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Article Title

The Participation of the Kaili Indigenous People and the Bugis Ethnicity in Preserving the Kupatan Ritual of the Java Ethnicity

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to understand the process of the Kupatan ritual by the Java ethnicity and the participation forms of the Kaili indigenous people and Bugis ethnicity in the Kupatan ritual in Bahagia Village. This research uses an ethnographic analysis. Ethnographic analysis is an approach that begins with field facts, analyzes them based on cultural theories and relevant arguments to explore the cultural situation of the community, and ultimately yields a conclusion. The results show that the participation of the Kaili indigenous people and the Bugis ethnicity in the preservation of the Kupatan ritual by the Java ethnicity in Bahagia Village demonstrates impressive cultural collaboration, manifested through various processes from the opening, sermon and joint prayer, handshaking, to ngambeng or communal eating. This participation, which occurs in voluntary, spontaneous, and habitual forms, marks deep social and cultural integration among the three ethnic groups. Therefore, it is recommended that the Department of Education and Culture of Sigi Regency enhance support for documenting and promoting the Kupatan ritual as a cultural heritage that enriches local diversity. The residents of Bahagia Village are advised to continue maintaining and expanding participation in the Kupatan ritual, as part of an inclusive cultural preservation effort. The Java ethnicity, Kaili indigenous people, and Bugis ethnicity are encouraged to continue fostering inter-ethnic cooperation and dialogue in celebrating the Kupatan ritual by organizing joint activities to enhance understanding and appreciation of each other's cultures. It will strengthen inter-ethnic collaboration and harmony and ensure the sustainability of the Kupatan ritual as a symbol of unity and diversity in Bahagia Village.

Keywords: Cultural Preservation; Ethnic; Indigenous People; Kupatan Ritual.

INTRODUCTION

Culture often serves as a reflection of a society, revealing its identity and the values it holds (Cooper, 2023). In the Indonesian context, this culture is inseparable from the rich tapestry of traditions that have developed and been preserved throughout history (Ahmad et al., 2023). One manifestation of this culture is the various traditions passed down from generation to generation, which are not merely routine activities but also embody profound philosophical values (Akhurun & Septiady, 2022). Specifically in Java, the *Kupatan* ritual is a vivid testament to today's cultural richness.

The *Kupatan* ritual, a core part of the *ketupat* festival, has deep historical roots for the Java ethnicity. This tradition, which has existed since the Hindu-Buddhist era, is more than just a celebration; it also reflects the values embraced by the Java ethnicity (Siswayanti & Yunani, 2021). The philosophy behind the name *ketupat*, symbolizing the acknowledgment of faults and four significant actions performed during the festival, illustrates the deep meaning inherent in this tradition. It shows how culture can unify ideas, symbols, and values into a meaningful celebration.

Over time, the *Kupatan* ritual has undergone acculturation, particularly with the introduction of Islam to Indonesia. The interaction between local traditions and new values has added a new dimension to the *Kupatan* ritual, especially as it marks the end of Ramadan fasting (Ningsih, 2020). Thus, this tradition not only preserves old values but also integrates new ones that align with the dynamics of society. In Palolo Sub-District, Sigi Regency, the *Kupatan* ritual exemplifies how traditions can bridge various ethnicities and cultures, showcasing diversity within unity.

Bahagia Village, located in Palolo Sub-District, displays a rich cultural diversity, with most of its residents being of Java ethnicity. The presence of the Kaili indigenous people and the Bugis ethnicity from South Sulawesi adds to the village's demographic composition. Economic factors drove the migration of the Bugis ethnicity (Acciaioli & Nasrum, 2020), while the relocation of the Java ethnicity was part of a government transmigration program (Listiqowati et al., 2021). This diversity brings a social and economic dynamic that shapes the community structure of Bahagia Village today. This diversity is not only evident in ethnic origins but also in economic activities, where the Bugis typically engage in trade, whereas the Java is predominantly involved in agriculture.

The ethnic diversity in Bahagia Village creates a unique cultural mosaic, particularly in preserving and practicing traditions. As one of the majority populations, the Java ethnicity has played a crucial role in maintaining the Kupatan ritual, which is part of their cultural heritage. This tradition endures through changing times and new geographic contexts and attracts participation from other ethnicities in the village, creating an engaging cultural collaboration. The Kupatan ritual by the Java ethnicity, involving the Kaili indigenous people and the Bugis ethnicity, reflects an ongoing cultural integration process within the life context of Bahagia Village.

