palu, Sulawesi Tengah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisa dan mengkaji prinsip budaya *sipakatau-sipakalebbi* (saling menghargai dan memanusiakan) di antara pasangan suami-istri Bugis dan Kaili di Kota Palu. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus dimana hasilnya dapat memberikan kontribusi pada Teori Dialektika Relasional dengan mengkaji pola dan praktik komunikasi antarbudaya dan komunikasi keluarga melalui lensa budaya lokal Indonesia. Temuan penelitian ini secara empiris menunjukkan bahwa budaya *sipakatau* (saling memanusiakan) dan prinsip *sipakalebbi* (saling menghargai) yang menjadi pedoman dan strategi komunikasi etnik Bugis masih dipegang teguh dalam berkomunikasi dengan orang lain, meskipun banyak di antara mereka yang menikah dengan orang yang memiliki latar belakang budaya dan etnik yang berbeda. Penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa pasangan pernikahan beda etnik Bugis dan Kaili tidak hanya sebatas memahami dinamika tetapi juga dilakukan dengan cara mengkomunikasikan segala dinamika yang terjadi terkait dengan perbedaan budaya tersebut, sehingga masalah dan kerenggangan yang terjadi, bahkan yang berujung pada konflik pernikahan, dapat teratasi. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa karena kurangnya pemahaman mengenai prinsip *sipakatau sipakalebbi* dari sisi pasangan etnik Kaili, sehingga pada prakteknya prinsip tersebut belum bisa memuaskan pasangan beretnik Bugis.

Kata Kunci: Bugis; Kaili; Perkawinan Antar Etnik; Komunikasi Antar-Budaya; Sipakatau-Sipakalebbi; Kota Palu

INTRODUCTION

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Many different ethnic groups live in Indonesia, and these ethnic groups are dispersed around the country, from Sabang to Marauke. Because people of different ethnicities in Indonesia communicate with one another, there is the possibility for intercultural exchange every time they do so. It is because each ethnic group in Indonesia possesses its distinguishing characteristics and identities that set it apart from the other ethnic groups. The primary reason is that each individual will bring their cultural principles or patterns with them when discussing and engaging with others.

First, this study elaborates on two major ethnic groups on the island of Sulawesi. The first is Bugis, who are migrants to the locus of this research. The Bugis originate from South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia, where they are still predominantly settled. In this article, we follow Christian Pelras and other prominent scholars by referring to Bugis as those hailing from either former confederation of smaller states (the Pare-Pare and Suppa regions on the west coast, the area around Sinjai in the southern lowlands of South Sulawesi) or primary larger states (Bone, Wajo, Soppeng, and Sidenreng) (G. Acciaoli, 2004; G. L. Acciaoli, 2014; Mattulada, 1982; Pelras, 1996). This term can also be used to describe the languages spoken in these areas, which are primarily acknowledged by linguists as “constituting dialects” due to their high degree of similarity (G. Acciaoli, 2009; Pelras, 1996). The ethnic name Bugis can also be used for descendants of migrants from the regions mentioned earlier who settled permanently outside their homeland, as in the locus of this study, Palu Municipality of Central Sulawesi Province.

The second main ethnic group studied in this research is the Kaili, the indigenous and primary ethnic group in Central Sulawesi. Kaili or *To Kaili* are those settlers who predominantly settled around the Palu Valley, Donggala, Sigi, and Parigi. The majestic ethnic group has sub-ethnic groups, such as To Palu, To Biromaru, To Dolo, To Sigi, To Pakuli, To Lindu, To Banggakoro, To Tamungkolawi, To Baku, To Banggakoro, To Kulawi, To Susus, To Balinggi, To Dolago, To Patimbe, To Parang Gonau, and To Parigi (Abdul Latief, Listiqowati, & Abd Muis, 2021; Abdulkadir-sunito, Adiwibowo, Soetarto, Kinseng, & Foley, 2017; Babcock, 1982; Mattulada, 1983). Specifically, we refer to the Kaili in this research are those settled in Palu municipality.

