

**AN OVERVIEW OF BUGIS WEDDING CULTURE PRIOR TO
THE EMERGENCE OF WEDDING ORGANIZERS.**

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Abstract

This study aims to revisit the cultural processes involved in wedding ceremonies within the Bugis community in South Sulawesi. Weddings in Bugis culture are traditionally perceived as intricate events, comprising numerous stages leading up to the main ceremony, enriched with ritual customs and cultural values that have been passed down through generations. These processes involve the active participation of extended family members, relatives, and the surrounding community in the preparation and execution of the wedding. The complexity and high cost of Bugis wedding traditions are deeply rooted in the cultural principle of siri, which emphasizes the importance of honor and dignity.

Keywords: Bugis Culture, Wedding, Values

BACKGROUND

Culture is a complex entity encompassing social values, knowledge, social norms, religious practices, and social structures (Eppink Andreas, 2021). It represents human creations derived from the development of social life, which are then passed down through generations via communication and guidance aimed at preserving cultural heritage.

For the Bugis community, marriage signifies mutual acceptance and is regarded as a reciprocal bond. Despite differences in social strata, once a couple is officially united as husband and wife, they are recognized as a pair. In Bugis culture, marriage is not merely the union of two individuals but a ceremonial unification of two extended families, often already connected, to strengthen or deepen familial ties (Pelras, 1996).

Another interpretation of marriage in Bugis culture is found in Sulasena by Anwar Ibrahim, which discusses *siabbineng*—a term derived from *bine*, meaning "paddy," and *mabinne*, meaning "to plant paddy." This perspective resonates phonetically with *baine* or "wife," and *mabbaine*, meaning "to have a wife." The term *siabbineng* conveys the idea of planting seeds within a household, symbolizing the hope for positive

values to become the foundation of family life (Ibrahim, A., 2002).

Bugis weddings are among the most intricate cultural wedding traditions, involving significant emotions and energy from the proposal stage to the reception at the groom's side. The ceremony engages all family members connected to both the bride and groom. Traditional Bugis weddings uphold the belief that every step of the process carries symbolic meaning and values, performed with caution to avoid violating their cultural beliefs (Sudirman'P, 2016).

In the Bugis community, which strongly adheres to the principle of *siri*—meaning honor or dignity—a wedding is not merely a gathering of invited guests but also a means of enhancing social status. The grander the celebration, the higher the family's perceived status within the Bugis social hierarchy. Consequently, it is common for extended families to actively participate in making a wedding celebration as grand as possible, particularly for their children or nieces and nephews. Long before the main event, relatives from both the father's and mother's sides are already involved, taking on roles and dividing responsibilities to ensure the success of the wedding (Hardianti, 2015).

There are several stages in the process of a traditional Bugis wedding ceremony. In an unpublished book titled *Sakke Rupa: History and Culture of Bone* (Ir. H. Andi Promal Pawi, M.Si.), the first pre-wedding stage is *mamanu-manu*, which means conveying the good intentions of the prospective groom or his family to the prospective bride's family. This is typically done by the prospective groom or a family member entrusted to deliver the purpose of the proposal. This stage is conducted discreetly because, in Bugis culture, dignity is held in high regard, and they fear public knowledge if the proposal is rejected. This is referred to as the *mamanu-manu* process.

Following this is the *massuro* process, which refers to an official proposal that still involves a small number of people, typically consisting of a dialogue between a few individuals. Next is the *mappetuada* stage, where the engagement day is held to determine the wedding date and to provide *uang panaik* or dowry to the bride. This is conducted at the bride's residence and attended by the extended families of both sides to discuss the date of the wedding ceremony and the *mapparolla* or the groom's celebration. The traditional ceremonies that follow the aforementioned stages include customs performed for the prospective bride. The *mabedda*

process involves applying wet powder or body scrub made from soaked and finely ground rice mixed with turmeric and various spices all over the bride's body. The *ripasau* process is a treatment carried out in a designated room, such as the kitchen or bedroom, where herbal leaves are boiled to produce steam. The steam is used to warm the body, inducing sweat and releasing negative energy from the bride.

The *cemme passili* ritual is believed to ward off bad luck by asking for Allah SWT's protection from harm. This process is conducted at the front door of the house, symbolizing the intention to keep external dangers from entering the home and to expel internal misfortunes. The *macceko* practice involves trimming hairs around the eyebrows, symbolizing the Bugis belief that the bride's *dadasa* or black decorative makeup will adhere properly. Finally, the *mappacci* ritual is a purification ceremony to cleanse the bride from negative elements, performed the night before the wedding. This ceremony involves inviting family and relatives to apply *pacci* leaves and other symbolic items.

