



## **Pitu Ba'bana Binanga: The Diplomatic Legacy of the Balanipa Kingdom in Harmonizing Politics, Religion, and the Economy of Mandar**

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**Abstract:** This study analyzes the diplomacy of the Balanipa Kingdom in managing political, religious, and economic relations within the Mandar context, particularly through the Pitu Ba'bana Binanga confederation mechanism (seven kingdoms at the river mouth). This study employs a qualitative historical method combining literature review, in-depth interviews, and primary source analysis. This study finds that Balanipa's diplomacy was not merely an instrument of external relations, but an internal consolidation mechanism that integrated the political dimension through deliberation and collective governance structures, the religious dimension through accommodative Islamization and the institutionalization of Sharia within the Parewa Saraq, and the economic dimension through the management of an inclusive maritime trade network. Key findings indicate that the cultural values of sipamandar (mutual reinforcement) and sirumung karaya (consultation) serve as the philosophical foundation shaping the character of Balanipa diplomacy—which is non-aggressive, participatory, and oriented toward multilateral harmonization. This diplomatic model holds significant relevance for contemporary social and multicultural development, particularly in strengthening participatory democracy, managing diversity based on local consensus, and revitalizing local wisdom in the era of globalization.

**Keywords:** Balanipa; Pitu Ba'bana Binanga; social harmonization; traditional diplomacy

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini menganalisis diplomasi Kerajaan Balanipa dalam mengelola hubungan politik, agama, dan ekonomi dalam konteks Mandar, khususnya melalui mekanisme konfederasi Pitu Ba'bana Binanga (tujuh kerajaan di muara sungai). Penelitian ini menggunakan metode sejarah kualitatif yang menggabungkan studi pustaka, wawancara mendalam, dan analisis sumber primer. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa diplomasi Balanipa tidak sekadar instrumen relasi eksternal, melainkan mekanisme internal konsolidasi yang mengintegrasikan dimensi politik melalui musyawarah dan struktur pemerintahan kolektif, dimensi keagamaan melalui Islamisasi akomodatif dan institusionalisasi syariat dalam Parewa Saraq, serta dimensi ekonomi melalui pengelolaan jaringan perdagangan maritim yang inklusif. Temuan utama menunjukkan bahwa nilai-nilai budaya *sipamandar* (saling menguatkan) dan sirumung karaya (musyawarah) menjadi fondasi filosofis yang membentuk karakter diplomasi Balanipa yang non-agresif, partisipatif, dan berorientasi pada harmonisasi multilateral. Model diplomasi ini memiliki relevansi signifikan bagi pembangunan sosial dan multikultural kontemporer, terutama dalam penguatan demokrasi partisipatif, pengelolaan keberagaman berbasis konsensus lokal, dan revitalisasi kearifan lokal di era globalisasi.

**Kata Kunci:** Balanipa; diplomasi tradisional; harmonisasi sosial; Pitu Ba'bana Binanga



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## Introduction

The Kingdom of Balanipa was one of the most influential maritime kingdoms in Mandar, West Sulawesi, playing a strategic role in the socio-political history of Eastern Indonesia. As a coastal kingdom, Balanipa served as a trade hub connecting Makassar, Kalimantan, Nusa Tenggara, and Maluku, making it a center for the exchange of commodities, culture, and diplomacy among kingdoms (Islam & Ayundasari, 2021). This position had a significant impact on the formation of a power structure that was adaptive and responsive to external dynamics, enabling Balanipa to maintain social and economic stability over the long term. The structural framework of the Balanipa Kingdom consisted of several cabinets (*sappulo sokko*) and four traditional councils known as *Appe Banua Kayyang* (the four great regions). The cabinets were formed to manage specific sectors as part of efforts to meet the kingdom's needs for the people's welfare (Idris et al., 2024). Additionally, Mandar's geographical context along major shipping routes prompted the kingdom to develop a maritime diplomacy model based on alliances, customary systems, and religious legitimacy.

One of the main foundations of Balanipa's political structure is the concept of *Pitu Ba'bana Binanga*, a confederation of coastal kingdoms formed in response to maritime security challenges and the need for economic cooperation. *Pitu Ba'bana Binanga*, which translates to "seven kingdoms at the river mouth" (Sianturi & Ribawati, 2025). This confederation reflects the complexity of the Mandar local governance system, which prioritizes mechanisms of deliberation, consensus, and the sharing of authority among kingdoms (Aminuddin et al., 2022). This system simultaneously demonstrates that Balanipa served not only as a center of power but also as a regional political mediator. Although this concept has been the subject of cultural and political studies, research on diplomacy examining the simultaneous interplay between politics, religion, and the economy within the framework of Pitu Ba'bana Binanga remains limited.

From a religious perspective, the spread of Islam in Mandar occurred through mechanisms that were more persuasive and cultural in nature, rather than through conquest. Islam first entered the Kingdom of Balanipa, brought by a scholar named Abdurrahim Kamaluddin who arrived during the reign of the fourth King of Balanipa (Tahara & Bahri, 2018). Abdurrahim Kamaluddin's ship (who held the title Tosalama in Binuang) anchored at *Tammangalle* Beach, Balanipa (other accounts mention Tinambung and that it anchored at Para Port) (Kawu, 2011). The process of Islamization was supported by trade networks, cross-kingdom kinship ties, and the role of religious elites who served as key actors in social diplomacy (Arfah & Sastrawati, 2024). Islam subsequently gained a position as a source of legitimacy for leaders and as an ethical foundation for governance. The integration of Islamic values with Mandar customs (*adaq*) gave rise to a flexible and harmonious cultural model—a form of religious synthesis that became a hallmark of Nusantara Islam. This model of integration was one of the factors enabling Balanipa to establish social stability and maintain harmony amidst the diversity of Mandar's social structure.

