The Existence of Bugis Migrants
(a Study of Social Interaction Strategy In Kendari, Southeast Sulawesi-Indonesia)

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ABSTRACT

The Bugis people spread out all over the world and they have been well-kwon as wanderers. They settle alongside areas of native inhabitants and other ethnic groups for significant lengths of time without any notable conflict in Indonesia. This is generally attributed to the ability of the Bugis people to interact well with others and adapt to different social environments. The research aims to discover and explain strategies of social interaction as observed from Bugis migrants in the city of Kendari. This study is a qualitative research with a phenomenological approach using a flow model to analyze data. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation.

Keywords:
Bugis Migrants, Social Interaction Pattern, Social Interaction Strategies, Social Adaptation, Social Attribution, and Acculturation

I. Introduction

Indonesia is a decently populated country which is heterogeneous. This can promote various problems in developing its people. The growth of population tends to increase rapidly in populous regions especially in areas which possess potential natural resources. The areas are not well developed, as a result job opportunities are very limited and the areas cannot provide business opportunities for the people. In turn, this encourages people to migrate to several areas which are very promising form them.

The dynamics of life of the Indonesian people have generated many problems especially in the integration of native and migrants of other ethnic groups. Competitions amongst them have occurred and this leads to disputes and conflicts amongst ethnic groups and creates socio-cultural, economical and political instability in the community. Therefore, necessary efforts should be taken by the community in order to develop a better dynamics of social life amongst ethnic groups in terms of the migration contexts.

The people of South Sulawesi Province have been well known as migratory people especially since the Gowa Kingdom was conquered by the Dutch in 1669 and conflict between the Bugis kingdoms and Makassar kingdoms as well as internal conflicts amongst Bugis kingdoms starting from 16th century to 19th century which caused the migration of Bugis.

A Bugis philosophy which was stated in Paseng (messages) of Wajo Kingdom named La Tadampare’ Puang ri Ma’galatung (Moein, 1994:19) emphasizes that: “re’sopa na tinulu’ na temmangingi ‘ nale’te’i pammase’ De’wata Se’uae”” (Only hard work, determination and non boredom are given by God Almighty through His grace). This paseng has always inspired all Bugis society to work hard in order to achieve social changes so that the previous situation which was only an imagination or a dream can be realized into a reality. The success of economic well-being of many Bugis people has led to competition and even many of them have shifted the economic and social status of the people in the areas where they migrated.

Migration motive is influenced by internal elements of a community although it is significantly determined by external stimulation. Therefore, the motivation of migration shall be understood, studied and analyzed utilizing theories of sociology. As one of the phenomena of Bugis society, migration to urban areas can be approached with push-pull factors theory where urban areas generate the pull
factors and rural areas construct the push factors. These two kinds of factors have been partially integrated and they have encouraged rural people to migrate to urban areas which are very promising to have a better life (Lee : 1976).

Furthermore Bugis people have been well known as massompe (migration) and they have constantly explore and visit all areas in Indonesia with a variety of purposes such as trading, continuing education or seeking for livelihood and new hopes in order to change the social economic condition which cannot be achieved in the areas where they used to live previously because of many factors.

Another aspect which is interesting to be looked at is the increasing population growth of Bugis migrants. This is caused by several factors. Firstly, Kendari is close to the origins of Bugis migrants. Secondly, Kendari city is easy to access. Thirdly, the number of members of families and relatives who have previously migrated. Finally, Kendari city is an ideal destination for migration because of the economic growth, employment and business opportunities as well as the natural resources and social environment which are similar to the origins. Thus, this research aims to explore and describe the strategies of social interaction of Bugis migrants in Kendari city, Southeast Province, Indonesia.

II. Literature Review

A. The Social Interaction of Migrants

Social attribution is the way to explain both behaviors of others and themselves and also the result of behavior which is in question such as attributes, motives, attitudes, and another external situation factors. This causal explanation is a mediator between the stimuli accepted by individuals and the response affected by the stimuli. A tendency to provide attribution is caused by a tendency of human beings to clarify all things (the nature of scientific human) including what is behind the behavior of others (Myers : 1996).

In order to assess other people based on their natures, purposes or particular abilities, we have to create attributes or summary about themselves. Because we cannot access the personal thoughts, motives or feelings of people, we have to sum up their natures or characteristics based on the behaviors we observe. By creating the attribution, we can improve our ability to predict about what will be done by others in the future.