The participation of all community elements in Bahagia Village, comprising the Java ethnicity, Kaili indigenous people, and Bugis ethnicity, in celebrating the Kupatan ritual reflects a robust social unity amidst diversity. This tradition symbolizes togetherness and serves as a bridge connecting old and new generations through its annual execution. The timing of the Kupatan ritual, seven days after Eid al-Fitr, follows a long-standing tradition and marks the end of the six-day Syawal fasting. This practice shows how traditions can collaborate with religious practices, creating harmony and diversity (Truna & Zakaria, 2022).

The variation in Kupatan ritual practices across regions demonstrates local adaptations and interpretations of the same tradition. For example, the community in Durenan Village in East Java celebrates the Kupatan ritual by parading a giant *ketupat* around the village (Amin, 2017). In contrast, in Bahagia Village, they celebrate this tradition at the mosque. The approach of the Java ethnicity in Bahagia Village not only strengthens religious values within the community but also ensures universal participation from all Muslims, regardless of social status or ethnic background. Choosing the mosque as the celebration location symbolizes inclusivity and unity, illustrating how spiritual and communal values can intertwine within a tradition.

The participation of the Bahagia Village community in the Kupatan ritual at the mosque indicates a broader social phenomenon where values of togetherness, equality, and solidarity are at the heart of the celebration. Through this tradition, the community not only commemorates and celebrates the end of a worship period but also actualizes the concepts of brotherhood and mutual support in daily life. It creates

a strong foundation for the village's social character, reflected in harmonious and supportive inter-resident relations and enriches communal life in Bahagia Village.

Based on the description above, this research aims to understand the process of the Kupatan ritual by the Java ethnicity and the participation forms of the Kaili indigenous people and Bugis ethnicity in the Kupatan ritual in Bahagia Village. The expected benefits of this research include enriching the knowledge base on cultural diversity and inter-ethnic interactions in the context of traditional celebrations. Additionally, this research intends to identify the social values intertwined through this tradition, which can serve as a foundation for promoting harmony and togetherness among village residents and informing strategies for ethnic and cultural preservation in the face of changing times and globalization.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach to understand groups of people, objects, situations, conditions, ongoing events, and even thought systems (Whitney, 1960). This research was conducted in Bahagia Village, Sigi Regency. This research utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Data was collected through interviews with key informants, field observations, literature study techniques, and document analysis concerning inter-ethnic interactions in the Kupatan ritual. The acquired data was then analyzed using ethnographic analysis. Ethnographic analysis is an approach that begins with field facts, analyzes them based on cultural theories and relevant arguments to explore the cultural situation of the community, and ultimately yields a conclusion (Hicks et al., 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Kupatan ritual in Bahagia Village has become a symbol of unity and harmony among residents of different ethnicities. This activity involves the Java ethnicity, the Kaili indigenous people, and the Bugis ethnicity, demonstrating how this tradition has embraced various layers of society. Their participation in the Kupatan ritual proves that this tradition is more than just a religious celebration; it has become a bridge for intercultural connection that respects diversity. The positive energy generated from this collective activity strengthens the bonds of brotherhood and reinforces religious and communal harmony (Sasmita et al., 2022).

Originating in the 15th century during the Demak Sultanate era, the Kupatan ritual shows how this tradition has traversed hundreds of years while maintaining its authenticity (Fadli, 2022). Interestingly, the choice to celebrate this tradition at a mosque in Bahagia Village, which predominantly practices Islam, signifies the adaptation of the tradition to the local environment. It confirms that the Kupatan ritual is not merely ceremonial but possesses a deep religious dimension for the community. The local community regards the Kupatan ritual as an expression of gratitude for

successfully observing Ramadan fasting, followed by voluntary fasting in the month of Shawwal, which enriches their spiritual values.

The participation of the Kaili indigenous people and the Bugis ethnicity in the Kupatan ritual is a concrete manifestation of mutual assistance and understanding between ethnic groups. Through this participation, they respect and value the tradition carried out by the Java ethnicity and strengthen the foundation of religious harmony. Integrating various cultural elements in one celebration creates a beautiful social harmony, reflecting the richness and diversity of Indonesian culture. Thus, this paper will further discuss the process of the Kupatan ritual by the Java ethnicity and the forms of participation by the Kaili indigenous people and the Bugis ethnicity in the Kupatan ritual.

A. The Kupatan Ritual Process

The Kupatan ritual performed by the Java ethnicity in Bahagia Village, centered at the mosque and led by an *imam*, underscores the integration of religious values into the cultural celebration. The selamatan ceremony, attended by the entire community and featuring *ketupat* as the main dish, reflects deep meanings of gratitude and togetherness. The sequence of the Kupatan ritual procession will be elaborated further in subsequent discussions.

