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Building Unity in Diversity: The Confederal Governance of *Amara'diang* Balanipa and the Making of the Mandar Confederation

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Abstract

This article explores the confederal legacy of *Amara'diang* Balanipa, one of the most influential indigenous polities in the Mandar region of present-day West Sulawesi, Indonesia. Anchored in the local philosophy of *sipamanda* (a principle of mutual reinforcement and inclusive solidarity), *Amara'diang* Balanipa developed a system of alliances that fostered unity across distinct geographical zones and culturally heterogeneous communities. Through the establishment of two major inter-kingdom coalitions, *Pitu Babana Binanga* (Seven River Mouths) and *Pitu Ulunna Salu* (Seven River Sources), and landmark agreements such as *Assitalliang Tammajarra* and *Allamungan Batu* at Luyo, this polity laid the foundation for a Mandar confederation in the 16th century. Drawing on historical, philological, and ethnographic sources, this study demonstrates how the confederal structure managed plural legal traditions (*ade' mate* and *ade' tuho*) and reconciled regional differences through consensus and kinship diplomacy and negotiated autonomy. The article argues that this indigenous confederal model offers a historically grounded and culturally specific framework for understanding how unity can be sustained without erasing diversity. By revisiting Mandar's experience, the study contributes to broader reflections on how locally rooted governance practices can inform contemporary debates on multiculturalism, peacebuilding, and inclusive statecraft.

Keywords: *Amara'diang* Balanipa, *Sipamanda*, Multicultural governance, Mandar confederation, Diversity

1 Introduction

Indonesia is one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world, home to over 500 ethnic groups and 746 languages (Butler, 2016). This extraordinary national diversity is not abstract but emerges from deeply rooted local experiences, one of which is the Mandar region, where pluralism was historically managed through confederal mechanisms such as those initiated by Amara'diang Balanipa. The Mandar region is located in West Sulawesi Province, with Mamuju as its capital (Gunawan & Suhendro, 2023). Mandar's political history is considered "pluralistic" because it consisted of multiple autonomous communities (banua) led by distinct *Tomakaka*, each possessing its own customary laws, territorial authority, and political leadership. Rather than being integrated through a single hierarchical structure, these polities coexisted and interacted through negotiated alliances, ritual obligations, kinship diplomacy, and collective decision-making, elements that together constitute the pluralistic foundation of Mandar governance. Historical Lontarak manuscripts document numerous Tomakaka (local leaders), each governing their territories (Nurkidam et al., 2020). Among them, Amara'diang Balanipa emerged as a key polity centered in present-day Polewali Mandar. Initially composed of the four core banua (neighborhood states) Napo, Samasundu, Masso, and Todang-todang, forming the Appe Banua Kaiyang alliance, the kingdom expanded through both diplomatic

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alliances and military campaigns, eventually shifting its political center from Napo to Tammajarra and later to Tangnga-Tangnga (Poelinggomang, 2012; Rahman, 1988, p. 33).

This strategic relocation reflected political dynamics and geopolitical considerations. As maritime historians have widely demonstrated, particularly in studies of Eastern Indonesian polities (Rismawidiawati, 2023), coastal kingdoms often shifted their political centers to enhance access to maritime routes, trading partners, and interregional networks. Situated along the coast, the new capital allowed Balanipa to access major maritime routes that connected Mandar to wider Nusantara trading circuits, thus strengthening its strategic position in regional interaction. Rather than implying large-scale economic transformation, this relocation aligns with broader maritime patterns in the archipelago, where political centers were commonly repositioned to secure mobility, communication, and alliance-building across coastal zones. This shift also required adaptation to distinct geographic and socio-cultural conditions between the coastal and highland populations.

Beyond economics, Amara'diang Balanipa played a central role in building inter-polity networks. Strong kinship ties led to the formation of the Pitu Babana Binanga (seven river estuaries) confederation, comprising Balanipa, Sendana, Banggae, Pamboang, Tappalang, Mamuju, and Binuang (Poelinggomang, 2012). This alliance aimed to strengthen inter-kingdom solidarity in facing internal and external challenges. Later, this network expanded inland through establishing the Pitu Ulunna Salu (Seven River Sources) alliance, which included Rantebulahan, Aralle, Mambi, Tabulahan, Matannga, Tabang, and Bambang. The meeting of these two confederations in Luyo in the 16th century marked the founding of the Mandar Confederation, built on the principles of cooperation, equality, and collective resilience.