This study aims to explain the portrayal of Bugis marriage culture in Makassar before the emergence of wedding organizer services, highlighting the strong spirit of mutual cooperation at each stage,

from preparation to the cleaning process after the event. This strengthens the bonds of togetherness and family ties within the Bugis community. Therefore, this research requires several informants to be interviewed for their views on marriage.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative method, which is employed to collect information aimed at enhancing the understanding of a topic or issue. Qualitative research seeks to explore and observe social reality issues. By using the qualitative method, the portrayal of Bugis marriage culture before the presence of wedding organizers can be re-examined, observing how Bugis weddings are rich in philosophy and meaning in every stage of the ceremony.

In conducting this research, fieldwork was carried out to collect data through observation, interviews, and documentation. In observation, a researcher does not merely observe, but does so with seriousness to obtain useful and accurate results. The outcome of observing is aimed at gathering valid data through three methods of observation before conducting interviews.

Structured interviews were used as a data collection technique, where

instruments in the form of prepared questions were given to the informants. Each respondent was asked the same set of questions during the interview. Semi-structured interviews allowed for more freedom in questioning the respondents to encourage openness. Unstructured interviews, on the other hand, are informal and do not require the researcher to follow a systematic guideline; instead, the process is driven by the main points of the issues to be addressed.

Documentation, according to GJ. Renier, a prominent historian, is crucial for gathering data related to aspects or variables such as transcripts, books, newspapers, journals, and other writings deemed relevant by the researcher for the required data (Haris Herdiansyah, 2015).

RESULT

To analyze Bugis marriage culture before the advent of wedding organizers, it is necessary to explain the main concepts of History and Localization using data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, and documentation.

The view of Bugis marriage is deeply consistent with the cultural teachings passed down by their ancestors, as stated in Bugis language: "Narekko tomappabboting sitongkkoi ade'E sibawa gaukengnge, syara sanre ade', ade' sanre wari, wari

sanre tulida," which means that in carrying out the marriage process, customs and actions must go hand in hand. The traditional customs are closely connected with social order, and in this sense, culture and society function in harmony within life.

According to Susan Bollyard Millar (2009), the role of family in organizing the wedding celebration is met with great enthusiasm. Preparations typically begin two to four weeks in advance, depending on whether the family intends to hold a grand or simple celebration. However, for the Bugis community, a wedding celebration is always associated with a grand event. Therefore, the organizers must hold a meeting to form a committee within the extended family.

Before marriage, there were so many things that needed to be prepared and organized, and the most important people involved were my mother's and father's relatives, especially when it was the son or male nephew who was going to get married. The preparations started with discussions about the dowry (uang panaik) and the family's plan to visit the woman's house for the proposal.

During this time, the best date for bringing the dowry or what we call "mappetuadda" was usually decided. Once the mappetuadda process started, preparations for the invitations would follow, and

typically, cousins would be asked to wear a suit and baju bodo and then go out to distribute the invitations. After that, the preparation of the invitations was taken care of, and the work would continue. Basically, all close and extended family members would contribute to making the event as great as possible (Hikma, 2024).

The quote above explains how crucial family involvement is in the planning and execution of a wedding for one of their family members. Uncles and aunts are deeply involved in ensuring every detail is taken care of, and here lies the value system of the Bugis community that places great importance on honesty (lempu) when working together as one family unit, steadfastness (agetengeng) which is essential to fulfilling responsibilities, unity (sibaliperri) in cooperation, and mutual assistance (sipurepo), which is the spirit of gotong royong in the Bugis community (Abdi Mahesa, 2024).

Historically, most people believe it is necessary to explain the facts to prove something because facts are the main element of history, speaking of the past that has brought us to where we are today. There are several steps to reconstruct a fact, starting from where the historical source comes from, who the

historical figures involved directly in the struggle or practice of history are, and the witnesses of history, those who know the event but were not directly involved (Saefur, 2009).

Bugis society is characterized by distinct stages in their marriage traditions, beginning with an inquiry directed toward the woman to be proposed to. This stage involves a series of questions deemed essential by the man's family to gain necessary insights. Once the woman agrees to the proposal, the process transitions to the engagement stage. During this stage, the prospective groom and his extended family present a sum of money as a customary prerequisite for marriage, along with determining an auspicious date for the marriage contract (akad nikah) and the reception. Following the reception, both newlyweds proceed to the groom's residence (Sariah, 2024).