1. The Opening

The opening procession of the Kupatan ritual follows long-established protocols, beginning with the community gathering at the mosque. Their seated arrangement in circles reflects the concepts of togetherness and unity among community members. Choosing the mosque as the gathering place highlights the religious aspect of this celebration and its roots in the familial and communal values central to the Kupatan ritual. Based on ritual process theory, this gathering phase represents the 'liminal phase,' marking a transition from everyday life to a sacred space where the community assembles for a common purpose (Maiyo et al., 2023).

Once tranquility has been established, the role of the Master of Ceremony (MC) becomes vital in facilitating the event's proceedings. The MC serves not only to manage the event flow but also to connect participants and event leaders. The MC's calling of the mosque's *imam* to open the event underscores the religious leader's significant role in the community, especially in an event with a spiritual dimension like the Kupatan ritual. In this instance, the *imam*, Mr. Sucipto M. Rifai, is a central figure representing religious and cultural authority whose presence validates and blesses the event.

The addresses given by key figures, including the Village Head and the Head or Secretary of Palolo Sub-District, are more than mere formalities; they

also strengthen social bonds and reassert the community's commitment to the cultural and social values they uphold. In this context, these addresses serve as an effective communication medium for conveying important messages and reinforcing social solidarity (Emojong' & Korir, 2022). Moreover, they reemphasize the role and responsibility of each individual in preserving traditions and culture while demonstrating the local government's full support for activities that strengthen local identity and wisdom (Arafat et al., 2022).

2. The Sermon and Joint Prayer

Following the opening speeches, the Kupatan ritual continued with a sermon and joint prayer session led by Mr. Erwin Sujatmiko, a respected *Ustaz* in the village. This sermon served not only as a religious ritual but also as a means for introspection and self-renewal, especially given the context of Eid al-Fitr, which is rich with the values of forgiveness. *Ustaz* Erwin's sermon addressed religious and social aspects, considering that *halal bi halal* is a tradition deeply rooted in Indonesian society as a symbol of reconciliation and the restoration of interpersonal relationships (Maulidia, 2020).

The concept of forgiveness discussed in the sermon reflects a fundamental principle in communal living, aligning with interpersonal communication and conflict resolution theories. In this context, the sermon serves as a medium to convey moral and ethical messages that support forming a harmonious community (Sukirman et al., 2022). The sermon's delivery by a *Ustaz* who possesses spiritual authority adds significance and depth to the message, reinforcing the role of religious leaders in guiding and uniting the community.

The joint prayer that followed the sermon marked the climax of the spiritual procession in this celebration. Through the joint prayer, all participants united in their intentions and hopes for the collective well-being of the local community and society. This practice reaffirms the importance of solidarity and collective support in communal life (Dewiyanti et al., 2023), consistent with the principle of togetherness, a cornerstone of Bahagia Village. Through the joint prayer, the messages delivered in the sermon are expected not only to remain discourse but also to be realized in concrete actions that support a more harmonious and peaceful social life.

3. The Handshake Process

The handshake procession that follows the sermon and joint prayer session during the Kupatan ritual is crucial in strengthening interpersonal relationships among the community members. This procession is not merely symbolic but serves as a tangible manifestation of the forgiveness practices discussed in the sermon. The ritual begins with handshakes with the elderly, demonstrating respect and acknowledgment of their maturity and wisdom,

and continues with all community members, including men, women, and young people.

According to nonverbal communication theory, physical contact, such as handshaking, carries profound significance in social interactions (Ibrahim et al., 2022), particularly in cultures that emphasize harmony and togetherness, such as Indonesia. In this context, a handshake is more than just a gesture; it is a means of communication that conveys good intentions, respect, and a desire to mend relationships that past mistakes may have damaged. This procession highlights the importance of sincerity and the renewal of social relationships as integral parts of the Kupatan ritual.

Furthermore, participating in all community layers, from the eldest to the youngest, in the handshake procession reflects the cross-generational transmission of social values and norms that characterize Bahagia Village society. This procession teaches the importance of humility, respect for others, and the awareness always to maintain harmony in social relationships. Through the handshakes, participants in the Kupatan ritual are encouraged to reflect on themselves and renew their commitment to a peaceful and harmonious community life in line with the values upheld by Bahagia Village society.