Social networking is one of the pillars of social capital which can be understood as networks of relationship within a group of people which are associated either directly or indirectly. Analysis of social networks is a study about social relationship amongst society. This social relationship cannot be separated from the communication which is built up in the social networks. Thus, discussions regarding the social networks refer to the arguments claimed by Rogers and Kincaid (1980). They argue that generally the social networks can be identified in three conditions including with whom a person interacts in a social system; whether someone in a social system joins with others in a group or organization; and whether someone in a social system has a high or low status.

Stone and Hughes (2002) come up with two main aspects to analyze social networking including social networks itself and the characteristics of social networks. The social networks can be identified in three types comprising informal networks, general networks and institutional networks. Furthermore, characteristics of social networks can be clarified based on size and extensiveness, density and closure, and diversity.

Roger and Shoemaker (1993) and Epstein (1961) argue that a social network is a pair of specific relationship amongst special groups. Furthermore, the nature of the relationship is overall used to interpret the social behavior of people involved in the relationship. A community is a group of people and is also viewed as a set of relations of its members. Closeness and size of social network have become the unifier in social life and if the social network is weak it can trigger a social conflict. This also can be realized by improving the intensity of contact, communication, social network and social interaction of the community.
Feagin and Feagin (1984) find out that the relationship between individuals of most community starts from the simple to the complicated ones and it always has different level and status. Every group performs their own life style and typical traditions as well as different attitude to implement social interaction with individuals from different level and status. Therefore, a process of adaptation requires good relationships between individuals within the same group or between individuals from different group or status to be recognized their existence.

The term of symbolic interactionism refers to typical nature of interaction amongst human beings which reciprocally interpret and define the actions. Blumer (1969), proposed based on several premises. Firstly, individuals respond about a symbolic situation based on meanings contained in elements of their environment. Secondly, meanings turn out to be a product of social interaction, thus meanings cannot come with the object but they are negotiated through the usage of language. Thirdly, individuals interpret the meaning of which may change from time to time, in line with changes to the situation found in social interaction.

The theory of Parsons (1937) created controversy on functionalism approaches and maintained the functionalism theory for almost two and half centuries since he published the structure of social action. The analytical realism developed by Parsons has employed adequately specific concepts to encompass the outer environment. Furthermore, the action systems introduced by Parsons using his convincing AGIL scheme consist of four characteristics: Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration and Latency. In a social system, Parsons also views that the actors became the orientation of this situation in terms of motivation and values.

B. The Social System of Bugis Community

To-Ugi’ (the Bugis) are the largest tribe and ethnic groups possessing distinctive features and interesting characters which can differentiate it with other tribes. The Bugis are well known with their tough characters and strongly uphold honor. Although they are very tough they are also very friendly and loyal to others as well as respect others. The features of the Bugis have largely become stereotype. Generally, the Bugis tribe consists of people who are very energetic (high spirit) and they never accept unreasonable or unfair actions. The Bugis are very brave. They deserve to be rewarded an honorable title which is a title given to the Malays called Monsieur Poivre. They are fond of adventure, wandering around the globe, and are able to do dangerous challenges (Pelras : 2006).

Interaction pattern in social life of the Bugis is generally based on patron-client system which is interconnected and holistic although they also still have strong personality and possesses a rigid and complicated hierarchy system. However, their prestige and desire of competition to achieve high social status such as position and wealth are the main pull factors to develop their social life in the community. The contradictory characters are suspected to cause the Bugis to actively mobile and thus they are very well known as migratory community.

Bugis language has symbols of sounds or alphabets which are similar to Makassar language called lontara’. In their social life, they can also distinguish people based in their social stratification by identifying the character of the language used by the community. The differences will be reflected in the distinction of usage of Bugis language in formal and informal contexts as well as the beauty of the language. The complexity of usage for speaking is caused by the social stratification in Bugis society (Darwis, 2009).

Bugis tribe has a value system which becomes the foundation of life, gained from advices of their ancestors called pa’paseng. It includes good social behavior and attitudes called panngaderreng which is based on traditions (ade’), civil law (rapang), legacy law (wari’), interpretation of legal science (bicara) and Islamic law (sara’). In addition to advices of good social behaviors, there are also many Bugis expressions or wise words concerning with the types of attitudes which are based on siri’ (feeling of proud and embarrassed).

