

Social Adaptation of the Community to Local Residents in Bone Regency, South Sulawesi Province

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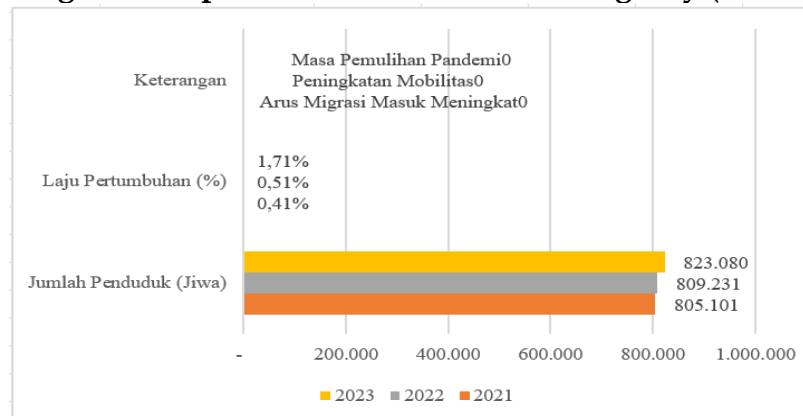
ABSTRACT

This study aims to assess how migrant communities adapt socially and interact with local residents in Bone Regency, South Sulawesi. Using a descriptive qualitative method, this study investigates the impact of Pangadereng values (Bugis traditions) on the process of social integration. Data were collected through participant observation and in-depth interviews with migrants and local community leaders in the region. The results indicate that the adaptation process occurs in three main stages: functional adaptation, cultural acculturation, and social integration. Key elements supporting this process include shared moral values such as hospitality, honesty, and mutual respect (sipakatau), while the challenges faced are primarily related to language differences and specific customary norms. In conclusion, migrant groups tend to adopt elements of local culture without losing their own identity in order to achieve social harmony within the Bugis Bone community.

INTRODUCTION

Bone Regency is a region in South Sulawesi Province with a rich historical and cultural heritage. As the former center of the Bone Kingdom, this area has not only inherited a strong social structure but also embodies important philosophical values that shape how its people interact. In today's modern and globalized world, population migration is an inevitable reality. Bone Regency, rich in natural resources and boasting robust economic development, attracts people from outside the region to settle there – whether for work, education, or marriage (Abdullah, 2017). The following chart shows the population growth of Bone Regency (2021–2023).

Figure 1. Population Growth in Bone Regency (2021–2023)



The graph above shows a significant population increase in 2023, reaching 1.71%. This increase is not only due to birth rates but is also influenced by Bone Regency's appeal as a hub for trade and services in the Bosowasipilu region (Bone, Soppeng, Wajo, Sinjai, Sidrap, Pinrang, Luwu). The influx of new residents from various ethnic groups (such as Javanese, Bugis from outside Bone, and Makassar) necessitates strong social adaptation mechanisms to maintain harmony with the local community.

This phenomenon has a natural consequence: the emergence of intercultural interactions. The people of Bone, the majority of whom are of Bugis ethnicity, hold values known as Pangadereng. Within this framework of values lies the concept of Siri' na Pesse, which serves as an ethical and social guide for behavior. On the other hand, immigrants bring diverse cultural backgrounds, traditions, and differing norms. The encounter between these two social groups required a process known as social adaptation. Social adaptation involves not only physical adjustment to the new environment but also negotiations of identity and efforts to achieve a balance to avoid social conflict (Kesuma, 2017).

This research is highly significant because the people of Bone place a high value on honor and ethics. For newcomers, it is important to understand three concepts – Sipakatau (mutual respect for one another as human beings), Sipakalebbi (mutual respect), and Sipakainge (mutual reminders) – in order to be well-received within the local community. However, in reality, the adjustment process often encounters various obstacles. Communication issues, social prejudices, and differing views regarding traditions considered sacred by local residents frequently pose challenges. If these issues are not managed properly,

the inability to adapt can lead to social division that may hinder regional development (Hamzah & Marwati, 2023).