In this article, the term “intercultural communication” has been used to refer to exchanges between people of different nationalities, which is based on the work of Stephen M. Croucher, Mélodine Sommier, and Diyako Rahmani (Croucher, Sommier, & Rahmani, 2015; Gudykunst & Nishida, 1978; M.-S. Kim, 2010; Y. Y. Kim, 1988; Mulyana, 2016; Piller, 2011). As a result, for the sake of this research, we are looking for an ontological account of the “different cultures,” specifically the Bugis and Kaili of Sulawesi, Indonesia. Recently, analysis and debate regarding distinctions between cultures have also been extended by numerous academics in other areas (Guillem & Toulou, 2018; Hua, Jones, & Jaworska, 2022; Manning & Denker, 2021; R’boul, 2022; Valdeón, 2021).

Furthermore, Palu – the locus of this study, is also the destination of people who belong to the Bugis ethnic group, which is sometimes referred to as the “migrating ethnic group” (G. Acciaoli, 2004; G. L. Acciaoli, 2014; Mukrimin, 2019a, 2019c). These arrivals of Bugis ethnic background are caused by several different circumstances, such as the simple act of traveling or the pursuit of employment opportunities appropriate to their talents. Some Bugis migrants, both female and male, who choose to remain in Palu Municipality, Central Sulawesi, decide to marry members of the Kaili ethnic group. This municipality consists of many different ethnic groups in the city.

The linking of cultures after being united in marriage is a challenging matter. Communication difficulties faced by different ethnic couples involved in communication are caused by differences in cultural expectations and their respective cultures. Differences in cultural expectations can cause dynamics in marriage. Differences in expectations in communication can cause communication not to run smoothly, feelings of discomfort arise and can lead to misunderstandings between spouses. Misunderstandings often occur when a person interacts with people from different cultural groups. In cross-cultural communication, we always attach our values and culture either consciously or unconsciously in interacting with others so that in its stages, a person will bring his values and concepts at the beginning of the conversation or interaction (Vebrynda, 2015). In terms of Cross-Cultural Marriage, the main problem is that it is typical for each individual, when united in marriage, to have a tendency and assume that their culture is dominant, so some couples will use their culture as a standard to measure their partner’s culture. One of the fundamental forms of intercultural communication activities can be seen in the lives of married couples of different ethnicities. The problem regarding intercultural marriage has occurred in some marriages from different ethnicity,

which is caused by various things. Research conducted by Anwar & Cangara (2016) found that many married couples of different Papuan and Javanese ethnicities tend to display their cultural characteristics dominantly to each other. One of the causes of conflict is miscommunication between the two parties caused by ethnic differences and the difficulty of adjusting to these conditions. This research shows that good openness of communication between married couples does not necessarily reduce the intensity of conflict in the process of escalation of marital relationships. The immediate solution is that they form a strong bond of commitment and the need to understand the existence of diversity. Furthermore, another study revealed that intercultural marriages have as many conflicts as monocultural marriages but require extra patience due to differences in addressing conflicts and require more time to adapt so that cultures assimilate each other (Budyanto et al., 2022).

Additionally, in a broad sense, culture in this study is regarded to be a tradition that is handed down from one generation to the next by the ancestors of an ethnic group until it becomes the identity of the ethnic group, so distinguishing or identifying the various ethnic groups that are now in existence (Haerussaleh et al., 2022; Nunn, 2021). Traditions need to be preserved so that people understand the habits of their ancestors. The purpose of a tradition is so that people can live their lives according to the rules that apply hereditary.

There are many ethnicities in Sulawesi, one of which is the Bugis ethnicity, which is known for its *sipakatau-sipakalebbe* culture (mutual respect and humanization). This culture is not just a symbol but has become the principle and guide of life wherever this ethnic group is, including when they are overseas. The *sipakatau-sipakalebbe* culture can be interpreted as mutual respect or appreciation, humanizing each other. Therefore, this study aims to identify the cultural principles of *sipakatau* (mutual respect) and *sipakalebbe* (mutual humanization) as Bugis ethnic culture in Bugis and Kaili ethnic married couples in Palu Municipality, Central Sulawesi.

The *Relational Dialectics Theory* is used in this study. Leslie Baxter and Barbara Montgomery put out the *Relational Dialectics Theory* (1996). To better comprehend how communication impacts interpersonal, familial, and societal bonds, an interpretive theory known as “Relational Dialectics Theory” can be applied (Littlejohn & Foss, 2016). *Relational Dialectics Theory* is what Baxter and Montgomery suggest in terms of dialogue. Thus, the nature of a connection is articulated via the course of a conversation between many participants.

