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Structural Assimilation of the Bugis Community with the Native in Kangean Island

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A B S T R A C T

The Kangean Islands, Madura, serve as a transit hub for traders and fishermen from various regions, including the Bugis ethnic group that migrated to the Kangean Islands in the past few decades. Interaction and adaptation carried out by the Bugis ethnic and natives in the Kangean islands is able to bridge the differences between these ethnicities. This article analyzes the structural assimilation of the Bugis community with the natives on the Kangean island, especially at the grassroots level. This research used the phenomenology approach. Data collection is conducted through in-depth interviews. The findings proved that the process of cultural assimilation of Sulawesi culture in Kangean island, particularly in the Arjasa sub-district, can be considered only minimal conflicts were found. Structural assimilation has reached a broader scale, encompassing the participation of Bugis community in various aspects. In education, interactions with Bugis culture primarily occur informally in activities organized by the Sulawesi Student Association. Economically, structural assimilation is evident in the mutual acceptance of job opportunities and interdependence in economic resources. Within governmental institutions and organizations, assimilation is achieved by building awareness and understanding of ethnic diversity. Everyone has equal rights within the government structure, as evidenced there are Bugis individuals holding positions within the government structure at the district and village levels.

A. INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on structural assimilation of the Bugis community by investigating how communication and social contact occur between the Sulawesi community and the Kangean society, particularly at the grassroots level.

Kangean Island, administratively part of Sumenep Regency, East Madura, East Java Province, is the largest island among the dozens of smaller islands scattered in the Kangean Archipelago. According to lontarmadura.com, there are three sub-districts in the Kangean Archipelago: Arjasa (western part of Kangean

Island), Kangayan (eastern part of Kangean Island), and Sapeken (covering smaller islands)(Lontar Madura, 2011). The diversity of cultures on Kangean Island is intriguing. Despite its relatively small size compared to the entire Madura Island, this archipelago in the easternmost part of Madura is home to several ethnic groups living together. In addition to the Maduranese (Madura ethnic), who constitute the majority, there are Javanese, Balinese, and communities from Sulawesi, including the Bugis, Bajo, and Mandar, as well as minority groups like the Chinese and Arabs residing on the Kangean Islands.

According to research by Taunay, the people of Kangean do not know when these ethnic groups first arrived to settle there. However, their arrival is intertwined

with migration history and trade between Java, Bali, and Sulawesi. According to the local population, around 1,000 Chinese people arrived in Arjasa in the mid-18th century, at which point the Maduranese were already the largest community in the Kangean Islands (Taunay, 2013). The initial Sulawesi community that came to the Kangean Islands did not settle permanently; they merely made it a stopover point on their voyages from Sulawesi to Banyuwangi and then to Bali to sell fish. However, over time, the route along the small islands to the east of the Kangean Islands became a place of settlement for the Sulawesi community. The next wave of settlers came due to conflicts between the Dutch and the Sulawesi people during the colonial period. Based on their settlement areas, the Maduranese occupy the largest islands in the western part, with their livelihoods primarily based on agriculture. In contrast, the smaller islands in the eastern part are inhabited by the Sulawesi community, who work as fishermen (Taunay, 2013).

Assimilation of culture can occur naturally or unconsciously, as well as intentionally and planned. The success of assimilation is contingent upon the absence of prejudice and discrimination during the social process, meaning that extensive and intensive interactions between groups may only necessarily lead to assimilation if there is a foundation of tolerance and sympathy. Consequently, the process of assimilation can be categorized into three stages: first, when individuals or groups adapt to the new culture without forsaking their original culture; second, when individuals or groups acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in the new culture while still preserving their original culture; and finally, the stage at which individuals or groups fully absorb the new culture and relinquish their original culture. In examining assimilation, Gordon identified seven variables that require examination: cultural assimilation, structural assimilation, intermarriage (amalgamation), identification assimilation, attitudinal acceptance assimilation, behavioral acceptance assimilation, and civic assimilation (Gordon, 1964). Gordon mention that structural assimilation refers to the integration of individuals or minority groups into the main social, economic, and political structures within a larger society.