Amara'diang Balanipa emerged as a unifying force emphasizing kinship, tolerance, and solidarity in this context. Two major political agreements, *Assitalliang Tammajarra* and *Allamungan Batu* at Luyo, stand as historical milestones in establishing a confederal system, offering concrete evidence of a local contribution to realizing unity in diversity. This model demonstrates that local values such as *sipamanda* (mutual reinforcement in diversity) are historically relevant and provide an alternative lens through which to approach contemporary global governance challenges.

Regionally, Mandar reflects broader patterns of negotiated alliances among autonomous polities in Sulawesi, where inter-kingdom cooperation was essential for maintaining stability across a highly diverse cultural landscape. Nationally, these confederal traditions resonate with Indonesia's longstanding debates about the balance between central authority and regional autonomy. *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* reflects a national commitment to unifying differences while constructing a cohesive national identity (Blackmore et al., 1970). In practice, the Indonesian state has pursued policies that promote the recognition and representation of ethnic diversity as a foundation for social harmony. *Pancasila*, as the ideological cornerstone of the state, also reinforces this spirit, offering not only a domestic framework for pluralism but a potential model for multicultural societies worldwide (Blackmore et al., 1970). Recent studies have shown that a universal-diverse orientation can strengthen congruence between ethnic and national identities, enhancing solidarity among diverse groups. Such an orientation enables individuals to preserve their cultural identity while embracing a shared national identity, resulting in greater social cohesion (Burhan et al., 2022).

Nationally, Mandar's confederal tradition resonates with Indonesia's longstanding debates about the balance between central authority and regional autonomy, most prominently articulated in the Soekarno–Hatta discussions during the early independence period, in which Soekarno emphasized a unitary national identity while Hatta advocated for a more federal, community-rooted political structure. This distinction sharpens the conceptual relevance of the Mandar case: Whereas national unity in Indonesia is institutionally framed through *Pancasila* and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, the Mandar confederation historically realized unity through voluntary cooperation, mutual obligation, and consensus-driven leadership. In this sense, Mandar provides a historically embedded example of how local autonomy and collective cohesion can be reconciled within a single political framework.

Amidst growing global challenges in managing diversity, ranging from ethno-national conflicts and cross-border migration to increasing social polarization, the principle of unity in diversity has become a cornerstone of governance efforts worldwide. Multicultural countries such as Canada, India, and South Africa, for instance, exemplify how ethnic, religious, and cultural pluralism can be integrated within a single

national framework through policies of recognition and collective representation (Asanga Fon, 2023; Datta & Madhavi, 2016; Rismawidiawati, 2023). In each of these contexts, federal or quasi-federal arrangements provide institutional mechanisms that allow diverse cultural communities to participate in shared governance while maintaining local autonomy. This principle of negotiated coexistence resonates strongly with the Mandar experience in Indonesia, where confederal alliances among autonomous polities likewise fostered cooperation without erasing cultural differences. In this context, Indonesia's local experience with the principle of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity) represents a valuable contribution to global discourses on multicultural governance, one grounded in inclusion, solidarity, and intercultural dialogue. As the foundational ideology of Indonesia, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* fosters peaceful coexistence among the country's diverse ethnic and cultural communities. It remains highly relevant in addressing contemporary global challenges related to diversity management, particularly in its emphasis on collective identity and shared belonging. This article demonstrates how the confederal system of Amara'diang Balanipa operationalized the principle of Unity in Diversity through institutionalized cooperation among culturally distinct polities.

To clarify the conceptual foundation of this study, Unity in Diversity is understood here not only as a moral or cultural ideal but as a governance principle that enables distinct communities to coexist through institutionalized cooperation. Confederal governance, by contrast, refers to a political arrangement in which autonomous polities voluntarily coordinate authority through consensus-based mechanisms. In such systems, diversity is preserved through the retention of local sovereignty, while unity is produced through negotiated agreements, shared norms, and collective decision-making. It is this structural complementarity (autonomy on the one hand and cooperation on the other) that allows confederations to operationalize Unity in Diversity. This theoretical relationship provides the analytical lens through which the Mandar experience is examined in this article.