From a political perspective, Balanipa demonstrates an intriguing transformation of power structures through the shift in leadership from *Tomakaka* to *Mara'dia*. This transformation highlights the local political system's ability to adapt to social dynamics and external threats. The traditional council (*Dewan Ada' Kaiyang*) plays a crucial role in controlling power and ensuring that governance operates based on mutual agreement (Poelinggomang, 2015). Recent studies confirm that the political contract between *Mara'dia* and the people constitutes an early form of consensus-based governance involving traditional leaders, religious figures, and the community (Karim, 2020). This makes internal diplomacy a vital instrument in maintaining the stability of Balanipa's power.

In the economic dimension, Balanipa relied on its maritime strength and the trading activities conducted by Mandar merchants or *passompe'*. This economic network was connected to various trading centers across the archipelago, extending as far as Sabah and Mindanao in a modern context. Through these trade relations, an economic diplomacy mechanism emerged that strengthened Balanipa's position within the regional trade network (Hasan et al., 2022). As one of the centers of power in the coastal region of Sulawesi, the Kingdom of Balanipa was not only a symbol of local strength but also a key actor in the network of inter-kingdom diplomacy in eastern Indonesia (Ekawati et al., 2021). Thus, economic relations were not merely of material value but also strengthened socio-political ties between regions.

Although the Balanipa Kingdom has been extensively discussed in the context of Mandar history, studies on diplomacy as an integrative mechanism linking politics, religion, and the economy remain scarce. Most research has focused on historical-descriptive aspects, such as the formation process of the kingdom (Iqmal, 2016), the role of local figures in the unification of Mandar (Hamid, 2022), or the dynamics of colonialism (Karim, 2020). This situation indicates a gap in research regarding how traditional diplomacy functions as a system that enables the harmonization of various social dimensions within the kingdom.

Furthermore, there has been little research examining Balanipa through an interdisciplinary approach that integrates theories of traditional diplomacy, social harmonization, and maritime economics. Yet, the social-political relationship model applied by Balanipa is relevant for understanding the dynamics of coastal communities today, particularly regarding social development, conflict management, and the integration of cultural values into local governance systems. A number of recent anthropological studies emphasize that the Mandar customary system possesses adaptive capabilities in addressing modern challenges, including in governance and social relations (Mutmainnah et al., 2024).

The current context also indicates that coastal communities like the Mandar face new challenges, such as the penetration of the global economy, shifts in social structures, and dependence on maritime commodities. Under such conditions, the traditional diplomacy once developed by the Balanipa Kingdom offers a model of social relations oriented toward collectivity, balance of interests, and cooperation among communities. This underscores that history not only provides narratives of the past but also contributes a framework for thinking to address modern challenges more constructively.

The objective of this study is to comprehensively analyze the Kingdom of Balanipa's diplomatic practices in managing and integrating political, religious, and economic dimensions within the framework of the *Pitu Ba'bana Binanga* confederation, as well as to identify the forms of harmonization resulting from the social dynamics of Mandar society. The urgency of this research lies in the limited number of studies that view traditional diplomacy as an integrative mechanism capable of simultaneously connecting various dimensions of social life, particularly within the local context of the Nusantara. Amid the challenges of globalization, social disintegration, and a crisis of values in the governance of modern society, the revelation of the Balanipa diplomatic model becomes crucial as a source of local wisdom that not only holds historical value but also offers an alternative conceptual framework for fostering social harmony, strengthening participatory democracy, and preserving cultural diversity rooted in local traditions.

## Research Method

This study employs a qualitative approach based on *the historical method*, utilizing descriptive-analytical techniques (Noor, 2014). Methodologically, the qualitative approach is

highly relevant for social and cultural history research as it allows for interpretive analysis that prioritizes data depth over generalization. As emphasized, qualitative research is an effort to analyze data inductively, moving from specific themes to general themes, and to interpret the meaning of the data (Kusumastuti & Khoiron, 2019). A qualitative approach was used in this study to gain a deep understanding of the dynamics, structure, and meaning of the Balanipa Kingdom's diplomacy as recorded in historical sources and the collective memory of the Mandar community.

The research method employed is *library research*, supported by *in-depth interviews* with local historians and cultural experts who understand the political dynamics and history of Mandar. Library research was used to examine scholarly works and literature regarding the Balanipa Kingdom. Meanwhile, the interviews served to supplement the textual data through local perspectives on Balanipa diplomacy, traditional power structures, and inter-regional relations within *Pitu Ba'bana Binanga*.