This study focuses on structural assimilation, explicitly investigating how communication and social contact occur between Bugis community and the Kangean society, particularly at the grassroots level, such as village and sub-district levels. Additionally, this research explores how the acceptance and recognition of the Sulawesi community's identity as part of the Kangean society has become an intriguing subject for further investigation because research on the outcomes of assimilation between the Sulawesi community and the Kangean society has not been extensively conducted. One of the studies on cultural

assimilation is titled "Social Harmony: Natural-Assimilative Social Interaction between Chinese Muslim and Malay-Bangka Ethnicities" written by Abdullah Idi in the journal *Thaqafiyat*, Volume 13 No. 2, December 2012. This study examines one of the practices and experiences of cross-ethnic and religious social harmony, namely between the Malay-Bangka-Islam and Chinese ethnic populations. The results of this study indicate that this harmony has long existed and evolved naturally without any systematic social engineering. This fact supports the unity of Indonesian identity framed within unity in diversity (Abdullah Idi, 2021). Nevertheless, studies specifically examining mixed marriages have been undertaken in Sumenep City, Madura, by M. Mahsyur Abadi in his work titled "Cross Marriage: A Model of Cultural Blending Among the Chinese, Arab, Indian, Javanese, and Maduranese Communities in Sumenep City" in 2007 (M Masyhur Abadi, 2012). Furthermore, research on Kangean Island has predominantly focused on its tourism potential and studies regarding its cultural products, language, and natural resources.

Subsequently, this research addresses how structural assimilation of the Bugis community occurs within various forms of associations, cliques, and significant group institutions (the Kangean society), particularly at the grassroots level.

The interactions among ethnic groups on Kangean Island have profoundly impacted its social and cultural changes. Given the background above, the research question is how the structural assimilation of the Sulawesi community especially Bugis ethnic transpires in various types of associations, cliques, and significant group institutions (the Kangean society), particularly at the grassroots level.

B. METHOD

This research is a qualitative study employing a Phenomenological approach. Phenomenology is a research design that delves into the essence of the experiences of several individuals who have encountered a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2016). Phenomenology commences with an individual's awareness of a specific phenomenon and involves describing or interpreting it, subsequently connecting it to relevant contexts (Paley, 2017). By using phenomenology this research explore the meanings and interpretations that participants ascribe to their lived experiences. Data collection techniques are conducted through in-depth interviews. The following are the steps in data collection:

1. Observation. The observation was conducted by directly visiting the research location and observing the daily activities, livelihoods, education, interactions between the Bugis

Community and the natives of Kangean, as well as the roles of Sulawesi immigrants in organizations and government.

2. The interviews were conducted in-depth using interview guidelines while still accommodating information beyond the guidelines that remains relevant to the research problem. Interviews were conducted with 7 respondents :
 1. Daeng Rahman (Bugis descent, village elder in Pajanangger Village and author of the book "Asal-Usul Desa Pajanangger dan Perkembangannya").
 2. Suhrawi (Kangean descent who married a Bugis individual, Village Head of Pajanangger Village).
 3. Husairi (Chinese descent, Subdistrict Head of Arjasa).
 4. Said (Bugis descent, Principal of a Private Junior High School in Pajanangger Village and former village official of Pajanangger).
 5. Mahbub (Bugis descent, Head of Sabiliyah Islamic Boarding School and entrepreneur of a bread factory).
 6. Fifi (Bugis descent, employee at Mahbub's bread factory).
 7. Daud (Mandar descent, university student).
3. Documentation

The data analysis steps are based on the four levels of analysis as articulated by Sanders (Sanders, 1982). The steps are as follows:

1. Describing the recorded interview results. The transcribed narratives are used to identify and describe the quality of the experiences and awareness of the participants.
2. Identifying themes or invariants. The theme is determined from the data findings obtained from interviews with the informants. For example, informants mention the economic condition and organization in Kangean; both of these conditions are used as themes to analyze the assimilation of the Bugis community in Kangean island.
3. Developing correlations between individual perspectives on the structural assimilation of the Bugis community with natives on Kangean island.
4. Concluding and presenting them in the report.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings indicate that several aspects of communication and social interaction at the grassroots level can be observed through language and dialect, oral traditions, religious ceremonies and rituals, daily social activities, economic cooperation, organizational structures and institutions, customs, and etiquette. Based on observations and interviews conducted with 7 respondents, it is evident that the Bugis community has successfully integrated with the Kangean islanders. Bugis identity is less noticeable when interacting with them. Cultural assimilation, particularly in terms of language, is most evident. According to respondents, when the Bugis people initially arrived in Pajanangger, Arjasa sub-district, their predecessors learned the Kangean language in connection with their work relationships as Bugis landowners and Kangean laborers. To facilitate communication, the Bugis people eventually learned the Kangean language, and it has become the everyday language for the fourth generation of Bugis descendants. Besides language, other prominent cultural elements in daily life include food, norms, customs, and daily habits that the Bugis community has adapted to the Kangean way of life. In terms of religious rituals, since most of the Bugis community practices Islam, their rituals blend Islamic values with Kangean cultural values. In terms of structural assimilation, assimilation extends to a broader scale, which involves the participation of Bugis people in various fields, such as the economy, education, organizations, and government institutions, particularly at the grassroots level, such as in villages and sub-districts, as follows:

1. Structural Assimilation in the Field of Education

Education plays a crucial role in structural assimilation as an agent for teaching cultural values. It is because the education system encompasses a wide range of society and spans various age groups and durations corresponding to the levels of education. Cultural values, language, and arts from a region can be understood, learned, and taught through the education system. Education is a rolling model that imparts positive values and counters negative ones, including those related to culture. Negative values will automatically diminish if positive values are consistently taught to children (Aslan et al., 2019). In the context of structural assimilation in Kangean, the diminished values are not negative but rather the Sulawesi cultural values held by the Sulawesi community in Kangean. One example is the regional languages of Sulawesi, such as Bugis, Mandar, and Bajo. According to interviewees Mahbub and Daud, they were taught the regional language, Maduranese, during their schooling. Because the Kangean

Islands fall under the administrative jurisdiction of Sumenep Regency, the local curriculum follows Sumenep Regency's curriculum, as explained in the following interview excerpts:

Mahbub: *Yes, there is a subject for regional language. Maduranese. The formal version of Maduranese. It uses the 'anacaraka' script.*

Interviewer: *Not Kangean language? Bugis language is not taught automatically?*

Mahbub: *No, it's not. We follow the curriculum.*

Daud: *For the local language learning, Madurese is prioritized because, administratively, Pangerungan is within the Madura-Sumenep area.*

Interviewer: *I see. So, does it follow the curriculum?*

Daud: *Yes, that's how it is. As per the above quotes, local content subjects in schools that teach regional cultural values include the Regional Language class.*

Maduranese, taught in Kangean schools, is part of the Education system's curriculum divided according to its administrative regions. Thus, even though, in reality, Kangean is home to many other ethnic groups besides the Madurese, their cultural values, including their languages, cannot be widely taught due to the curriculum's lack of coverage for the Sulawesi ethnic groups. This results in reduced exposure to the culture of the Sulawesi communities (e.g. Bugis, Mandar, and Bajo). It is understandable that in the long term, this leads to the cultural assimilation of Sulawesi in Kangean with minimal conflict. As mentioned, if one value is continuously taught (in this context, Madurese), other values (Sulawesi regional languages) will automatically diminish and gradually disappear.

Apart from regional languages, the education in Kangean schools also does not teach the traditional arts of Sulawesi, even though many Kangean residents come from Sulawesi ethnic groups. It is evident in the following interview excerpts:

Interviewer: *How about regional arts classes, such as traditional dance?*

Mahbub : *Maduranese dance.*

Interviewer: *So, the Bugis culture doesn't really get touched upon in schools?*

Mahbub : *No, it doesn't.*

Interviewer : *But, are there unique Kangean arts different from Madura?*

Mahbub : *There are, but they have become extinct.*

Interviewer: *Are there subjects related to regional arts (such as dance, music, and performing arts) taught in schools?*

Daud: *Yes, but it comes back to dance, music, and performing arts, which are mostly taken from Sumenep's regional arts.*

From the responses of the respondent Mahbub and Daud above, it can be inferred that the arts and culture of Sulawesi are not taught in schools in Kangean. Instead, what is taught is the arts and culture of Madura.