In addition, Bone Regency features a wide range of geographical diversity, encompassing both coastal and mountainous areas, which influences social interactions among residents. Communities along the coast are generally more open to change, while those in remote areas tend to hold more firmly to their traditions. This diversity of locations poses a challenge for newcomers in finding the right way to adapt. Therefore, a study of this social adaptation process is crucial for describing social integration in South Sulawesi from a temporal perspective (Narwoko, 2017).

In line with several studies, as global temperatures rise, the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events – and the risks they pose to communities and assets – are also increasing. These risks are particularly urgent for Pacific islanders living in urban informal settlements, given their socioeconomic vulnerabilities and limited political influence. There is a growing awareness that national adaptation strategies may not fully meet the needs of these vulnerable communities, leading to a focus on community-led adaptation (Turner et al., 2025). Furthermore, governments often adopt a top-down approach in their mitigation projects to address climate change risks in coastal areas. However, community participation can enhance the effectiveness of these mitigation projects. Regions where communities exhibit different levels of place attachment or social bonds may demonstrate varying degrees of willingness to participate in social activities, particularly in community-led adaptation strategies and their involvement in government-led mitigation projects (Buchori et al., 2022). And local governments around the world are devising various ways to address climate change. However, the compounding and overlapping vulnerabilities experienced by historically marginalized populations are generally addressed in isolation by conventional adaptation approaches, even when equity is touted as a primary goal of these plans. In response, we propose a shift toward an intersectional perspective in climate adaptation research and practice to analyze the interrelated forms of socio-environmental injustice that drive vulnerability in cities, paving the way for equitable, concrete, and integrated adaptation and urban transformation strategies (Amorim-Maia et al., 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theories of Social Adaptation

Social adaptation is defined as a dynamic process in which individuals or groups modify their behavior to conform to the norms and standards of a new social environment (Fikri, 2024). In sociology, adaptation is not merely a means of self-protection, but also an effort to achieve harmony with the local community in order to prevent social tension. Menurut (Soekanto & Sulistyowati, 2017) Success in adapting depends on how frequently social interactions occur and how strong communication is between groups with different cultural backgrounds.

Bugis Bone Culture and the Pangadereng Philosophy

The community in Bone Regency has a strong social structure shaped by the values of Pangadereng (a system of customary norms). Newcomers' ability to adapt to life in Bone depends heavily on their understanding of the following values:

- Sipakatau, Sipakalebbi, Sipakainge: These principles emphasize the importance of mutual respect, mutual appreciation, and mutual support (Pelras, 2021). Pendatang yang mampu menerapkan prinsip ini umumnya lebih cepat diterima oleh warga lokal Bone.
- Siri' na Pesse: Adalah ciri khas utama dari komunitas Bugis. Siri' berhubungan dengan martabat, sedangkan Pesse mencerminkan tingkat kepedulian sosial yang besar (Riadi, 2019). Successful social integration in Bone requires newcomers to respect the local community's "Siri" and demonstrate a sense of solidarity (Pesse) in community activities.

Symbolic Interaction in Adaptation

Adaptation in Bone is generally influenced by linguistic symbols and behavior. The Symbolic Interaction Theory proposed by Herbert Blumer asserts that human actions are based on the meanings derived from the symbols that surround them. In Bone, the use of polite terms such as "Iye" (yes/respect) and "Taba" (excuse me) serves as a crucial symbol in the process of social integration. Newcomers' inability to understand these polite symbols can hinder the adaptation process and lead to the emergence of social prejudice.

Drivers of Social Integration

Several factors that accelerate the community's integration with the local population in Bone include:

1. Shared Religious Identity: With the majority of Bone's population being religious, mosques and celebrations of major Islamic holidays serve as effective venues for interethnic gatherings.
2. Engagement in Local Traditions: Newcomers' participation in cultural activities such as Mappacci (wedding ceremonies) or Mappadendang (harvest celebrations) strengthens emotional connections with the indigenous population.
3. Economic Activities: Traditional markets in Watampone and commercial centers serve as areas of interaction that foster functional assimilation between newcomers and the local community.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative method using a descriptive phenomenological approach. The purpose of choosing this approach is to gain in-depth insights into the personal experiences of immigrants as they adapt socially and interact with the local community in Bone Regency. The focus of this study is on how meaning is interpreted in relation to cultural symbols and social actions in everyday life (Creswell, J. W., & Poth, 2018).