## Research Findings

### The Primary Objectives of the Balanipa Kingdom's Diplomacy in Managing Mandar's Political, Religious, and Economic Relations

Research findings indicate that the diplomacy of the Balanipa Kingdom cannot be understood merely as inter-kingdom relations or foreign policy maneuvers, but rather as an internal mechanism for consolidating the *Pitu Ba'bana Binanga* confederation, which served to maintain political stability, the integration of religion and custom, and the economic sustainability of the Mandar coast. Historical literature confirms that Balanipa served as the "driving force of the confederation," acting as a coordinator among the other coastal kingdoms, so that diplomacy was directed toward forming a collective understanding regarding territorial defense, the distribution of power, and the management of maritime trade routes (Karim, 2020). The position of the Balanipa Kingdom within *Pitu Ba'bana Binanga* was that of a father/leader and simultaneously a central figure in the historical development of the kingdoms in *Pitu Ba'bana Binanga* (Muslim, 2016). The Balanipa Kingdom's diplomacy in managing Mandar's political, religious, and economic relations had interrelated strategic objectives designed to strengthen the kingdom's political supremacy while ensuring the people's welfare and the continuity of Mandar's cultural identity.

#### a. Political Dimension

The Balanipa Kingdom conducted multidimensional political diplomacy, combining kinship ties, customary confederative treaties, maritime alliances, and pragmatic interactions with external powers (neighboring kingdoms and colonial influences). In the political dimension, traditional confederative agreements form the primary objective of Balanipa's diplomacy, achieved by establishing and maintaining confederative unity through the formation of *Pitu Ba'bana Binanga* and integration with *Pitu Ulunna Salu* within the framework of the fourteen-kingdom Mandar confederation, bound by the Luyo treaty as a single strategy.

Information from Mandar cultural expert Mr. Tammalele (Interview on September 13, 2025) states that:

From a political perspective, as I see it, our forebears already understood what is known as strategy. Why form a coalition like *Pitu Ba'bana Binanga*? From a political and defense strategy standpoint, the seven coastal kingdoms had the task of facing enemies from the sea; these seven coastal kingdoms were prepared to confront them. The seven kingdoms, referred to as "*memmata di sawa*" (watching the snakes in the rice fields),

were prepared to face the enemy and possessed a political strategy. This means they already understood what a defense system entails within the realm of civilization.

The Mandar defense system is “distributed and shared equally” between naval and land forces collectively, not centralized in a single kingdom, to prevent internal divisions while creating a bulwark against external threats. This concept fostered cross-regional cooperation based on the principle of “*sipamandar*” (mutual reinforcement) as the ideological foundation of local diplomacy. The “*sipamandar*” (mutual reinforcement) pledge recited in Luyo embodies the commitment that a threat to one kingdom is a threat to all of Mandar, with responsibilities divided according to geographical position. *Pitu Ulunna Salu* monitors threats from the interior (*watching over the rice fields*), while *Pitu Ba'bana Binanga* monitors threats from the sea. The principle of autonomy within the confederation was upheld through the pledge that “where the fire burns, there it also dies out,” meaning that each kingdom did not interfere with one another’s internal laws and customs, was free to discuss domestic affairs, did not insult one another, and did not hinder one another’s power.

Political diplomacy involved pragmatic interactions with smaller kingdoms a combination of diplomacy and military strength to manage neighboring kingdoms. The conquest of Passokkorang, for example, was not merely about expansion but also a strategic maneuver to centralize trade routes and secure the inland-to-coastal corridor. On the other hand, local treaties, such as the one with Alu, demonstrate that Balanipa also negotiated to ensure protection and recognition of its political standing.

The path of the Balanipa kingdom’s political diplomacy through kinship ties was actually pioneered by I Manyambungi when he settled in the Gowa kingdom. I Manyambungi was appointed as one of the war commanders; the reason for this selection was that he was considered capable and competent to carry out the task, as he had gained experience during his time in the Gowa Kingdom. Even when I Manyambungi had to return to Mandar at the request of *Appe Banua Kaiyang* to restore security and order following the chaos of the *Tomakaka uprising*, the political diplomacy between I Manyambungi and the Gowa Kingdom was formalized through an oath of allegiance to the King of Gowa: “If the rooster of the Gowa Kingdom crows, Mandar must pay its respects.” The text of this oath of allegiance is as follows:

"Tomorrow or the day after, should Gowa be in danger, you must come to its aid, unless the danger is confined to its own territory, in which case I do not expect you to do so unless it is your own wish. Likewise, if Mandar is in danger in the morning, you must inform us as soon as possible in the afternoon; likewise, if danger strikes in the afternoon, you must inform us in the morning. The day after tomorrow, if anyone claims that Gowa and Mandar are at odds, find and kill them. If a person from Gowa makes such a claim, then Mandar must kill them; if a person from Mandar makes such a claim, then Gowa must kill them. This proves that Mandar and Gowa are not at odds." (Kila, 2015).

The presence of I Manyambungi changed the course of Mandar’s history. As a former Gowa warlord who successfully conquered Pariaman, he had a broad perspective on the system of power and law. He realized that military strength was insufficient without a well-ordered legal system (Dj, 2024). This reflected a commitment to mutual aid in times of crisis, as evidenced when Mandar became a loyal ally of Gowa in the Makassar War (1666–1669 CE) against Bone and the VOC, though it ultimately suffered defeat and had to adapt to the new hegemony.

Another form of diplomacy with the Kingdom of Gowa occurred when Puang Dipoyosang, as the holder of traditional authority, was sent to Gowa to request the adoption of

customs practiced by the Makassar people in Gowa. This was based on the fact that early in his reign, I Manyambungi found that the ancestral customs practiced by the people of Balanipa were considered inhumane, so they needed to be changed for the sake of the community's survival and the development of the kingdom. The solution to improve the community's customs toward a better and more dignified direction was achieved by requesting the King of Gowa's willingness to provide a lontarak containing the customs of the Makassar people in the Kingdom of Gowa. With the approval of all members of the *Bate Salapang* council, a lontarak was provided, the contents of which pertained to the customs and traditions of the Gowa Kingdom, which subsequently became a reference for the Mandar people in Balanipa in their daily conduct.