Koentjaraningrat, in his book "Introduction to Anthropology", explains the process of assimilation involving a majority and minority group. The minority group changes the distinctive characteristics of its cultural elements. It adapts them to the majority group's culture to such an extent that they gradually lose their cultural identity and become part of the majority culture (Koentjaraningrat, 2009). The statements from the interviewees Mahbub and Daud above indicate that the arts taught in Kangean schools also come from Madura, not Sulawesi. The Kangean residents from Sulawesi ethnic groups are considered a minority because, historically, they are immigrant groups in Kangean. The tendency for minority groups is the loss of their original culture as a form of adaptation to the new culture where they live. In this context, Sulawesi culture adapts to the Kangean culture, which is more inclined toward Madura, gradually losing its distinctive characteristics and disappearing. From this, education plays a crucial role in preserving or losing regional cultures.

Awareness of the need to preserve their original culture's uniqueness and distinctive features arises from Kangean students who come from Sulawesi and initiate cultural preservation activities. It is mentioned by the interviewee Daud, who is a student from Pulau Pangerungan Besar (located in northern Kangean), originally from the Mandar ethnic group (West Sulawesi).

Interviewer: *How is Sulawesi culture taught in Kangean schools?*

Daud: *The learning of Sulawesi culture itself is introduced and preserved by the student organization in Pangerungan (located in northern Kangean), namely IKMA PB, which is initiated by Malang students who are part of the Mandar Malang Community.*

Interviewer: *Oh, so this is outside Pangerungan, right?*

Daud: *What I mean is that students from Pangerungan (Kangean) are part of or join the community mentioned above, which is made up of pure Mandar ethnic members. However, most of its members are initially from Sulawesi. So, as members of that community (KMM), who are also part of the youth organization in Pangerungan (IKMA PB), initiate the preservation of Mandar culture, it goes like that.*

Interviewer: *I see. In what form does cultural preservation take? Are you teaching Sulawesi dance and music?*

Daud: *Yes, we prioritize what we can prepare in a short period, such as introducing their traditional dance and, from a literary perspective, poems that we use for performances in the Independence Day celebrations, combined in a theatrical format.*

From the quotes above, the Mandar student community's cultural preservation activities involve introducing dance, poetry, and theater. Although simple and brief, this is an excellent initial step in preserving Sulawesi culture in Kangean. These activities also receive support from the local community. As in the following quote, "Even yesterday, when it was first presented, none of the audience members left their seats, perhaps out of longing or remembering a history now forgotten by the younger generation" (Daud).

The gradual loss of Sulawesi culture in Kangean is also regretted by the Sulawesi community (as expressed by the interviewees, Village Head Suhrawi, Sub-district Head Husairi, and Daud). Sulawesi culture should be a unique aspect of Kangean culture itself and worthy of preservation.

Interviewer: *That's great. Students become agents of change who remind us that our cultural roots should not be lost.*

Daud: *Exactly.*

Interviewer: *It's almost lost in Arjasa, right? It's such a shame.*

Daud: *You are right. It could be due to a lack of awareness, and the students cannot initiate it on their own. There should be an initiative from the youth or students. They can follow the curriculum, but culture should not be forgotten because it is improbable for the elders or older people to initiate it, ma'am.*

Daud recognizes that students and young people have more ability than the older generation to start preserving Sulawesi culture in Kangean. It shows that students are agents of change in society. As an educated group, they raise awareness among the community about the uniqueness and distinctive features of their own culture. Ultimately, education is what can provide knowledge and insight that the culture of origin is part of one's identity and must be preserved.

2. Structural Assimilation in the Field of Organization and Government

Building awareness and understanding of ethnic diversity among government officials is vital. Training and education on multiculturalism and ethnic diversity issues can help officials better understand how to treat citizens from various backgrounds. In the Arjasa region, the role of local government is still very significant. It is exemplified by what Husairi, the sub-district head of Arjasa, does. To build multicultural awareness and maintain social order in Arjasa, approaches to the community are made through cultural arts and participation in community organizations. For example, reaching out to young community groups through the *angklung* musical instrument and sometimes

participating in Family Welfare Program (PKK) activities to encourage members to start businesses and introduce simple economic concepts to homemakers.