4. The *Ngambeng* (Communal Eating) Procession

The *ngambeng* (communal eating) procession during the Kupatan ritual is a critical stage that marks the climax of the series of events. This activity is not merely about eating together; it is a practice laden with meaning, representing togetherness, brotherhood, and gratitude for the blessings received. According to culinary anthropology theory, communal eating in the context of rituals or celebrations symbolizes community unity, where food is not just seen as a physical necessity but also as a medium to share and celebrate the social and cultural values held collectively (Syahrial & Anjarsari, 2023).

This procession takes place outside the mosque, indicating a dynamic adaptation of space in traditional celebrations, where the sacred space of the mosque is used for more religious proceedings like sermons and prayers. At the same time, the outside area becomes a place for communal activities that emphasize social and cultural aspects. The food arrangement on the mosque's outer terrace portrays the openness and inclusiveness of the Bahagia Village community, where everyone, regardless of social status, sits together and shares food from their homes. It reflects the egalitarian principle characteristic of the Java ethnicity, where everyone is treated equally in a communal context (Subahri & Nuha, 2022).

The dishes, dominated by *ketupat*, *lepet*, and vegetables, cater to physical needs and contain rich symbolism. *Ketupat*, not just the main dish in

the *ngambeng* procession, carries deeper meanings than merely being food. The terms “*Ngaku Lepat*,” meaning to acknowledge mistakes, and “*Laku Papat*,” which includes four essential actions—*lebaran*, *luberan*, *leburan*, and *laburan*—highlight the rich spiritual and cultural symbolism of *ketupat* (Zamhari, 2023). *Lebaran* signifies the holiday, *luberan* means abundance (material or spiritual), *leburan* depicts the dissolution of sins and mistakes, and *laburan* symbolizes that one’s heart will become white and pure again. *Ketupat*, therefore, is not just food to be enjoyed together but also a medium that conveys profound messages about the importance of self-reflection, forgiveness, and generosity. In the context of *ngambeng*, *ketupat* becomes a symbol of the values to be lived and passed on, reaffirming the importance of togetherness, brotherhood, and tradition in strengthening social bonds in Bahagia Village.

B. Forms of Participation of the Kaili Indigenous People and the Bugis Ethnicity in the Kupatan Ritual Process

The participation of the Kaili indigenous people and the Bugis ethnicity in the Kupatan ritual hosted by the Java ethnicity in Bahagia Village signifies harmonious social integration among various ethnic groups. Their involvement in various activities, from preparation to execution, illustrates solidarity and a strong sense of belonging to this tradition, even though it is not directly part of their cultural heritage. The forms of participation by the Kaili indigenous people and the Bugis ethnicity in this traditional celebration will be further detailed in the subsequent discussion.

1. The Voluntary Participation

The voluntary participation of the Kaili indigenous people and the Bugis ethnicity in the Kupatan ritual illustrates a unique phenomenon in the dynamics of a multi-ethnic society. They willingly engage in the process and preparation, including preparing food, a crucial element of the Kupatan ritual, demonstrating deep cross-cultural solidarity and respect. This involvement, which arises from an intrinsic desire to contribute to the event’s success, reflects strong and deep-rooted communal values in Bahagia Village, where traditions are not just preserved by one ethnicity but are a shared heritage celebrated by all.

This high level of participation strengthens social bonds between the Java ethnicity, Kaili indigenous people, and Bugis ethnicity and promotes understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. By participating in traditional activities that do not originate from their cultures, the Kaili indigenous people and the Bugis ethnicity demonstrate openness and adaptability, which enrich the cultural tapestry of Bahagia Village. Their free and voluntary engagement in the Kupatan ritual exemplifies the concept of

‘unity in diversity,’ where differences are valued and celebrated as a shared wealth that strengthens communal ties (Muis, 2022).

Furthermore, this voluntary participation also creates opportunities for cultural exchange, allowing for deeper understanding and mutual respect among ethnic groups. By sharing practices, traditions, and food, the Kaili indigenous people and the Bugis ethnicity do not just participate in the ceremony but also engage in a cultural dialogue that paves the way for greater social cohesion. Their presence and contributions to the Kupatan ritual are tangible evidence of the community’s ability to bridge differences and build a harmonious community based on mutual understanding and cooperation principles.

2. The Spontaneous Participation

The spontaneous participation of the Kaili indigenous people and the Bugis ethnicity in the Kupatan ritual represents an intriguing social phenomenon, showcasing positive inter-ethnic interaction dynamics. Their involvement, without external encouragement such as outreach or invitations, indicates intrinsic motivation and a deep understanding of the importance of the activity. This phenomenon, emerging from self-awareness and the desire to participate, reflects a high level of integration and social coherence in a multi-ethnic society. According to collective action theory, spontaneous participation is often driven by individual perceptions of the effectiveness of collective action and identification with the group or activity involved (Tittonell et al., 2021).