Furthermore, Baxter and Montgomery called it a dialectical theory, meaning that conflicts are resolved within interpersonal relationships (Littlejohn & Foss, 2016). In addition, the *Relational Dialectics Theory* is predicated on the following four key assumptions: There is no such thing as a linear component in a relationship; instead, they are made up of the oscillations that arise from having competing desires. Second, the dynamic nature of change is exemplified in relationship life. The change in question is the fact that the nature of the relationship is fluid and can go in either direction at any given time. Third, the existence of contradiction in interpersonal relationships is a fundamental reality. It signifies that the contradiction or tension between two opposites never goes away and never stops creating tension. It also means that the contradiction or tension never ceases creating tension. In fourth place, managing and negotiating conflicts in relationships requires effective communication. Baxter and Montgomery propose reevaluating linguistic conventions and metaphors on interpersonal connections. They recognize that the term “relationship development” has come to imply a progression in a forward direction or a progression in a linear fashion (Littlejohn & Foss, 2016).

In addition, the key point to *Relational Dialectics Theory* is the concept of a chain consisting of messages that relate to other messages, like a series of links in a chain, a concept also called “intertextuality,” which is a potential site of contention when a chain of utterances gives rise to a clash of meanings. There are four general sites of potential discursive contests, namely; first, “distal already-spoken” is a site of contests where people in a relationship clash with “culture.” Second, “proximal already-spoken” is a discursive site where the current status of the relation clashes with the meaning of the past status, and this past system of meaning always leaves a “residue” in the current interaction. Third, “proximal no-yet spoken” is where meanings for self and others become necessary to discuss, where the self needs others to live. The fourth, “distal not-yet spoken,” is an estimate of the response of a typical person that is evaluative and measured based on cultural ideals because different cultural discourses have different ideals; therefore, related parties face a clash of competing ideas (Littlejohn & Foss, 2016).

Broadly, intercultural communication aims to express social identity and self-identity by bridging intercultural differences by acquiring new information and learning something new that did not previously exist in our cultural context. This sociocultural background is what, in time, becomes an

identity in behaving and interacting, both with various groups in the community, especially in intercultural communication interactions, or with each other, primarily when they communicate and interact with culturally different groups. This condition is called “cultural behavior” (Aryanata, 2017; Gea, 2011; Sulistyawati & Santosa, 2018). On a particular side, intercultural communication always aims to create effective communication through the exact meaning of the messages exchanged. Meanwhile, Larry A Samovar, cited by Rini Darmastuti (Darmastuti, 2013), defines “intercultural communication” as a form of communication that involves interaction between people whose cultural perceptions and symbol systems are pretty different communication. In light of this, the research presented here contributes to the field of communication, specifically Intercultural Communication, by employing the *Relational Dialectics Theory* to analyze specific Indonesian local cultures and values.

At this point, the intermarriage of Bugis and Kaili ethnic groups in Palu Municipality, as we argue, will influence the dynamics of mixing, cultural intermarriage, and other values in marital life. On the other hand, this cultural intermingling will become an obstacle when it needs to be managed and communicated well by each partner. It is based on the assumption that differences in customs, culture, language, behavior patterns, and others will be the potential for various conflicts and problems. It indicates that language, culture, and race are barriers that arise in interethnic encounters (Dianto, 2019; Mohamad Sudi, 2020). In intercultural or multiethnic communication, it can be seen that everyone’s customs in communicating, both verbal and nonverbal, are used by community members in communicating (Alatas, 2016; Amrullah & Fanani, 2019; Yusuf Shofyan, 2020).

Theoretically and practically, there had been several types of research related to inter-cultural communications in inter-ethnic marriage have been conducted in different areas (Han, 2022; Husain, Ibrahim, Yusoff, Rashid, & Samah, 2021; B. Kim, Kim, Moon, Yoon, & Wolfer, 2021). The previous studies, however, have not covered Indonesian couples or specific ethnic groups. Genuinely, this study covers communication among Bugis and Kaili couple. Therefore, this study explores two things: Firstly, it elaborates on the two major tribes or ethnic groups on the island of Sulawesi, namely the Bugis and Kaili ethnicities. Secondly, this study reveals the behavior of *sipakatau-sipakalebbi*, which is not just an expression or concept of the Bugis ethnicity, but how the practice and realization of intercultural marital relations occur between the two ethnic groups. This study can arguably be seen as ground-breaking research and finding in intercultural communication within academia. This study contributes to the Discipline of Communication, particularly on Inter-Cultural Communication studies.