"So, in the car, there are 30 extra angklung units. Angklung, compared to other musical instruments, builds togetherness. We can't play the basic notes until this is finished, right? We wait for this for a long time; we are still waiting. So, be patient, adapt to others. So, we are interdependent with friends. That's why I chose angklung... When I went on a PKK mission, I demonstrated cooking. Ladies, please, I want to cook something modern. Cooking battle first, that's my real goal. You can divide it, write down the ingredients consisting of half flour, ten sugar. Write down the price. If you make a donut, you get twenty. If you sell it for five hundred, how much profit is it? She can already do simple bookkeeping with a simple concept. That's my intention..." (Husairi).

Assimilation at the village or sub-district government level aims to enhance social cohesion among community members, balancing individual and collective interests to achieve harmony. In this context, the Bugis people have successfully integrated with the Kangean community, where they can hold strategic positions without any ethnic prejudice leading to conflicts from the Kangean community itself. It is also supported by the laws and regulations in Indonesia, as stated in the 1945 Constitution Article 27 (1), which declares that all citizens are equal before the law and government and are obliged to uphold the law and government without exception. It correlates with the absence of ethnicity, religion, race, or group differentiation in holding government positions.

One example of equal rights in governing can be seen in Pajanangger village, Arjasa sub-district, where Bugis people and native Kangean residents have led the head of Pajanangger village. According to Suhrawi, the current head of Pajanangger village, and Said, a community leader in Pajanangger village, the Bugis people once led Pajanangger village for 32 years.

"... So, the first village head here was a native Kangean, then the second generation was Bugis, that's when the Bugis people became prominent, and the Kangean people couldn't do much. Bugis people held office for 32 years. Then it changed to a native Kangean, but the Bugis position remained on top. It wasn't until I became the village head that equality was established, there shouldn't be anyone standing out, no one should be special..." (Suhrawi).

"Yes, alternated (gap). So, the first one was (...), then the second, and then Puang Marwa took over, he's Bugis. Puang is from... his ancestry. Puang's lineage is high. If you look back, it wasn't like today, the term in office was long... around more than 30 years. It wasn't until 1985 that a native Kangean took over, then two terms later, this son of Mr. Marwa took over, one term later, a Bugis took over

again, then one or two terms later, another Bugis, and only then a Kangean. Well, until now, it's the Kangean term in progress." (Said).

From the quotes above, it is clear that leadership changes are expected. Said also explained that during these transitions, there has never been any significant conflict; everything has been safe during village head elections. Although sometimes ethnic origin influences the selection of village heads, both figures mentioned that they choose whoever is competent to lead. As Said put it, "...It's safe here... When electing a village head, if Kangean people choose a Bugis, or Bugis choose a Kangean, it's the same (...) it depends on the vision and mission, or what kind of person they are." Suhrawi also stated that during his tenure as the village head, efforts were always made to eliminate ethnic differences, and everyone was considered equal regarding rights and responsibilities as village residents.

At the sub-district government level, this condition is also evident. Currently, the Arjasa sub-district is led by a Chinese descendant, Husairi, while most of its employees are Kangean natives. Bugis descendants are present but in smaller quantities. According to the head of Pajanangger village and the Arjasa sub-district head, only some Bugis people work as civil servants or office employees because, from the beginning, these jobs were not the preferred career choice for Bugis descendants. Mahbub, a Bugis community leader who lives in Arjasa, stated that most Bugis descendants in Pajanangger, also known as Celong, and in Arjasa work as farmers, herders, traders, or entrepreneurs.

"Rarely, they prefer to engage in trade and become entrepreneurs. That's why it's rare in Celong. People who become employees are all from here (Kangean). Like Mr. Said (a native community leader of Pajanangger village), he's from here, and his wife is from there (Bugis descendant)." (Mahbub).

The presence of several ethnic groups among the employees or leaders in the Arjasa sub-district and Pajanangger village can be considered an indicator of inclusive leadership. It indicates that the government has policies that promote diversity in government leadership. Representing these ethnic groups in political positions and bureaucracy suggests that the diversity of perspectives and interests is acknowledged and considered in local governance. Although both the Arjasa sub-district head and the Pajanangger village head mentioned in their interviews that they do not consider these origins in their work, and all decisions are based on the capacity and visions of each individual, this can be an indication that the local government has inclusive policies that recognize the rights and needs of various ethnic groups. These rights

include the right to participate in the political process, access public services, and receive equal legal protection.