Despite these strengths, Indonesia continues to face challenges such as social polarization and interethnic tensions. These dynamics underscore the need for adaptive governance strategies and continuous intercultural dialogue to ensure that diversity remains a source of strength rather than division. In this context, local historical experiences such as those of the Mandar region become crucial to examine because they offer empirically grounded models of how culturally diverse polities negotiated cohesion without centralization. This provides an academic basis for analyzing Mandar not merely as a regional case, but as a historically embedded system of diversity governance.

Previous studies have explored the political and social structures of Mandar's kingdoms. Poelinggomang (2012) detailed the region's political organization within the broader patterns of South Sulawesi state formation; Rahman (1988) examined Mandar's customary values and local legal traditions as the basis of legitimacy; while Nurkidam et al. (2020) analyzed the role of *Tomakaka* in maintaining stability and symbolic authority. Additional studies such as Limbugau (1987), A. M. Mandra (1987), and Syah (1997) further illuminated Mandar's ritual politics, kinship diplomacy, and inter-polity relations. However, this body of scholarship has not systematically addressed how the confederative alliances initiated by Amara'diang Balanipa functioned as a long-term mechanism for integrating culturally distinct polities while preserving autonomy. In particular, no study has explicitly examined these alliances as historical expressions of Unity in Diversity or analyzed their relevance to broader national debates on federalism and regional autonomy. Therefore, this article aims to reconstruct and analyze the contribution of Amara'diang Balanipa to multicultural integration through two key historical agreements: *Assitalliang Tammajarra* and *Allamungan Batu* at Luyo. By explicitly addressing this gap, the article situates the Mandar confederation not only within local and regional histories but also within national and global conversations on diversity governance.

Understanding the Mandar experience therefore requires a closer look at how the principle of Unity in Diversity was articulated through its confederal system of governance. In this article, the concept of Unity in Diversity refers to the coexistence of distinct cultural and political entities within a single cooperative framework. In the Mandar context, this principle is embodied in the indigenous notion of *sipamanda*, which means mutual reinforcement and inclusive solidarity. Meanwhile, the confederal system refers to a loose political arrangement in which several autonomous polities voluntarily form alliances while retaining their sovereignty. This structure differs from a centralized federal model because authority is derived from consensus rather than delegation of power to a higher unit.

The historical experience of Amara'diang Balanipa illustrates how a confederal structure can institutionalize unity without erasing diversity. Through treaties such as Assitalliang Tammajarra and Allamungan Batu di Luyo, Mandar's kingdoms practiced a form of negotiated autonomy and collective decision-making. In this sense, the Mandar confederation demonstrates that unity in diversity can emerge not from uniformity, but from a shared commitment to cooperation and mutual respect.

2 Method

This study is qualitative research with an interdisciplinary, descriptive-analytical approach. A multidisciplinary approach is needed to reveal the research problem and achieve progress using various methods (Dörpinghaus et al., 2022; Yu et al., 2023). This research integrates historical, philological, archaeological, and ethnographic methods to gain a more holistic understanding of the contribution of *Amara'diang* Balanipa in building unity and diversity in Mandar. Unlike previous descriptive works, each method in this study was applied in an operational manner to ensure empirical accountability.

Data was collected through literature study, archaeological survey (including *test pit*), observation, and in-depth interviews with traditional leaders, local historians, and Mandar people. The interview process followed a semi-structured format and involved eight purposively selected informants; interview data are cited in the analysis section using anonymized identifiers to ensure transparency. In this study, interviews function primarily as expert consultations to verify the interpretation of key historical and cultural concepts rather than as primary narrative data; therefore, they are referenced in the analysis in a general form without direct quotation. Triangulation was carried out to ensure the validity of historical data by comparing primary sources (*lontarak,* artifacts, building structures) and secondary sources (academic studies, interviews, and local historical records). Source credibility was evaluated using standard historical source criticism, including internal–external validation, comparison between manuscript variants, and cross-referencing with colonial or regional chronicles when available. This study does not include quantitative or economic data but instead focuses on historical and cultural dimensions of confederal governance.