Relationship system of Bugis tribe is called asseajingeng that becomes one of the aspects of panngaderreng and plays an important role in social life of the Bugis especially for engagement or
wedding. In terms of wedding, there are tendencies that the Bugis people get married to their own relatives of either from the father’s line or from the mother’s line.

C. Overview of Bugis Migrants in Kendari and Other Relevant Studies

Kendari city population growth rate during the period 2007-2009 is 1.87 percent per year. Estimated number of population is 265,645 in Kendari city and the Bugis people who live in Kendari city are about 52,492 inhabitants. The Bugis migrants are spread thoroughly in all districts in Kendari and have diverse livelihood. They live in groups in certain areas and form a community of Bugis and most of them are settled individually and join a community of people of other ethnicities in a harmonious and dynamic unity.

In early arrival to Kendari, most of the Bugis people chose to settle in the coastal regions which were relatively relevant with the background of life and livelihood in the area of origin such as merchants and sailors. Many of them who had a background as farmers still chose the areas that were suitable for their livelihood on agriculture regions and estates around the city of Kendari. Kampung Bugis (Bugis region) of Poasia District in Kendari is one of the figures in the past that reflects the existence of the Bugis settlement in Kendari.

In general, Bugis migrants living in Kendari city are traders in boths small and large scale, entrepreneurs in various fields of business, fishermen and sailors as well as civil servants or private employees spreading out in Kendari city and around. In the beginning of migration to Kendari city, Bugis migrants tend to seek jobs and livelihoods which were similar to their jobs or skills in their home town. If they succeeded in improving the economic condition in accordance with the field that they do so they will survive and grow up their business. However, if they fail or cannot manage to develop their business then they will try to find alternative employment or other livelihood they can do according to environmental conditions.

Bugis migrants in Kendari maintained and preserved cultural traditions and customs which became one of the characteristic identities of Bugis ethnic including the process of assimilation with the local culture. They also try to strengthen the relationship with other migrants from the same area so that they establish organizations, associations, family fellowship as well as other institutions that allow them to interact and work together so that they can survive and thrive in the migration destination.

Tagiling (2001) conducted a study on social interaction of the Bugis ethnic in Nusa Tenggara Timur Province. The main factor which impeded the social interaction was education. He argues that the competition of education was not a major concern in the community because the community only required skills in reading, writing and counting. Continuing education in a higher level is considered to waste time and money which can be used for establishing business. They just believe that economic ownership will upgrade their social status in the community.

Syamsuriadi (2003) studied the interaction between Bugis fishermen and fishermen of Rote ethnic group in Oesapa district of Kupang city, Nusa Tenggara Timur province. He identified differences of background of these two ethnic groups. Bugis fishermen are intensive fishermen while fishermen of Rote are considered as subsystem fishermen. However, different condition and technology mastery have triggered a functional dependence to generate social interaction which is associative instead of dissociative. Furthermore, religion differences of both ethnic groups have not become a fanaticism aspect that hampers the social interaction because they are interdependent especially in economic sector.

Rustan (2007) identifies a factor that encourages the success of Bugis people so that they can be accepted by other communities of areas they wish to reside because they are perform their ability to adjust themselves with local community by implementing openness based on principles of sipakatau (mutual respect), sammasei (mutual love), siasseajingeng (friendliness), lempu’ (honesty), getteng (courage), warani (bravery), ada’ tongeng (truthfulness). Therefore, these principles have led to the behavior of taro ada’ taro gau (appropriateness of words and deeds).

Winanti (2008) recognizes features of Bugis tribe including happiness and strong characters. There are five strong characters and they are related to the happiness of each individual. The findings
of her study indicate that the majority of Bugis people involved in the study were in the high level of happiness and strong characters unless two other characters including creativity and self regulation. The most five strong characters which were significantly visible to identify Bugis tribe include thankful, goodness, solidarity, fairness, and integrity.