METHODS

This research mainly focuses on the dynamics of intercultural communication between husband and wife in different ethnic family couples. In this case, the focus is on how different ethnic family couples interpret and understand events and phenomena through interaction in family relations and actions, specifically in the culture of *sipakatau-sipakalebbi* (mutual respect and mutual humanization) in Bugis and Kaili ethnic couples in Palu Municipality. Therefore, this research is in the constructivist paradigm, often called the interpretive tradition (Mulyana, 2013). The interpretive (qualitative) paradigm views social reality as subjective and interpreted. Humans create a series of meanings in dealing with their lives. In this context, science is based on everyday life, is inductive and idiographic, and aims to understand social life. A humanistic research model is a paradigm directed towards a more subjective approach. This paradigm is oriented toward humans positions as the primary subjects in social and cultural phenomena (Guillem & Toula, 2018; Manning & Denker, 2021; Mulyana, 2013; Mulyana & Rakhmat, 2014; R’boul, 2022).

Methodologically, researchers employed qualitative methods, which can explore social phenomena in more depth when compared to research using case studies. In this research, we analyze the phenomena of different ethnic marriages practiced by the Bugis and the Kaili in Palu of Central Sulawesi. Furthermore, by using purposive sampling, four key informants were selected. The main criterion in determining informants is that participants, in this case, the family of married couples of different ethnicities, namely Bugis ethnicity and Kaili ethnicity, have an interest and knowledge and are willing to participate in in-depth interviews. The number of informants, as recommended by John W. Creswell (Creswell, 2014), is the exploration of groups of individuals who have experienced the phenomenon. Individuals identified who may vary in size from three to four to ten to fifteen

individuals who became key informants for this study as scholars have suggested (Creswell, 2015; Creswell & Clark, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Croucher et al., 2015; Soliz & Phillips, 2018; Valdeón, 2021).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Every married couple, regardless of their shared ethnic background, should strive to understand one another. Marriage is the joining of two individuals with various personalities, qualities, and character traits, not to mention discussing ethnic distinctions. Marriage between individuals of various nationalities results in the fusion and unity of two cultures (see figure 1, for example).



Figure 1. A Couple of Bugis and Kaili

Based on the research results from the field, it shows that married couples in different ethnic marriages of Bugis and Kaili in Palu Municipality, Central Sulawesi, will undoubtedly find their dynamics when faced with the culture brought by their respective partners (see figure 2, for example). Although the household is built based on *sipuji* (mutual love) between them before deciding to enter into marriage, it cannot be denied that the dynamics in marriage will still exist and color the journey of marriage. It can be seen from the interview results, where the interviewee stated that the source of conflict or dynamics in the daily household of Bugis and Kaili ethnic couples is the absence of a partner's understanding of the culture of *sipakatau-sipakalebbi* (mutual respect and mutual humanization). The most minor and frequent issue raised by Kaili ethnic informants was that their Bugis ethnic partners are "anti" and will never come to a party, especially a wedding party if the family of the Kaili ethnic partner does not come to invite them to their house. It is because their partner (Bugis ethnic) holds the principle or culture of *sipakatau-sipakalebbi*, which is the culture of the Bugis ethnic group (Abdul Latief et al., 2021; G. Acciaioli, 2004; Akhmar, Arafah, & Pardiman, 2017; Alatas, 2016; Amin, Tang, Parawansa, & Salam, 2015; Idrus, 2005; Kaddi & Dewi, 2017; Khotimah, 2013; Manning & Denker, 2021; Mukrimin, 2019b, 2019a; Pelras, 2000; R'boul, 2022; Rusli, 2019; Suryawan, 2017).