The data obtained was analyzed using historical and interpretative approaches to reconstruct past events based on available historical sources. The historical analysis involved identifying chronological sequences, political terminology, and patterns of alliance formation cited with specific manuscript page or folio references to strengthen traceability. Philological studies were conducted by analyzing *lontarak* manuscripts to understand local perspectives on the governance system and relationships between alliances. This included lexical comparison across manuscripts such as Lontarak Balanipa and Lontarak Pattapingan, enabling verification of consistency in accounts of political agreements. The archaeological approach explores material evidence that can support historical reconstruction, drawing on test pit findings used solely to confirm settlement continuity and spatial patterns related to Balanipa's political centers. Meanwhile, ethnography provides insight into how cultural and social values are inherited in Mandar society today, particularly through observation of customary rituals, kinship practices, and narrative transmission.

With this approach, this paper seeks to reveal not only the chronology of events but also the patterns of social interaction, geopolitical strategies, and historical relevance of the treaties made by *Amara'diang* Balanipa. The integration of these various methods provides a new contribution to the study of local history, especially in understanding how the confederative system in Mandar became a model of harmonious diversity in the archipelago.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Brief overview of Amara'diang Balanipa

In this study, we retain the indigenous Mandar term *Amara'diang* rather than translating it as "kingdom," as the latter misrepresents the nature of political authority in Mandar. Philological readings of the lontarak, combined with anthropological scholarship on Mandar and wider South Sulawesi polities, show that an *Amara'diang* refers to a customary polity whose legitimacy derives from *adat* (local custom), collective

leadership and negotiated authority, rather than from monarchical sovereignty centered on a single ruler. The political structure of Mandar, particularly the confederation of *Pitu Ba'bana Binanga* and *Pitu Ulunna Salu*, functioned through distributed power, ritualised agreements, and inter-polity cooperation. This differs substantially from the hierarchical, dynastic, and centralised characteristics implied by the English term "kingdom" (Karim, 2019). Retaining the local terminology ensures conceptual accuracy, avoids imposing Eurocentric categories, and aligns with decolonial methodological approaches in Indonesian historiography.

According to several sources, the name Balanipa derives from two words: bala and nipa. Bala refers to an enclosure, fence, or a designated arena used for settling disputes or adjudicating conflicts. Nipa, on the other hand, is the name of a type of palm whose leaves are still commonly used today as roofing material for buildings (Rahman, 1988; Saidong, 1997; Syah, 1997). Therefore, after security and order in the *Appe Banua Kaiyang* (four great nations) alliance had been restored successfully under the leadersip of Todilaling, Balanipa was chosen as the name of the political unit and Todilaling and the customary leaders of the Appe Banua Kaiyang (four great nations) alliance formed a governing body known as Balanipa. Amara'diang Balanipa was established due to Todilaling's nomination as an alliance controlling Napo, Samasundu, Mosso, and Todang-todang (Amir, 2011; Rahman, 1988).

Amara'diang Balanipa is located on the west coast of the northern part of the southern peninsula of Sulawesi Island. Sulawesi Island in the Indonesian Archipelago is located at the three junctions of the Indo-Australian, Eurasian, and Pacific Plates (Liu et al., 2020). Sulawesi is the largest island in the Wallacea Region, divided into four peninsulas in the north, center, south, and southeast (Ó Marcaigh et al., 2021). Balanipa is in the trading area of the archipelago.

Balanipa is located in the middle of the east coast of the Makassar Strait. The Makassar Strait lies between Southeast Kalimantan and western Sulawesi and is geographically situated on the border of the West Indonesian province and the Eastern Indonesian province (Guntoro, 1999). In Sulawesi, Amara'diang borders the Pitu Ulunna Salu alliance (Mamasa Regency today) to the north. On the east, it borders Amara'diang Binuang (present-day Polewali District). Mandar Bay and the Makassar Strait border it in the south. Amara'diang Banggae, Pamboang, and Sendana bordered it in the west (now Majene Regency). Tinambung, Campalagian, Limboro, Balanipa, Tutallu, Wonomulyo, Mapilli, Luyo, Tapango, and Patampanua sub-districts, which are included in the Polewali Sub-district area under the current Polewali Mandar Regency, were part of the former Amara'diang Balanipa area.