III. Methodology

This research is a phenomenology study which explores and describes the phenomena of Bugis migrants including interaction strategy and social process based on empiric facts. This study came up with perception of Bugis migrants in Kendari city as the object of the research. The study was conducted in several districts of Kendari city of Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia. This study employed purposive sampling. The informants include Bugis migrants and non-Bugis tribes residing in the same location of residence and socially interacting with Bugis migrants for more than 1 (one) year. Data were collected from 9 (nine) families of the Bugis migrants who have permanently resided in Kendari city and got married with other ethnic groups, and 8 (eight) informants from other community in Kendari city. Other relevant documents were also used to collect data required for the study. A flow model adopted from Miles and Huberman’s interactive model(1992) was used to analyse the data. Data validation was done through extended research time, persistence, triangulation, peer discussion, negative case analysis, and sufficient number references.

This study focuses on the social interaction strategy of the Bugis migrants in their daily social life, communication of the Bugis migrants with other community and adaptation of Bugis migrants with natural and social environment as efforts to survive and continue their as well as maintain their relationship to avoid conflicts with local community

IV. Conclusion

Bugis migrants possess high ability of adaptation and a result they can be easily accepted by other ethnic groups such as the indigenous people of Kendari and other migrants. They are easily to get along with other communities, brave and friendly. Their adaptation can lead them to the improvement of their quality of life in terms of economy. The migrants reside in areas with potential natural resources which are suitable for them to develop the areas and provide them business opportunity. The adaptation strategy is to adjust with the surrounding environment and in a certain context they can integrate themselves in the community although they tend to live in a colony with other Bugis ethnic groups.

The Bugis migrants is high ability to adapt socially with the surrounding community and the social, natural and cultural environments. Basically it is based on philosophies that are bound in the Bugis community namely tellutemmasarang (three unseparable things) and duatemmaleseng (two undifferentiated things) including ethos and sacred viewpoints of life towards God, human beings and nature which become an integral and interdependent parts and so when the nature is destroyed this will destroy their own lives. It was found that there are concepts which are still implemented by the community in their social life. Furthermore, in other areas and types of economic activities some concepts and the values of the activities have shifted because of the social dynamic and cultural change caused by recent competitive.

In daily communication, Bugis migrants in Kendari city tend to speak their own language as their mother tongue. This reflects their efforts to maintain their identity in Kendari city. In formal activities, they speak Indonesian. However they also still speak their own language amongst Bugis people in the formal situation or they use mixed language with Bugis accent in communicating with other ethnic groups. The spoken language of Bugis in Kendari city has been influenced by languages spoken by other ethnics such as Makassar, Tolaki and Muna languages. The influences include dialect, accent, and vocabulary from other languages. In speaking Bugis language, the Bugis migrants have utilized the honorific system which is based on social classes.
Well-spoken communication is also the main capital in running a business and it has become the main factor to create and continue connectivity with others. Communication strategy play an important role to attract interests of others through friendly messages which should spoken expressively. Ampe (behavior) also play a significant role in the interaction because it is a factor to generate customer allure and interest. Therefore, the Bugis people in the social life understand and implement the concept of sipakatau (to humanize others), sipakalebbi (to honor each other), and sipakainge (to remind each other).

Internal motivation that influences individuals and groups of Bugis migrants as social attributes of interaction with individuals and groups, either amongst Bugis migrants or amongst the migrants and other ethnic groups includes the foundation of philosophy and values that have been passed from generation to generation by their ancestors. The role of custom (ade’) as their philosophy is reflected in a phrase: “Maradeka To WajoE Adenami Napopuang” (only the land is eternal, the owners of the land have freedom and only customs become their guidance).

The socio-cultural value of pangaderreng still exist and it has been maintained and has become the philosophy of the Bugis migrants because of two factors, Firstly, the Bugis migrants has totally accepted their customs in their social and cultural life or other daily practices. They are consistent and firmly believe that they are assured to live happily and peacefully because of their customs. Secondly, they implement the customs by following the customs as their daily guidance and making the customs as their behavior and ways of life in the community.

The application of siri’ for the rulers (kings) of Wajo can be found in the messages of Puang Ri Maggalatung: “Padecengiwi bicara-e, Parakai ampe-ampe malebbi-e, Gau-gau lalo’tennga-e, Pari tengngai bicara ri tengga-e” (improve correct speech, improve appropriate and respectful behaviors, apply simple life or never show off, never favor to someone when problems occur. These messages have become the guidance of life for Bugis people to do their activities including doing their business activities. This is in line with an assumption that financial capital is not necessarily needed when running a business activity (trade) of any kind. However, social capital is absolutely needed to establish interaction so that it can create convincing harmony between producers or suppliers and customers or users.

References