Figure 2. The *Sipakatau-Sipakalebbi* Value Reflected in Domestic Share Roles

For example, an informant stated that at the commencement of her marriage, the Kaili ethnic informant felt that the couple had to understand the culture of her Bugis husband, which she thought was very different from her own culture. This individual was born with a Kaili ethnic background. The informant recognizes the Kaili cultural system as simple as the culture of the husband, who comes from the Bugis ethnicity and holds the principles and philosophies of the Bugis people. It is reflected in several activities, such as holding a big celebration like marriage. In Bugis custom, inviting guests to a celebration must be done by the owner of the celebration coming directly or sending a messenger to the invited party.

Sipakatau, referred to as mutual respect, is a humanizing trait. The values of *sipakatau* show that the Bugis culture positions humans as creatures of God Almighty who are noble, and therefore humans must be respected and treated well. On the other hand, *sipakatau* culture contains the value of how to place anyone in a human position. Ahmad Rustan (2018) asserts that *sipakatau* is an essential value with a social-horizontal and a social-vertical dimension, and it refers to the practice of humanizing one another or treating one another as humans (Rustan, 2018). While *sipakalebbi* humanizes is equally important, this culture embraces the meaning and understanding of helping each other create a family atmosphere; therefore, according to the Bugis, these traditional values must remain the backbone and principles wherever they live and interact with others.

Furthermore, a scholar maintains that Bugis values contain much advice from its ancestors (Khotimah, 2013). It can be seen from the culture of *sipakatau-sipakalebbi* in Bugis community interaction, which is the foundation of strong emotional ties with fellow human beings. Thus, the value of the *sipakatau-sipakalebbi* philosophy contains positive values that should be instilled in every individual with Bugis ethnic background. Therefore, the importance of upholding the principles and culture of *sipakatau-sipakalebbi* was stated by informants from Bugis ethnic couples in Bugis culture because *siri'* becomes a benchmark in interpreting and applying in everyday life in contact with the *sipakatau-sipakalebbi* culture.

Furthermore, the *sipakatau-sipakalebbi* is closely related to *siri'* (shame) and self-esteem. For Bugis interviewees, both those who live in their ancestral lands and those who have migrated, *siri'* and self-esteem are attitudes that should be upheld wherever Bugis people live and settle. *Siri'* is a valuable worldview or cultural value that is then affiliated with behavior in daily life for Bugis people in interacting and communicating with any culture (G. Acciaioli, 2004; Akhmar et al., 2017; Idrus, 2005; Mukrimin, 2019c, 2019a; Pelras, 2000; Rusli, 2019; Suryawan, 2017). Various parties interpret this concept as a form of self-respect, honor, dignity, ethos, and shame. In the view of the Bugis people or the Bugis ethnic literary repertoire, expressions hint at the existence of this view of *siri'* and encourage people to behave following the existing concept of *siri'*. In other words, they must protect, defend and uphold *siri'*. The concept of *siri'*, which must be maintained, was acknowledged by the interviewees who said that, for the Bugis ethnic group, when there is a wedding event, and there is no invitation, it is "abstinent" to attend the event because it is not expected to participate in the wedding party (Amin et al., 2015; Idrus, 2005; Mukrimin, 2019a; Pelras, 1985, 1996, 2000). According to the interviewees, this principle correlates with their culture, principles, and philosophies, namely the

sipakatau-sipalebbi culture. The hardness with which Bugis ethnic couples adhere to this principle has led to the dynamics of their daily lives, even leading to minor conflicts in their marriages.

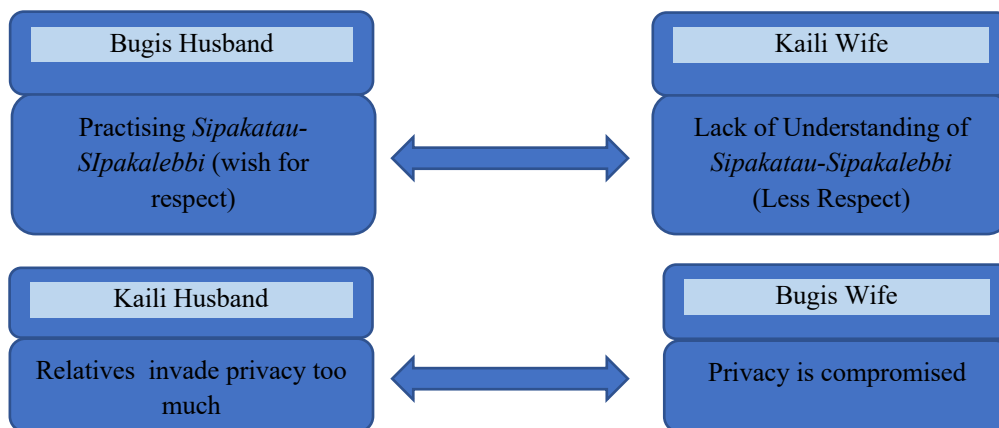


Figure 3. Model of Intercultural Communication in *Sipakatau-Sipakalebbi* Practise