Most of Balanipa is mountainous or hilly, difficult to traverse, and rocky.[1] The soil in the mountains is not very fertile, and the humus layer is not very deep. The lowlands have good agricultural soil, especially in the Maloso (*Mapilli*) River Basin in Campalagian and surrounding areas. Amara'diang Balanipa is the watershed of two major rivers, the Mandar River and the Mapilli River. The Mandar River is not very swift, originating in Kopean, and it flows from north to south. The river has tributaries, including the Undu River on the left and the critical Rabakang, Ajuna, Padada, Mombi, and Ulung Rivers on the right side. The two main rivers (Mandar and Mapilli) link the inland or upstream areas with the downstream or estuary areas, politically and economically.

3.2 From Napo to Tangnga-Tangnga

Before assuming the position of *mara'dia* (king) of Balanipa, Todilaling first made an assitalliang (agreement) with the chairman of the *Ada' Kaiyang* council (*hadat besar*), Puang Dipoyosang, on behalf of the people.[2] The Ada' Kaiyang council members comprised the traditional leaders Papuangan Napo, Samasundu, Mosso, and Todang-todang. This customary council is also called the *Ada' Appe Banua Kaiyang* council. The assitalliang delivered at the inauguration of the Mara'dia of Balanipa reads, among other things, that

[1] AD Surveys and Test Pits, 12-14 October 2022

[2] *Puang Dipoyosan was the name of the parriba ada' (traditional leader) of Poyosan. The name of the Poyosan region later changed to Limboro, so the traditional leader was also addressed as Puang Limboro. Puang Dipoyosan was the first chairman of the Ada' Kaiyang Balanipa council, as well as the first traditional leader of Papuangan Limboro and a contemporary of Todilaling. Their family relationship is often described as first cousins, and some also mention that Todilaling was Puang Dipoyosan's nephew* (Rahman, 1988, p. 271). Hal inilah yang mendasari sehingga pelantikan *maraqdia* Balanipa berikutnya dilakukan oleh *Papuangan* Limboro yang biasa disapa dengan *Puang* Limboro.

"*Upakaiyangngo'o, mupakaraja', madondong duang bongi anna marrattoso'o uake', maruppu-ruppu'o batu, uwalai membali akaiyangan*" (We chose you to hold the reins of power, but you must respect us. If you decide to send in a combined force and trample on local laws and traditions the day after tomorrow, we will revoke the honor we have bestowed on you." (Rahman, 1988) This shows that there has been an agreement governing the rights and obligations of both parties between a *mara'dia* and the people since the inception of Amaraqdiang Balanipa, which limits the power of a mara'dia. Subsequent inaugurations of the Mara'dia of Balanipa always included assent of this kind. To be observed by the *mara'dia* and the people of Balanipa, the *assitaliang* is repeated every time a new *mara'dia* is elected. In other words, this arrangement functioned as a form of social contract, ensuring that the ruler's authority was conditional upon the consent of the governed and the mutual observance of shared laws and customs.

The first step Todilaling (1540-1565) took after his appointment as *mara'dia* (king) was to organize the government centered on Napo and unite the surrounding countries that were still in conflict at the time. The placement of Napo as the center of Amara'diang Balanipa was not only because Papuangan Napo was the head of the Appe Banua Kaiyang alliance before the formation of Balanipa. It was also because the conditions at that time were still colored by conflict, especially with Passokkorang. In addition, Napo was strategically located because some banua kaiyang, such as Mosso in the north, Todang-todang in the northeast, and Samasundu in the west, surrounded it. Therefore, the determination of Napo as the center of government was closely related to defense and security interests (Amir et al., 2022; Syah, 1991).