This study was conducted in Bone Regency, located in South Sulawesi Province, specifically in Tanete Riattang District (Watampone City Center). This location was selected based on its high population diversity and its role as a hub of economic activity that fosters interaction between local residents and newcomers. Data collection took place over a three-month period, from December 2025 to March 2026.

The method used to select informants was purposive sampling. The criteria for selecting informants included: Key Informants: Individuals who have lived in Bone for at least two years (to ensure an adjustment period). Supporting Informants: Community leaders (To Acca), traditional leaders, and local residents who are native to Bone to confirm existing interaction patterns. A total of 10 informants were involved in this study.

Data collection was conducted through three main approaches: Participant Observation: Researchers conducted direct observations of social interactions in public spaces such as traditional markets, mosques, and community celebrations (such as weddings). In-Depth Interviews: Conducted in a semi-structured format to explore adaptation strategies, language issues, and the application of Sipakatau values in social interactions. Documentation: Collecting secondary data from demographic profiles of Bone Regency and literature references related to Bugis Bone culture.

Data analysis techniques were examined using the Miles and Huberman model, which involves three steps carried out simultaneously: Data Reduction: Extracting key elements and selecting information from interviews related to adaptation strategies. Data Presentation: Organizing information in narrative and tabular forms to illustrate the relationships among various social phenomena. Drawing Conclusions: Identifying patterns and relationships from the grouped data to answer the research questions (Miles & Huberman, 2019).

Data Validity to ensure the accuracy of the research findings, various methods of source triangulation and methodological triangulation were employed. The researcher compared data from interviews with statements from local community leaders and cross-checked field observations with existing documents (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

Based on interviews and field observations, the process of social adjustment among migrant groups in Bone Regency can be summarized in several key findings:

The Use of Politeness Markers (Tabe' and Iye')

The interviewees explained that understanding the symbols of verbal communication in the region is crucial for being accepted into the community. Newcomers who say "Tabe'" when passing through a crowd of local residents and "Iye'" in formal interactions are viewed as individuals with a pure heart (macing ati) who have come to understand the norms of that community.

Participation in the Social and Cultural Sphere

Adaptation occurs not only at the individual level but also through active participation in social institutions. Research findings reveal that:

- **Wedding Ceremonies (Mappacci):** These provide an opportunity for newcomers to interact informally with the local community by assisting with event preparations (mewallé).
- **Pesse Solidarity:** Newcomers who show concern when local residents experience grief or a disaster are more quickly accepted as part of the local community.

Initial Challenges in Adaptation

The main issue that arose in the early stages was the Bugis Bone dialect, which has a distinctive intonation. Some newcomers felt put off by the very direct manner of speaking, but as they gained a deeper understanding, they realized that this directness was a sign of openness, not anger.

DISCUSSION

Internalization of the Values of Sipakatau and Sipakalebbi

The results of the study reveal that the people of Bone treat newcomers based on the principle of Sipakatau (treating others with humanity). This finding aligns with symbolic interaction theory, in which the local community holds a positive view of newcomers who can adapt to the value of Sipakalebbi (mutual respect). Harmony is created when newcomers not only reside in the area but also incorporate the ethical values embraced by the local community into their actions. This study also highlights the complexity of factors influencing the adaptation process, where the availability of resources and social capital play a crucial role. This study recommends that communities lead the adaptation process and calls for a shift in the direction of research and funding to make them more flexible, responsive, and inclusive in supporting this program. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of understanding community dynamics to avoid paternalistic practices and effectively integrate local insights, thereby preserving community autonomy in the adaptation process (Turner et al., 2025); (Maidin, Rajamemang, Putera, Baharuddin, et al., 2023); (Maidin, Azis, et al., 2025); (Maidin, Rajamemang, Putera, Wahyuti, et al., 2023).