From the excerpt above, it is evident that there are many stages that need to be carried out for a Bugis wedding, and each stage carries a philosophical meaning. In this case, the mamamu process is likened to birds flying here and there searching for food. This process involves inquiring about the woman indirectly with several questions. Questions such as: "Has anyone approached you?", "Has anyone previously expressed good intentions toward you?", "Is the door still open if someone has good intentions

towards you?" are some of the questions asked during the mamamu process. In the maduta or official proposal stage, the status, family lineage, and financial matters, including the amount of money to be given to the bride's family, must be clarified. The mapenre dui can also be referred to as mappetuadda, and it is usually carried out openly, attended by both extended families. During this stage, an agreement is made through deliberation regarding the wedding date and other important matters related to the ceremony.

In a Bugis wedding, there is a series of events that must take place leading up to the wedding day. One of the rituals performed by the bride is mabedda, where a wet powder is applied to the bride's entire body. The ingredients for this powder are made from materials that have been soaked and finely ground, including turmeric and several roots. These ingredients are then mixed with other spices by a trusted aunt or grandmother, who is believed to have the ability to carry out the mabedda ritual (Andi Baso Ahmad and Ibu Ramlah).

Ripasau is a ritual performed for the bride-to-be, conducted in a specific room or kitchen in the bride's house. The process involves making a mixture by first cooking leaves such as sukun, coppen (in Bugis language), fragrant pandan leaves, and roots.

After boiling, the mixture is poured into a large pot placed on a tray, and the pot's mouth is covered with banana leaves, allowing the steam to emerge. This steam warms the bride's body, causing sweat to pour out, symbolizing the release of negative energy. The bride feels refreshed and purified as a result.

Cemme Passili is a ritual performed to ask for protection from any harm, especially for the bride. The ceremony takes place in front of the house door, with the bride sitting on a coconut or a traditional bench called bangko bangko, which is laid with a large metal tray or kappara. On the side, a small basin is placed containing rice, candles, whole coconut, brown sugar, nutmeg, cinnamon sticks, and a few areca nuts. During this process, various leaves such as serikaja, tebu, cabberu, tabaliang, waru, and cangadori are added to a large jar. The ritual is then performed by indo botting (a family member, often an elder), and the bride wears the traditional bodo dress and lipa sabbe headpiece (Andi Baso Ahmad and Ramlah).

Maceko is the next ritual after cemme passili, which involves shaving the fine hairs on the forehead and eyebrows. This ritual ensures that "dadasa," a traditional black face decoration for Bugis women, will adhere properly when applied to the bride's forehead.

Mappacci, also known as tudang penni, takes place the night before the wedding ceremony (the mapenre botting or wedding day). The extended family, relatives, and friends gather, and the bride is dressed in full wedding attire, including the bodo dress and a traditional headpiece. The Mappacci ritual involves family members taking turns applying pacci (a red paste made from pacar leaves) to the bride's palms while offering their blessings and prayers.

Mapenre botting, or the wedding ceremony, takes place at the bride's residence where the ijab qabul (wedding vows) is performed. The bride is escorted by family members, with the uncle of the groom playing a significant role in the process (Pelras, 2006). Prior to the ijab qabul, seserahan (gifts) or erang-erang (a traditional offering) along with several types of traditional sweets wrapped in bosara (traditional cloth) are given to the bride's family. This exchange follows the agreement made during the musyawarah mufakat or mapenre dui balanca (the consensus meeting). After the mahar (dowry) and the remaining money for the wedding expenses are handed over, the akad nikah (marriage contract) is then carried out (Susan Bollyard Millar, 2009).

Mapparola is a process in which the bride's family visits the groom's residence the day after the

wedding ceremony at the bride's home. Both the bride and groom get dressed again for the Mapparola ceremony. When the entourage from the bride's side arrives at the groom's house, they wait in the vehicle to be greeted by the groom's family and escorted into the house.

Locality not only refers to past conditions but, beyond that, requires an understanding of our culture, which has been passed down through generations, full of meaning and values contained within it. Locality provides an element of beauty in every object it refers to, bringing forth cultural richness that enhances our understanding of history and the identity of a community (Tri Widiati, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results above, which were conducted to revisit how Bugis weddings were carried out in the past, it is evident that each step of the process carries significant philosophical values and meanings. This is what makes the Bugis community well-known, even internationally, due to the high value placed on togetherness and the involvement of family members, which serve as a measure of the success of an event in Bugis society.

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