Tomepayung succeeded Todilaling as Mara'dia Balanipa II (1565–1580). After assuming office, several lontara's accounts describe that Tomepayung continued the political relations established during Todilaling's period, particularly regarding the integration of surrounding communities into Balanipa's sphere of influence. According to the Lontara' Pattodioloang, Tomepayung succeeded in negotiating with the Tomakaka of Barobaro and Malumba so that they would be recognized as pemangku adat, enabling Papuangan Tenggeleng (Barobaro) and Papuangan Luyo (Malumba), along with their dependent communities, to be incorporated into Balanipa. Furthermore, the Lontara' also records Tomepayung's successful campaign in Passokkorang, a polity with considerable regional standing whose center was located along the Mapilli River and known for its land–sea trade networks. These developments indicate the expansion of Balanipa's political authority during Tomepayung's rule, grounded in alliances, ritual recognition, and military assertion as documented in the Lontara' tradition (Syah, 1997).

Geopolitical policies were also implemented peacefully, alongside military conquest. Examples are treaties of friendship or brotherhood, such as those established with Allu and Taramanu, two polities that, according to tradition, were originally connected to Balanipa but had existed as independent entities. Over time, both eventually merged with or were absorbed into Balanipa. Other polities, such as Tumbi, voluntarily joined and became members of Balanipa. These nations later developed into autonomous territories within Amara'diang Balanipa (A. Mandra, 1991). Each country or kingdom joining Balanipa had a specific policy during the procedure. First, they were positioned at the center of power as traditional stakeholders in the political system. Second, they became autonomous regions with the authority to run their government, except for defense and security, which remained a shared responsibility under centralized management. This was Tomepayung's geopolitical strategy to enlarge Balanipa's territory and strengthen Mandar unity.

Along with territorial expansion, Tammajarra became the seat of government, which had previously been in Napo. The transition of power was closely linked to geopolitical, economic, and defense issues. King Tomepayung established specialized officers, or "a thousand men" (or pious people) with various skills, known as *sakka manarang* (complete with all skills) in Lontara, to advance the people's economy, such as teams of nurses, cooks, water carriers, wood carriers, carpenters, sail makers, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, brass workers, stone tool makers, rope spinners, art tool makers, carvers, and other craftsmen, with each group consisting of approximately twenty members (Syah, 1991). On closer inspection, the formation of sakka maranang is inseparable from maritime trade interests.

Mara'dia Balanipa IV Daengta (1590-1615) then moved the amara'diang center from Tammajarra to Tangnga-tangnga on the coast. The move was due to geopolitical and economic interests, particularly in response to maritime trade. After Islam was accepted as the official religion of the amara'diang in 1608, Daengta appointed Abdurrahim Kamaluddin as mara'diang na syara (head of the Islamic faith), who was

also known as the first Kadhi (Kali) of Balanipa, authorized to regulate the implementation of Islamic law. It is narrated in the lontarak that during the reign of Daengta, Tosalama came to Binuang (Abdurrahim Kamaluddin), who converted the mara'dia along with the people of Balanipa and Appe Banua Kaiyang (Napo, Samasundu, Mosso, and Todang-todang). Since then, Balanipa has been the center of Islam's spread in Mandar (Mappangara, 2003; Rusman, 2008; Yayasan Kebudayaan Mandar, n.d.). Therefore, Balanipa was critical in building unity as well as spreading Islam in Mandar.

Assitalliang Tammajarra: Building unity in diversity

After capturing Passokkorang, Balanipa under the rule of Tomepayung not only grew in strength and power, but the *amara'diang* also gained greater respect and began to play an essential role in Mandarese politics. It built cooperative relationships with some *amara'diang* in Mandar, made conquests, and had several nearby small states or kingdoms voluntarily join Balanipa. Mara'dia Balanipa interacted with other *Amara'diang* along the coast by forming alliances. At a meeting held in Tammajarra, the center of Amara'diang Balanipa at the time, they agreed to support each other and jointly build unity to promote prosperity and peace in Mandar. The Pitu Babana Binanga (seven estuaries) or coastal partnership, consisting of Amara'diang Balanipa, Sendana, Banggae, Pamboang, Tappalang, Mamuju, and Binuang, was formed by the provisions of the Assitalliang Tammajarra (Treaty of Tammajarra) (Sjariffudin, 1989).