Balanipa's diplomacy through kinship was also directed toward establishing strategic relationships with major kingdoms outside Mandar, particularly Gowa-Tallo, through kinship and political marriages that began during the era of I Rerasi (Princess Napo of Balanipa, who married King Gowa VI Batara Gowa and gave birth to King Gowa IX Tumaparrisi Kallonna, who had a maritime vision). This was continued by I Manyambungi, who married the grandson of the King of Gowa (Karaeng Suria), leading to strategic marriages between the Balanipa elite and the royal families of Gowa, Bone, and Bima. The oath of loyalty between Manyambungi and the King of Gowa stated, "If the rooster of the Gowa kingdom crows, Mandar must visit it." This reflects commitments to mutual aid in times of crisis, which was proven when Mandar became a loyal ally of Gowa in the Makassar War (1666–1669 CE) against Bone and the VOC, though they ultimately suffered defeat and had to adapt to the new hegemony.

Relations with the Sultanate of Bima were also established through a treaty on November 27, 1667, stating that the people of Mandar and Bima would mutually recognize one another, and that Mandar's enemies were Bima's enemies, with the aim of cooperating against the Dutch and the Bongaya Treaty, which harmed the interests of both kingdoms. Another political objective was to maintain the balance of power amidst the rivalry between Gowa and Bone, as well as to confront Dutch colonial pressure through a strategy of hostile diplomacy, economic resistance (such as Balanipa's refusal to sell copra to the Dutch and his choice of the free markets of Makassar, Surabaya, and Singapore), and military resistance. After the Makassar War, the Dutch began to extend their influence into South Sulawesi as far as Mandar. Bone, later aided by the Dutch, attacked Mandar; ultimately, Mandar and Bone signed a treaty at Lanrisang in 1674. That same year, the "Banggai Tractaat" was concluded, a cooperation agreement between Mandar *Pitu Ba'bana Binanga* represented by Tomatindo in Langgana—and the Dutch, represented by Resident Harthoufer. This treaty marked the Dutch's initial step in Mandar; however, the Dutch had not yet fully controlled Mandar at that time, so it did not become a colony (Karim, 2018).

The most evident form of democratization in Balanipa culture is the Balanipa Kingdom's system of government, which does not pass the throne down through hereditary succession. The process of selecting a king is carried out through election and approval by *the Appe Banua Kayyang*, who represent the sovereignty of the people. The openness in assuming the position of the Balanipa king results in a very strict system of oversight and control, both before and after the king's inauguration. If *the Appe Banua Kayyang*, as the people's representatives, deem that the reigning king has committed violations or errors, the process of impeaching the king may be initiated (Rahimallah et al., 2020). Therefore, *Amara'diang in the Kingdom of Balanipa* established a political principle stating that "*anak kodai mara'dia, Banua Kaiyyang toilopi*," meaning that in the kingdom, the king is likened to a captain, while the true owners are the people through their representatives (*from Napo, Samasundu, Toda-todang, Masso*) (Idham, 2007).

### **b. Religious Dimension**

In the religious sphere, Balanipa's diplomacy aimed to spread Islam peacefully and accommodatively while respecting local Mandar traditions, and to institutionalize Islamic law within the government structure and social life of the community. Islamization in Mandar was not achieved through coercion or the suppression of local culture, but through persuasive missionary methods that leveraged maritime trade routes and kinship ties with Gowa-Tallo, which had already embraced Islam. The arrival of the scholar Abdurrahim Kamaluddin, who first landed in Biring Lembang, Balanipa, and successfully converted the *Mara'dia* palis in Binuang before continuing his da'wah to the center of Balanipa, demonstrates a phased strategy and the empowerment of local networks in the Islamization process. The arrival of the religion at that time served as a guiding principle, as conveyed by *Mara'dia* Balanipa Daetta IV Kakanna I Pattang: "*naiyya mara'dia, tammatingo dibongi, tarrare diallo, namamadangmata, dimamatana dating ayu, dimamlimbonna rura, dimadinginna lita' diajarianna bonne tau, diatepuanna agama.*" This means: 'Indeed, a king-leader will not be lulled to sleep in the silence of the night, nor will he remain idle or sit idly by during the day, but he continues to think and strive to improve agricultural yields, ensure an abundance of fish in the ponds, and foster peace and tranquility, all to safeguard human survival and the perfection of the teachings of the religion of' (Idham, 2007).

Another strategic objective is to integrate Islamic values with Mandar customs through a process of cultural acculturation that gives rise to Islamic-Mandar traditions such as *totammaq* (a tradition of celebrating the completion of the Qur'an with a horse parade and Islamic prayers), *Kuliwa* (a fishermen's ritual before setting sail, Islamized with safety prayers based on Islamic teachings) (Mansur, 2016), and *sayingang pattu'du* (a tradition of horseback riding with Islamic prayers as a symbol of honor and motivation for the younger generation). Balanipa's religious diplomacy also involved cooperation with the Sultanate of Bima, which initially was only for the purpose of teaching Islam but developed into political and economic cooperation, as well as relations with Gowa-Tallo as a regional center for Islamic da'wah in South Sulawesi.