The model above illustrates that the practice of sipakatau sipakalebbi, when applied to marriages between ethnic Bugis and Kaili, does not run smoothly because sipakatau sipakalebbi requires the active role of each partner. On the other hand, the state of our communication, the way we communicate, language style, and verbal and non-verbal behavior all of it is a response to the culture we learn so that the practice and behavior of individual communication with one another will be different so that ways of communicating are a reflection of our culture. Ultimately, communication becomes an important tool and element in married life. Like the Lewis Cross-Cultural Communication Model, it shows how people from different cultures have diversity in time and space, silent distance, and eye contact. Furthermore, this model also explains how communication styles are reflected in the language patterns used. (Vebrynda, 2015). It is also the case for couples of different ethnicities. So it takes a process of adaptation between both parties.

Relationships are a dialogue between many voices, so relationships are a place that handles conflict. The dynamics and phenomena experienced by marriage couples of Bugis and Kaili ethnicity related to *sipakatau-sipakalebbi* culture align with the theory of relational dialectics proposed by Leslie Baxter and Barbara Montgomery. This theory states that relationships are a place that handles conflict because relationships are a dialogue between many voices (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

Furthermore, interaction in the context of intercultural communication will also be able to contradict related to the existence of different cultures that cause differences for the “supporters.” This sociocultural background is a guideline and benchmark that cannot be translated and will become an identity in behavior and interaction, especially when communicating and interacting with culturally different groups. This condition is called “cultural behavior” (Aryanata, 2017; Gea, 2011; Sulistyawati & Santosa, 2018). Cultural behavior based on one’s sociocultural identity can determine choices, both in the linguistic context and the form of communication patterns carried out by that person. This cultural behavior can also be a cultural differentiator for communication actors of different cultures. It means that a person behaves according to his sociocultural background and has different characteristics from people of different cultures. Social identity can be understood as a person’s knowledge that makes him a member of a group with similar values and emotions (Abrams, Lalot, & Hogg, 2021).

Customs or the concept of *adat* in the Bugis community is called *pangadereng*, in which the culture of *sipakatau-sipakalebbi* is embedded, a set of interrelated cultural norms and practices. These values unconsciously govern Bugis’ ethnic life in interaction. In line with what was conveyed by the informants, the habit of gathering or gathering Kaili ethics is a separate identity for this ethnic group. As exemplified by the informants, the Kaili routine of crowding or gathering is natural for the Kaili ethnic group, even though it is done with a dense duration. In contrast, for the Bugis ethnic group, crowding is done only at certain times. The Kaili ethnic informants recognized the habit of gathering or crowding by the Kaili ethnic group that the Kaili ethnic group is willing to spend their money to

gather so that the kinship between one family and another is closer. The informants recognized that their frequent gatherings strengthened their sense of kinship with each other.

Empirically, this study finds out that the close kinship and sense of family that is the culture or habit of the Kaili ethnic group make their spouses who are born with Bugis ethnicity should understand such communication patterns. Interviewees from the Kaili ethnic group said that kinship for their ethnic group is a communication pattern that is not easy to change. Because of the inherent value of kinship, when their families come to visit the home of Bugis and Kaili ethnic couples, they do not hesitate to go to the kitchen, eat the food available, cook in the kitchen, enter the room because they feel they are part of the couple's family. Their Bugis-ethnic partners interpret this pattern of kinship communication as a bit "taboo". For the Bugis ethnic group, specific spaces are private. It is in this context that the culture of *sipakatau* (mutual humanity) is the backbone of the Bugis ethnic group, who "always build harmonious relationships in their environment" (Rustan, 2018).