Furthermore, structural assimilation can also be seen in various community organizations and groups. Most muslim Bugis descendants have merged with the Kangean community in religious organizations such as NU and Muhammadiyah. There are no ethnic divisions in community activities, such as religious study groups, religious arts, and village-level organizations like youth organizations, sports associations like Persepa (Pajanangger Football Association), and women's volleyball groups.

Interviewer: "So, these are like religious-based groups here?"

Suhrawi: "Yes, based on religion. Yes, like religious study groups."

Interviewer: "Are there no Bugis groups here?"

Suhrawi: "There aren't. Here, these groups go back to these, like Muhammadiyah... then NU." (Suhrawi).

In the quote above, Suhrawi emphasizes that no Bugis groups exist in Pajanangger village. Everyone considers themselves part of the Kangean community, so any efforts to revive Bugis culture are not evident, especially in Pajanangger village. As the village head, Suhrawi, whose wife is Bugis, wants to revive Bugis culture as part of cultural tourism. However, he believes reviving Bugis culture at this point could lead to conflicts.

3. Structural Assimilation in the Economic Fields

At the economic level, structural assimilation can be observed in the gradual shift in livelihoods of the Sulawesi community in the Pajanangger area. Initially, when the Bugis people arrived in the Pajanangger village, they primarily held the status of landowners and owners of coconut plantations, while the local Kangean population worked for them. This situation was influenced by the historical context of the Bugis people's arrival in Pajanangger, as explained by Suhrawi:

"...First, the Gelaman people (western side of Pajanangger village) cleared half of the red clay land, then the Bugis people who preferred the swampy areas. Their hobby was planting coconut. That's when the Bugis people came and eventually took control of the village because the local population had become too numerous. The Gelaman and Kangean people moved back to the central village, not only because of the mosquitoes and the presence of wild animals but also because of the results of clearing the land. It took years, and there was a significant gap between the Bugis and Kangean people. There were even some conflicts during that time." (Suhrawi).

Initially, the Gelaman people arrived in the coastal Arjasa area, but the challenging natural conditions,

including dense forests and wildlife, caused them to stop at the red clay land. Many did not enjoy their stay and decided to return to the central Gelaman village. Subsequently, the Bugis people cleared the forest until they reached the coastal area. After successfully clearing the land, the Bugis people owned vast coconut plantations. Due to the extensive Gelaman area, the village was eventually divided into two regions, Gelaman and Pajanangger. Many Bugis people settled in Pajanangger village. The ownership of extensive coconut plantations led to a significant economic disparity between the Bugis and the local Kangean population, occasionally resulting in conflicts.

However, all the respondents from Pajanangger village stated that there have been no conflicts between ethnic groups, especially those leading to bloodshed, for a considerable period. Daeng Rahman, a Bugis community leader in Pajanangger, explained that although conflicts did occur in the past, they were relatively infrequent and were resolved through collaboration between Kangean and Bugis community leaders. The community leaders from both ethnic groups worked together to address issues and maintain harmony. Moreover, most respondents believed there is a sense of mutual interdependence in the local economy between the two groups.

As mentioned in the quotes, some conflicts led to damaged shops, affecting both Kangean and Bugis shop owners. Regardless of ownership, the community collaborated to repair all the damaged shops. The acceptance of the Bugis community by the Kangean people was facilitated by the Bugis community's role in creating employment opportunities. The economic interdependence between the two communities played a crucial role in creating a harmonious social order in the Pajanangger area.

Besides coconut farming, the Bugis people also engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry, even though they were initially known as sailors living in coastal areas. Fishing was not the Bugis people's primary occupation, as Suhrawi explained.

"...It means going to the sea, unprepared (mostly Bugis people). When the sea is calm, they won't go. It's as if there's no initiative to sell or earn money; the most important thing is to ensure their households are well-off. Because, indeed, in Pajanangger village, in particular, their income is pure... from coconut farming, livestock, which are wild here, and from their rice fields. The rice fields here are extraordinary, better than in other villages, even throughout the archipelago. The rice fields in Pajanangger are exceptional..." (Suhrawi).