### **c. Economic Dimension**

Economically, Balanipa's diplomacy aimed to maintain the smooth operation of the coastal trade network, which served as the lifeblood of Mandar society. Balanipa acted as a link between Mandar's local trade routes and the regional networks of Sulawesi, Kalimantan, and Nusa Tenggara. Maintained internal political stability ensured that Mandar's ports remained secure as distribution hubs for marine products, forest products, and agricultural commodities. Thus, diplomacy has a pragmatic-economic orientation focused on maintaining maritime security and cross-regional trade relations. The Balanipa Kingdom was adept at managing its economy effectively. As stated in an interview with Mr. Tammalele, "From an economic perspective, because here there is Sakka Manarang—meaning a wise person who manages the economy, such as SMEs in their time. They were known to be very astute in terms of power to strengthen their internal strategies within the kingdom" (Interview on September 13, 2025).

From the interview above, it is clear that the goal of Balanipa's diplomacy in the economic sector is to develop Mandar as a strategic maritime trade hub through the opening of ports and trade networks with regions within and outside the Nusantara. The desire to develop maritime trade activities (Iqmal, 2016), prompted the government to appoint royal officials who, in the lontarak, are referred to as *sakka manarang* (fully skilled). *Sakka manarang* were skilled workers who served as the backbone of the kingdom's economy and production. This economic institution comprised ten specialized fields managed by specific individuals

according to their respective areas of expertise (Kila, 2015). These ten fields of expertise constituted one of the kingdom's primary sources of income, alongside agricultural endeavors both wet-land and dry-land farming. In carrying out their respective duties and functions, each unit operated under the direct control and responsibility of *the mara'dia*.

*The Sakka manarang* consisted of a thousand people with various specialized skills, including: *pande bassi* (blacksmiths), *pande bulawang* (goldsmiths), *pande ganllang* (copper smiths), *pande ayu* (carpenters), *pande batu* (stonemasons and tombstone carvers), *passukki* (fruit pickers), *panjala* (fishermen), *passuppi'* (bird hunters using blowpipes), *pamio* (rope makers), and *pattema pallu* (furnace makers). *Sakka manarang* were not merely "ordinary artisans," but rather an integrated institution encompassing nearly every aspect of Balanipa's socio-economic life—from construction, metal and wood production, and crafts, to agriculture, harvesting, and fishing, all the way to services supporting trade and maritime activities.

With its economic strength supported by *the sakka manarang*, the Balanipa Kingdom established diplomatic and trade relations through the network of the confederation's ports and commercial ties with regions spanning Sulawesi, Kalimantan, and the Moluccas, as documented in the study "The Rise of Mandar in the 16th–17th Centuries" (Hamid, 2022). Even before the Kingdom of Gowa became the most important international transit port in the Java Sea, it was the sailors and merchants from Mandar who served as the primary supporters of the Kingdom of Gowa's maritime trade axis. This demonstrates that Mandar's maritime role was not merely a minor component but that of an active actor in the circulation of goods, navigation, and regional trade networks. The Kingdom of Balanipa's involvement in the world of trade has been documented in several sources, particularly following the fall of Malacca to the Portuguese in 1511 CE (Iqmal, 2016).

According to several studies based on foreign accounts regarding the southern peninsula of Sulawesi, trade at the port of Siang first appeared in European sources on a Portuguese map. This indicates that the existence and economic activities along the Sulawesi coast during that period were quite significant. The port of Siang, located on the western coast of Mandar, served as the main trade gateway for the kingdom and surrounding regions, where local and foreign ships docked to buy or sell commodities. Siang functioned as an import-export port, connecting Balanipa with other ports in Sulawesi, Makassar, and even trade routes between the Indonesian archipelago and Europe.

Trade activity and mobilization increased further in Balanipa, Pambusuang, and Campalagian when the ports of Para', Ba'barura, and Bonde (Karim, 2020), were reorganized as the port of Balanipa by the fourth *marad'ia*, Daetta Kakanna Ipattang, who ruled around 1615, thereby attracting foreign ships to call at the territory of the Kingdom of Balanipa. Driven by a maritime spirit, the people of Balanipa set sail to explore every corner of the archipelago, engaging in trade activities. The routes once traveled by the people of Balanipa since ancient times are as follows:

1. Western Nusantara, namely: a) Patumasik, a round-trip voyage from Mandar to Singapore; b) Passa'la, a voyage from Mandar to Malaysia to Singapore; c) Pappadang, a voyage and trade route sailing from Mandar to Padang and back.
2. Central Nusantara consists of: a) Pa'jawa, a round-trip voyage from Mandar to Java (Jakarta, Cirebon, Gresik, Surabaya, and Banyuwangi); b) Pabborenco, a round-trip voyage from Mandar to Kalimantan (North Kalimantan if the Dutch blocked the route through the Java Sea to Singapore).
3. The eastern part of the archipelago consists of: a) Passalaparang, which refers to the Mandar-Lombok, Sumbawa round-trip route; b) Pattimor, which refers to the Mandar-Kupang, Waingapu round-trip route; c) Pambuung, which refers to the Mandar-Ambon,

Buru round-trip route; d) Pattaranate, which refers to the Mandar-Ternate round-trip route (Iqmal, 2016).