At this point, the philosophy of life is fundamentally understood as sociocultural values used by the supporting community as a patron in daily activities and communication actions. Such is the importance and value of this normative value that it is common for these customs to be firmly attached to each of its supporters even though the flow of modernity always hits and afflicts it. In its implementation, it becomes the spirit and spirit to determine the mindset and stimulate human action, including in the context of appreciating family communication in couples with different ethnicities.

It must be acknowledged that behaviors, patterns, perceptions, and principles distinguish one culture from another, and these habits or patterns of behavior are carried over into daily life. These habits were eventually carried over to the research participants in the ethnic marriages of Bugis and Kaili in Palu Municipality. There are principles that Bugis people hold dear and that Kaili people take for granted. Vice versa, some things are considered principles for the Kaili, but for the Bugis, it is normal. This is where communication is needed, mutual understanding between spouses and their partners, that they are united in marriage not only two individuals but two prominent families, two different cultural backgrounds that cause two different behaviors.

Broadly, the way a person communicates is primarily influenced by culture, so people from different cultures will communicate differently. Culture and communication cannot be separated because culture essentially not only determines who, about what, and how communication takes place, but culture also determines how a person encodes messages and the meaning he has for messages. The conditions for sending, paying attention to, and interpreting messages, thus the entire repertoire of a person's behavior, depends on the culture in which the individual is raised and settled.

Evidently, many informants stated that although they have been married for a long time, all informants are still learning to recognize and understand each other's culture. Throughout the marriage journey, there are still dynamics because of the cultural differences between them. The interviewees also said that their spouses still maintain the Bugis culture embedded in their thoughts and behavior to this day. Nevertheless, as time passes, the two couples increasingly realize that cultural differences must be overcome in establishing communication relationships in inter-ethnic marriages; even though these dynamics cannot be eliminated, at least they can be minimized by both.

The intersection of two cultures framed in marriage is certainly not accessible. It takes a mutual understanding and "the importance of understanding intercultural communication) for couples to unravel the dynamics that arise in the temporarily lived marriage. Communication and intercultural communication have a significant role in solving existing problems. Similarly, Baxter said that from the perspective of relational dialectics, social actors give life through their communication practices to the contradictions that manage their relationships. The social reality of contradictions is produced and reproduced by the communication actions of social actors (West & Turner, 2009). It means that any contradictions that exist must be faced rather than avoided and faced with "communication," opening space for dialog or other forms deemed appropriate to overcome them more effectively. Each individual usually experiences contradictions in their relationships with others, so each of them must take appropriate communication steps to find the best solution to the contradiction.

Finally, it is safe to say that different ethnic marriage couples, as this study has found out, are not only limited to understanding the dynamics but the need to adapt to each other's culture, so each partner can overcome it by giving their partner an understanding of the purpose behind the action, or also done by communicating all the dynamics that occur related to these cultural differences; therefore, the dynamics and estrangement, even those that lead to relationship conflicts between couples can be resolved.

CONCLUSION

The study's findings suggest that the practice of *sipakatau-sipakalebbi* (mutual respect and mutual humanization) remains firmly ingrained among the Bugis people, even among those who have married outside their ethnic groups, including the Kaili, as this study has elaborated. The *sipakatau-sipakalebbi* is a value carried down from ancestors and serves as a point of differentiation for the Bugis people and a guiding concept for their daily lives; without it, the identity of this ethnic group would be incomplete. When translated into Indonesian, the core values preserved by the Bugis people are compassion and understanding for one another.

The principles and values that serve as the compass of Bugis ethnic life can be found in inter-ethnic marriages, especially between Bugis and Kaili. Culture is the overall attitude and pattern of behavior and knowledge that constitutes a habit that includes beliefs, arts, customs, and scientific morals inherited and owned by members of a particular community.

Ultimately, this study leads us to conclude that the Bugis community still adheres to this principle to remind people to act morally and refrain from doing things that could “*mappakasiri'-siri'*” (actions that can cause shame). In Bugis society, the level of self-worth, dignity, good name, reputation, and honor of oneself and one's family are all equated to *siri'* and must all be upheld in daily social interactions. Even though they have moved and been combined in other ethnic marriages like the Kaili, the *sipakatau-sipakalebbi* culture has never vanished from the Bugis ethnic community.

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