Furthermore, this spontaneous participation indicates mutual respect and esteem among ethnic groups, motivating the Kaili indigenous people and the Bugis ethnicity to contribute to the Kupatan ritual. On their initiative, they choose to be part of the traditional process, which not only shows respect for the Java ethnicity but also underscores universal values such as brotherhood and unity (Rusman et al., 2023). This involvement aligns with symbolic interactionism theory, which emphasizes the meanings and values formed through social interactions, where spontaneous participation in the Kupatan ritual serves as a means for the Kaili indigenous people and the Bugis ethnicity to communicate their support and solidarity (Wu et al., 2023).

Moreover, this spontaneous participation contributes to the maintenance and enrichment of the Kupatan ritual, demonstrating that this tradition has transcended ethnic boundaries and become part of a shared cultural heritage. It confirms the concept that traditions and cultures are not static but dynamic, capable of evolving and being enriched through the participation and contributions of various groups. Through this spontaneous participation, the Kaili indigenous people and the Bugis ethnicity demonstrate the diversity and

inclusivity of Bahagia Village and affirm that the Kupatan ritual symbolizes the harmony and diversity of Bahagia Village society.

3. The Habitual Participation

The habitual participation of the Kaili indigenous people and the Bugis ethnicity in the Kupatan ritual reflects a complex and dynamic cultural acculturation phenomenon. This annual participation has established a new tradition for them, demonstrating how cultural activity can transcend ethnic boundaries and become integral to the broader community life. This process aligns with acculturation theory, which posits that intercultural encounters can lead to accepting and integrating foreign cultural elements, thus forming new social practices all involved groups value (Karim, 2021).

In the context of Bahagia Village, acculturation enables the Kaili indigenous people and the Bugis ethnicity to adopt the Kupatan ritual as part of their cultural heritage. It enriches the tradition with its cultural elements. This process creates a hybrid cultural phenomenon, where the Kupatan ritual is no longer exclusive to the Java ethnicity but has become a symbol of Bahagia Village's multicultural identity. This phenomenon underscores the importance of flexibility and adaptation in maintaining and evolving cultural traditions, consistent with cultural adaptation theory, which emphasizes how cultural groups adjust in the face of social and environmental changes (Sayful, 2020).

Furthermore, this habitual participation demonstrates how acculturation can occur without erasing the original cultural identities of the interacting groups (Cormos, 2022). While embracing aspects of the Kupatan ritual, the Kaili indigenous people and the Bugis ethnicity continue to maintain and celebrate unique aspects of their cultures. This process creates a socially rich environment of cultural diversity, where Bahagia Village can celebrate various traditions and cultural practices within a framework of togetherness and mutual respect. Thus, the habitual participation in the Kupatan ritual by the Kaili indigenous people and the Bugis ethnicity is a powerful example of how a multicultural society can thrive through a respectful and enriching acculturation process.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that the participation of the Kaili indigenous people and the Bugis ethnicity in the preservation of the Kupatan ritual by the Java ethnicity in Bahagia Village demonstrates impressive cultural collaboration, manifested through various processes from the opening, sermon and joint prayer, handshaking, to *ngambeng* or communal eating. This participation, which occurs in voluntary, spontaneous, and habitual forms, marks deep social and cultural integration among the three ethnic groups, highlighting how the celebration

of tradition can serve as a meeting point that celebrates and nurtures diversity in unity. The involvement of the Kaili indigenous people and the Bugis ethnicity is not merely about presence but is a significant contribution that enhances the richness and sustainability of the Kupatan ritual in Bahagia Village, showcasing the dynamics of a multi-ethnic society that respects and supports each other's cultural heritage.

Based on the conclusions above, it is recommended that the Department of Education and Culture of Sigi Regency enhance support for documenting and promoting the Kupatan ritual as a cultural heritage that enriches local diversity. The residents of Bahagia Village are advised to continue maintaining and expanding participation in the Kupatan ritual, not only among the Java ethnicity but also by inviting more participation from the Kaili indigenous people, the Bugis ethnicity, and other ethnic groups, as part of an inclusive cultural preservation effort. The Java ethnicity, Kaili indigenous people, and Bugis ethnicity are encouraged to continue fostering inter-ethnic cooperation and dialogue in celebrating the Kupatan ritual by organizing joint activities to enhance understanding and appreciation of each other's cultures. It will strengthen inter-ethnic collaboration and harmony and ensure the sustainability of the Kupatan ritual as a symbol of unity and diversity in Bahagia Village.

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