The economic diplomacy of the Balanipa Kingdom ensured political stability because the confederation generated collective revenue and a relatively balanced distribution of prosperity between the Pitu Uluna Salu and Pitu Ba'bana Binanga kingdoms. During the reign of King Todiboseang, economic prosperity reached its peak, marked by the construction of a magnificent palace, gold and iron workshops, a troupe of dancers, and a fleet of large warships such as *the I Tandijo'jo* with four moorings, demonstrating strong economic and military capabilities. Balanipa's economic diplomacy also included resistance against colonial monopolies, as exemplified by the actions of Tokape and *Ammana I Wewang (Mara'dia Alu*, who was also the commander of Balanipa).

There was a refusal to sell the Mandar people's copra to the Dutch, opting instead to sell it directly to Makassar, Surabaya, and Singapore, thereby becoming a significant hub of economic resistance, though it eventually faced Dutch military pressure. Thus, Balanipa's diplomacy aimed to achieve mutually reinforcing multidimensional stability: political stability through confederative deliberation, religious stability through the integration of Islam and local customs, and economic stability through a maritime trade network based on regional solidarity.

### **Forms of Harmonization in Balanipa Kingdom Diplomacy and Its Influence on Mandar's Political, Religious, and Socio-Economic Dynamics**

The harmonization of the Balanipa Kingdom's diplomacy manifested in various forms of political, religious, and socio-economic practices that reflected the kingdom's ability to blend traditional values with strategic needs within a dynamic regional context. In the political dimension, diplomatic harmonization was realized through political marriage mechanisms between the Balanipa elite and the royal families of Gowa, Bone, and Bima, which served as instruments to strengthen kinship ties, reduce the potential for conflict, and build sustainable strategic alliances. The marriage of I Manyambungi to Karaeng Suria (the grandson of the King of Gowa), the marriage of I Manyambungi's daughter to the Sultanate of Bima, and the marriage of King Bone La Patau's daughter to the King of Balanipa following the Makassar War, are concrete examples of how marriage diplomacy was used to transform rivalry into brotherhood and build bridges of communication between kingdoms. As stated in an interview with Mr. Tammalele:

This kingdom already understood that system because the geopolitical situation at the time was unstable. Geopolitically, the kingdoms across the archipelago were engaged in both small-scale and large-scale expansions. That is what makes the concept interesting from the perspectives of defense policy and the politics of power. To develop collectively from within, they established what we now call a constitution. The constitution I am referring to involves appointing officials—what we would now call ministers or royal advisors—such as *Pabbicara Kaiyang and Pappuangan* (Interview on September 13, 2025).

From the interview above, it is evident that the political harmonization of the Balanipa kingdom was not authoritarian but participatory, where every decision had to be a mutual agreement through dialogue and negotiation by forming *the "sappulo sokko ada"* (ten traditional offices). This structure demonstrates a coordinated and functional government that supported diplomatic harmonization across various fronts. The impact of this political harmonization on Mandar's dynamics was significant, as it successfully fostered internal

stability, reduced inter-kingdom conflicts, and enabled Mandar to emerge as a regional power respected by Gowa, Bone, the Dutch, and other kingdoms across the archipelago.

In the religious dimension, the harmonization of Balanipa's diplomacy was realized through persuasive and accommodative methods of *da'wah*, which did not confront local customs head-on but employed a cultural-participatory approach to integrate Islamic values into the Mandar tradition. The *kuliwa* tradition (a Mandar fishermen's ritual before setting out to sea) also underwent harmonization, where traditional practices originally centered on ancestral spirits and prayers of old beliefs were redirected into prayers for safety to Allah, ensuring the tradition remained alive but with an Islamic religious substance.

Religious harmonization is also evident in the gradual elimination of customs conflicting with Islam, such as the *bala tau* or *bala batu* judicial system—which relied on duels to the death—replaced by a more rational judicial system based on Sharia and reformulated customs within the framework of *Parewa Saraq* (the Institutionalization of Sharia). The integration of adat and sharia within *Parewa Saraq* demonstrates that Balanipa did not choose between adat or sharia, but rather merged both into a comprehensive legal system, where Islamic values such as justice, consultation, and social welfare are reinforced by the deep-rooted legitimacy of adat within society. The acceptance of Islam by the Mandar people in the Balanipa kingdom was due to several reasons. *First*, there were already seeds of religion within the community, such as beliefs and ritual practices. *Second*, Islamic teachings were seen as having similarities with the old beliefs they adhered to, such as spirits and supernatural powers. *Third*, the values of Islamic teachings were viewed as the truth (L & Ridhwan, 2020). The process of Islamization in the Balanipa Kingdom took on a political nature after the Balanipa Kingdom followed the call of the Gowa Kingdom to proclaim its kingdom as an Islamic kingdom in 1608 CE (Makmur, 2019).

In the socio-economic dimension, the harmonization of Balanipa's diplomacy was realized through various policies that promoted social inclusion, economic mobility, and the redistribution of welfare. The formation of a professional group known as *Sappulo Sakka Manarang* (the ten major crafts) indicates that Balanipa had a structured economic vision, in which various fields of expertise such as goldsmiths, blacksmiths, boat builders, rope makers, carvers, dancers, and others were systematically developed to support the kingdom's progress and the people's welfare. As stated in an interview with Mr. Tammalele:

In this kingdom, he reorganized each AP Binayang to form part of the *sakka manarang*. This *sakka manarang* serves as an economic supplier, thereby strengthening the kingdom. Within this economic system, there are *pandewatu*, tombstone makers known as *Pande Palio*, and *Pande Galang* who produce brass. These constitute the economic foundation (Interview on September 13, 2025).