According to the respondents, ethnic distinctions in these occupations are no longer prominent. As mentioned, Bugis descendants rarely opt for white-collar

jobs or become civil servants. However, in general, both Bugis descendants and the native Kangean population collaborate across various economic sectors. For example, while the Bugis people once held most of the economic resources in the Pajanangger area, the current situation has shifted. Many Kangean individuals, approximately 40% of the Kangean population in Pajanangger and the Arjasa area, have migrated as migrant workers (TKI) to Malaysia. This, as explained by Suhrawi:

"Degradation occurred with the opening of Malaysia. Bugis people did not migrate much because of their wealth, land, and other assets they owned. In contrast, the Kangean people migrated to Malaysia. The value of money was incredibly high at that time. Having one million (rupiah) meant you could buy three to four cows. Kangean people were intelligent in making purchases, which were then utilized, leading to their development. Consequently, the Kangean people now earn the same as or even more than the Bugis people..." (Suhrawi).

Kangean individuals who succeeded as migrant workers in Malaysia subsequently acquired land previously owned by the Bugis people. Economically, Kangean people can now be considered equal to or even wealthier than Bugis. In the long term, as Gordon (1964: 37) suggests, increasing social and economic differentiation within each ethnic group slowly reduces the ethnic impact on politics. This concept applies to Pajanangger village, which Bugis individuals previously led for 32 years. Leadership qualities influence the selection of leaders, but economic factors, such as wealth, also play a role. In the following periods, Kangean individuals, who have experienced economic improvements due to their success as migrant workers in Malaysia, became targets for prospective village leaders to garner support. As such, wealth became a factor that diminished the tendency to vote based on ethnic origin.

The assimilation of the Sulawesi community with the Kangean people is also evident in the actions of one of the interviewees named Mahbub, a community leader of Bugis descent living in Arjasa. As a Head of Islamic Boarding School Sabiliyah, Mahbub is also an owner bread factory. When it comes to business, profit is a primary consideration, so hiring employees based on competence becomes a top priority. Nevertheless, as social beings, family relationships, friendships, and shared ethnic identities also play a role in his choices. For example, Mahbub hired a speaker named Fifi because of their shared ethnic identity as Bugis people and a family connection. In other cases, Mahbub hired his employees based on various factors unrelated to their ethnic background. In summary, Bugis community cliques are not prominent in Arjasa about employment. The choice of employees based on shared

origins emerges from the desire to assist relatives needing economic support rather than a focus on professionalism.

Positive interactions among community members, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds, in community activities are a sign of the successful assimilation of the Bugis community into Kangean society. The social networks formed among them have provided benefits such as emotional support, information exchange, job opportunities, and assistance without ethnic prejudice.

D. CONCLUSIONS

The process of cultural assimilation of Sulawesi culture in Kangean can be considered successful, especially when observing the limited conflicts that occur. Structural assimilation in Kangean, particularly in the Arjasa District, has reached a broader scale, encompassing the participation of Bugis people in various aspects, including the economy, education, and organizations or governmental institutions, especially at the grassroots level, such as in villages and districts.

In education, interactions with Sulawesi culture primarily occur informally in activities organized by the Sulawesi Student Association, as formal education in schools does not teach Sulawesi culture; it follows the local curriculum of Sumenep Regency. Within governmental institutions and organizations, structural assimilation is achieved by building awareness and understanding of ethnic diversity, maintaining a balance of governance rights between Kangean and Sulawesi people, and eliminating ethnic divisions in community activities. In the economic sphere, structural assimilation is evident in the mutual acceptance of job opportunities and interdependence in economic resources.

Because Bugis culture is not formally taught and not passed down within families, in the end, Bugis culture only leaves behind Bugis names and its traditional food names. The Bugis community has assimilated into the culture of Kangean society. Positions within the government structure in Arjas District and Pajanangger Village are held by individuals of various ethnicities such as Madurese, Kangean, Javanese, Chinese, and Bugis. However, these positions are not determined by their ethnic identities but rather by individual competence. This principle also applies in the economic sector. Although initially the economy of the Kangean Islands was dominated by Bugis people, this is no longer the case. When it comes to business, profit is a primary consideration, so hiring employees based on competence becomes a top priority.

Given the fact of the disappearance of Bugis culture in Kangean, future research can explore the effectiveness of community-driven initiatives in preserving and revitalizing cultural traditions, including grassroots

organizations, cultural festivals, and heritage tourism projects.

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