Adaptation through the Siri' na Pesse Cultural Approach

In theory, the concept of Siri' (self-respect) is often seen as a source of conflict. However, field research shows that when newcomers recognize the boundaries of Siri', they actually gain support from the local community. Social integration in Bone is driven by the value of Pesse (empathy). When newcomers empathize with the sorrow or hardships of local residents, ethnic boundaries dissolve into the collective identity of the Bone community. Research also indicates that communities in suburban areas tend to adopt community-led adaptation strategies, as they are willing to engage in social activities. Additionally, residents in suburban areas exhibit higher levels of participation in government-led mitigation projects, which positively impacts the outcomes of these initiatives. Other factors, such as the role of village heads and the presence

of facilitators, also influence local community participation in these projects. This study suggests that increased community participation can strengthen their sense of ownership regarding government-managed mitigation projects. Consequently, local communities will be more motivated to maintain and contribute to the sustainability of these projects' outcomes (Buchori et al., 2022); (Maidin et al., 2024); (Rahman et al., 2025); (DR. Drs. Andi M Rusdi Maidin, S.H & AGAMA, 2021).

The Effectiveness of Public Spaces as Contact Zones

Traditional markets and mosques in Watampone serve as effective meeting points. In these locations, the exchange of information is ongoing, and negotiations regarding meaning take place. The process of adaptation involves functional assimilation, in which newcomers retain their original identities but functionally adhere to Bugis Bone norms to facilitate social and economic interactions. This study demonstrates that the methodology employed combines narrative review and analysis to construct a new conceptual framework that emphasizes the importance of (1) addressing the factors causing racial and gender inequality; (2) recognizing the diverse causes of vulnerability; (3) taking the political and ethical dimensions of care seriously; (4) employing location-based approaches and the shaping of spaces; and (5) fostering cross-identity activism and strengthening community resilience. We illustrate this framework with examples of ongoing projects in Barcelona, Spain, which is a pioneer in intersectional thinking and principles of justice in climate action. Although many initiatives are still in the experimental stage and not all focus on climate adaptation, the experiences from Barcelona provide examples of the direction for innovative and integrated approaches that can address various interrelated socio-environmental inequalities (Amorim-Maia et al., 2022). The research findings also indicate that there has been a shift in how the residents of Pampang Village interact during the pandemic compared to before the pandemic began. These changes have had both positive and negative impacts on the local population. In addition, the study reveals how residents of Pampang Village have adapted their behavior during the pandemic, with many having already adjusted to new norms. However, there are still some individuals who are gradually adapting to the regulations set by the government (Adiyanto et al., 2022); (Maidin, Baharuddin, et al., 2025); (Maidin, Rajamemang, & Putera, 2023).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Adaptation Strategy: The process of social adaptation for individuals newly arrived in Bone Regency is carried out through psychological acculturation and cultural integration. The ability to use verbal communication symbols, such as the words "Tabé" and "Iye," is crucial for establishing initial relationships with local residents.

Supporting Factors: The noble values of the Bugis Bone community, such as Sipakatau, Sipakalebbi, and Sipakainge, have proven to be driving factors that create an open atmosphere for newcomers. This openness provides an

opportunity for newcomers to feel accepted without having to abandon their original identities.

Social Solidarity: The concept of *Pesse* (empathy) serves as an effective social bridge. The involvement of newcomers in communal activities, such as weddings and funerals, has proven effective in resolving ethnic differences and strengthening emotional bonds between newcomers and the local community. **Harmony:** Overall, the process of social adjustment in Bone Regency proceeds peacefully due to a shared understanding of the customary norms (*Pangadereng*) upheld by both parties.

Newcomers are encouraged to continue participating in local community activities to reduce social misunderstandings. It is crucial to recognize and respect the cultural boundaries of *Siri'* so that daily interactions do not lead to misunderstandings. Local residents and traditional leaders are expected to maintain an open-minded attitude rooted in the value of *Sipakatau* so that Bone Regency remains a region that supports diversity. Traditional leaders need to consistently explain the meaning of cultural values to the younger generation and newcomers so that these values do not fade away with the changing times.

For the Local Government (Bone Regency Administration), the local government, through the Department of Culture or the Office of Community and Political Affairs, is advised to design programs focused on cultural festivals or public dialogue forums that regularly involve various ethnic groups to strengthen social integration.

For Future Researchers This study has limitations in its focus on social interaction in general. Therefore, future researchers are advised to explore social adaptation from a more in-depth perspective, such as the economic adaptation of migrant traders or language issues in the context of formal education in Bone.

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May the results of this research contribute positively to the development of sociology and serve as a guide in maintaining social harmony in Bone Regency.

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