From the interview above, it is evident that the Kingdom of Balanipa possesses a sound economic structure, supported by various specialized skills held by the community. These community skills are intended to support the progress and welfare of the people within the Kingdom of Balanipa. Additionally, social mobility through achievement is part of the socio-economic harmony, where an individual can rise in social status based on their abilities and contributions to the kingdom. Although a social class structure (*tau maradeka*, *tau pia*, *maraqdia*, and *batua*) persists, it is not as rigid as an absolute monarchy, as there is room for limited meritocracy. The impact of this socio-economic harmonization on the dynamics of Mandar is evident in the prosperity achieved during the reigns of King Tomepayung and Todiboseang, when trade flourished, infrastructure developed, professional skills were widespread, and economic redistribution through *zakat* fostered strong social cohesion.

### **Internal and External Factors in Diplomatic Practices**

The diplomatic practices of the Balanipa Kingdom were influenced by various internal and external factors that interacted with one another and shaped the kingdom's diplomatic strategies and orientation within the regional contexts of Sulawesi and the Nusantara. Internally, Balanipa's diplomacy was underpinned by strong kinship bonds rooted in a shared origin myth, facilitating the formation of political solidarity and territorial integration within the confederation. The leadership of charismatic figures like I Manyabungi was also a crucial factor, as they possessed not only military capabilities but also symbolic legitimacy in uniting various local powers. Furthermore, cultural values such as *sipamandar* (mutual reinforcement) and *sirumung karaya* (consultation) served as the philosophical foundation shaping a diplomatic character that prioritized dialogue, negotiation, and context as the primary mechanisms for conflict resolution. These factors reinforce one another, forming a stable political ecosystem within the Political Culture of the Balanipa Mandar Kingdom (Kila, 2015).

On the other hand, external factors also had a significant influence on the direction and strategy of Balanipa's diplomacy. Relationships with major kingdoms such as Gowa-Tallo opened access to broader political, military, and religious networks, while enriching the diplomatic experience of the Balanipa elite. Mandar's strategic geographical position along the maritime trade routes of the Makassar Strait made economic activity the primary driver of interregional interaction, so diplomacy was also oriented toward securing trade routes. The introduction of Islam through trade networks and missionary activities from Makassar also transformed the Mandar society's socio-religious system in an accommodative manner. Meanwhile, Dutch colonial pressure prompted Balanipa to develop a diplomacy of resistance, both through the rejection of economic monopolies and the formation of regional alliances, such as with the Sultanate of Bima. Thus, Balanipa's diplomatic practices do not stand in isolation but are the result of a historical construction shaped by a complex interplay of internal forces and external dynamics (Karim, 2020; Hamid, 2022).

### **The Relevance and Adaptation of the Balanipa Kingdom's Diplomatic Model in Contemporary Social and Multicultural Development**

The Balanipa Kingdom's diplomatic model holds significant relevance in the context of contemporary social and multicultural development, particularly regarding the strengthening of participatory democracy, the harmonization of diversity, and the revitalization of local wisdom amidst the tide of globalization. In the realm of social development, the democratic deliberative model known as *Irumung Karaya* can be adapted as a participatory decision-making mechanism in contemporary local governance, where every public decision is not merely determined by the ruling elite but through a process of exchanging opinions (*assamaturuang*) and reaching mutual agreement (*assamalewuang*) involving various stakeholders, including the community, academics, religious scholars, and traditional leaders.

The principle of *sipamandar* (mutual reinforcement), which forms the foundation of the Luyo Agreement, can be interpreted as a principle of social solidarity and mutual cooperation in addressing contemporary development challenges, where diverse community groups with different ethnic, religious, and economic backgrounds support one another and collaborate to achieve shared goals, as reflected in the values of Pancasila and the motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. The values of polite and non-confrontational politics, which characterize Balanipa diplomacy, can serve as a model for resolving socio-political conflicts in contemporary Indonesia, where dialogue, negotiation, and compromise are prioritized over violence or unilateral domination, thereby fostering social stability and harmony within a heterogeneous society.

The concept of meritocracy in leadership where an ideal king must love the people, be capable of maintaining sovereignty, and possess good moral character can be adapted to contemporary public leadership selection systems, where competence, integrity, and a focus on the people's welfare are the primary criteria for selecting leaders, rather than relying solely on lineage, wealth, or mere popularity. Research on the Balanipa Kingdom's model of civilized politics by Generation Z indicates that Balanipa's democratic values and political culture can serve as a solution for strengthening political culture, resolving political issues, and addressing deviations in political culture in contemporary Indonesia, particularly in West Sulawesi, where political cultural values are beginning to fade with the passage of time.

In the dimension of multiculturalism, the model of harmonizing Islam and local customs implemented by Balanipa serves as an important reference for da'wah strategies and the integration of religion within contemporary multicultural societies. Persuasive and accommodative da'wah methods that do not confront local culture head-on as practiced by scholars such as Abdurrahim Kamaluddin, Syekh Abdul Mannan, and Tosalama in Tuan Daeng demonstrate that Islam can flourish and be accepted by society without destroying local traditions, but rather enriching and imparting new meaning to those traditions within the framework of Islamic values.

The Confederation of Pitu Ba'bana Binanga and Pitu Ulunna Salu can serve as a model for managing regional diversity in Indonesia, where various regions with different cultural backgrounds, languages, and economic interests can unite under a single political umbrella without having to eliminate their respective local identities, in accordance with the principle of "where the fire burns, there it is extinguished," which respects local autonomy. The soft power approach through political alliances, trade, and cultural exchange implemented by Balanipa can be adapted into contemporary Indonesian cultural diplomacy, where Indonesia's cultural wealth (such as gamelan, angklung, batik, wayang, traditional dance, and others) is used as an instrument to build a positive image of Indonesia in the eyes of the world, strengthen bilateral relations with other nations, and attract foreign tourists and investors.

In practical terms, the revitalization of local wisdom such as totammaq, kuliwa, sayyang pattu'du, and other Mandar traditional values can be part of efforts to strengthen local identity amidst globalization, which tends to homogenize cultures. Civic education for Generation Z can be implemented by integrating the democratic values of the Balanipa Kingdom into the curricula for citizenship education, local history, and character education, so that young people understand that democracy is not merely an imported concept from the West but also has strong historical roots in the political traditions of the Nusantara.

A participatory leadership model that prioritizes deliberation, transparency, and accountability can be applied in contemporary local governance, where mechanisms such as the development planning deliberation (musrenbang), community forums, and public participation in decision-making can be strengthened with the spirit of sirumung karaya and sipamandar. Contemporary Indonesian cultural diplomacy can learn from Balanipa's success in using culture as a diplomatic tool, where cultural festivals such as the International Gamelan Festival, the promotion of angklung to various countries, and Indonesian cultural missions abroad can be designed based on the principles of transmission (the dissemination of culture), acceptance (reception by the international community), and coexistence (living together in peace), so that Indonesian culture is not only known but also valued and serves as a bridge for broader cooperation in the fields of politics, economics, and education. Strengthening local identity in the context of globalization can be achieved through the preservation and development of local traditions that hold positive values (such as totammaq to encourage children to study the Quran, kuliwa to maintain harmony with nature, and sayyang pattu'du as

a symbol of honor and motivation for the younger generation), while simultaneously opening up to constructive global influences and integrating them within the framework of local values, as exemplified by Balanipa's integration of Islam with Mandar customs.

In conclusion, the Balanipa Kingdom's diplomatic model characterized by democratic-participatory, culturally accommodative, and confederative-local autonomy principles holds significant relevance in the context of contemporary Indonesia's social and multicultural development, and can be adapted in various fields such as governance, education, cultural diplomacy, conflict resolution, and the strengthening of local identity, so that the historical legacy of Balanipa does not merely remain a memory of the past but becomes a source of inspiration and wisdom for current and future generations.

## Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the diplomacy of the Balanipa Kingdom played a central role in shaping, maintaining, and strengthening the integration of the Mandar coastal region within the *Pitu Ba'bana Binanga* confederation. Diplomacy was not merely practiced as external relations between kingdoms, but as an internal mechanism of political consolidation that governed power relations, defense, and the confederative governance of the region. Through the Luyo Agreement, the values of *sipamandar* (mutual reinforcement) and *sirumung karaya* (collective deliberation) were institutionalized as the foundation of inter-kingdom relations, emphasizing the principles of local sovereignty, collective solidarity, and the distribution of responsibilities according to the geographical positions of each region. In the political dimension, Balanipa's diplomacy proved effective as a unifying force for coastal and inland regions through the integration of *Pitu Ba'bana Binanga* with *Pitu Ulunna Salu*. The collective defense system established did not center on a single dominant power but rather on the distribution of regional responsibilities to address maritime and land-based threats. Inter-kingdom political marriages with Gowa, Bone, and Bima served as an effective instrument of cultural diplomacy in mitigating potential conflicts while simultaneously forming a network of strategic alliances. In the religious sphere, it demonstrates that Balanipa diplomacy played a crucial role in the Islamization of Mandar, which unfolded in a persuasive and accommodative manner. Islam was not introduced through coercive means, but rather via cultural da'wah, maritime trade, and kinship ties with Islamic kingdoms such as Gowa-Tallo and Bima. The integration of local customs and Islam resulted in a form of structural acculturation, institutionalized in the Parewa Saraq system as a hybrid legal framework combining customary law and Sharia. In the economic dimension, Balanipa's diplomacy was directed toward maintaining the stability and smooth operation of the maritime trade network, which served as the backbone of coastal communities' prosperity. The kingdom's strategic geographical position in Mandar Bay enabled it to act as a hub for inter-island trade routes connecting Sulawesi, Kalimantan, Java, Bima, and as far as the Moluccas.

The formation of the Sakka Manarang professional guild demonstrates the existence of an organized, skill-based local economic management system that supports productivity and promotes the distribution of prosperity. Economic diplomacy also served as an instrument of resistance against VOC domination through the rejection of trade monopolies on key commodities such as copra and the strengthening of free trade relations. This strategy indicates that Mandar diplomacy aimed not only to maintain internal stability but also to build collective economic autonomy. This study confirms that the diplomatic practices of the Balanipa Kingdom reinforce the Coastal Confederation Theory, which views Mandar's political integration as formed through inter-kingdom consensus within a network of autonomous entities, rather than through the centralization of power. The integration of indigenous and

Islamic traditions supports the theory of structural acculturation in the Nusantara, which suggests that Islam enriches, rather than negates, local traditions. Furthermore, economic and maritime diplomatic practices reinforce the local maritime political perspective, which positions maritime trade as the foundation of political and diplomatic stability.

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