Indeed, the narrative of the *Assitalliang Tammajarra* treaty has several versions. This difference occurs because the treaty was not written down, and there have been several treaties in this place, including a later renewal of the treaty. One of them is a fragment of P. Tandiagi's version, which is considered to be the first one:

> *After the consensus discussion at Podang, the people gathered at Tamajarra, united in thought, bowing their heads in memory of Passokkorang's atrocities. The Napo (Balanipa) government commented, "What about the consideration of Sendana?" How are you, Banggae, Pemboang, Tappalang, and Mamuju? Sendana asked. It was emphatically stated that only Balanipa and Sendana were allowed to speak. According to Banggae, the summoning of Pemboang, Tappalang, and Mamuju. What do you think, Napo, said Sendana. If Passokkorang's spear and fence are not taken down, according to Napo, the land in Mandar will tilt and be overturned. Because of Passokkorang's savagery that blocks day and night, our people cannot swallow a bite of food or even a sip of water. For our nation's security in Mandar, we must fight and win to reclaim our people's right to sleep (A. M. Mandra, 1987, p. 25, Sjarifuddin 1989, p. 280)*

This account suggests that the *Assitalliang Tammajarra* was initially driven by the urgent need to face a common external enemy, Passokkorang, whose actions had disrupted security, trade, and daily life across Mandar. The shared perception of threat provided a strong incentive for previously independent amara'diang to cooperate, mirroring other historical alliances where defence was the immediate priority. However, the Mandar alliance did not remain solely a defensive coalition. Over time, as reflected in later agreements such as the renewal of the *Assitalliang Tammajarra* and the *Allamungan Batu* at Luyo, the basis for unity expanded to include the regulation of inter-polity relations, the codification of shared values such as *sipamanda* (mutual reinforcement), and the preservation of cultural autonomy within a framework of political cooperation. This evolution indicates that while the confederation's foundation lay in collective security against external threats, its endurance rested on the institutionalisation of norms that promoted both unity and diversity in peacetime.

The historical records further detail the circumstances of the treaty's initial formation, which took place in the form of a dialogue aimed at coordinating the campaign against Passokkorang. The agreement was in the form of dialogue, and a meeting was held to conquer Passokkorang. The Amara'diang of Balanipa, Sendana, Banggae, Pamboang, Tappalang, and Mamuju attended the meeting. Binuang was not mentioned in the text of the treaty, so it is certain that the alliance formed at that time still consisted of six amara'diang. Napo, who spoke at the meeting, represented *Appe Banua Kaiyyang* as the core area of Amara'diang Balanipa. However, in due course the alliance formed through Assitalliang Tammajarra increased to seven after Binuang joined, thus forming the Pitu Babana Binanga alliance.

Binuang's involvement in the Assitalliang Tammajarra is described in Lontarak Pattapingan Mandar as follows:

> *Gather everyone in Tammajarra. Please join Sendana and others. Marakdia Balanipa continued, "I have a purpose in contacting you, my relatives. It is good for the seven of us to ally because we are all brothers from the same origin, have the same grandmother, and are all descendants of Tokombong Dibura. Who has Taandiri, Marakdia Tappalang, and the grandson of Marakdia Mamuju. Who, if not Daeng Palulung, owns Mara'dia Sendana's grandson and Marakdia Pamboang? The origin is also Tokombong Dibura. Ibongkapadang is the father of Marakdia Banggae and Marakdia Binuang, and Tokombong Dibura also has ancestors. Because we all came from the same grandmother," Marakdia Balanipa said, "We are all brothers." How about that, my brothers? Say the fifth, "You who fight with Balanipa", to Sendana. You are marvellous, Sendana, Balanipa said. "Once you say, ten times I am happy", Sendana said. With one exception, I am big while you are sambolangiq (sky cover, a type of bird). For fear of the revival of Passokkorang's power, you (as) husband, I (as) wife, and as children are Banggae, Pamboang, Tapalang, Mamuju, and Binuang. "He died in the morning in Balanipa, in the afternoon, Sendana with his son", Sendana repeated. So it was with Sendana and Pitu Babana Binanga for life (Yayasan Kebudayaan Mandar, n.d.).*

However, the description in Lontarak Pattappingan is different from Rahman (1988) and Saharuddin (1985)'s description of the agreement as follows:

> *Let's work together to advance the interests of our respective nations, especially when it comes to maintaining stability and prosperity for the benefit of our citizens. Instead of looking for bad solutions for the whole, let's look for suitable solutions for the common good. Let us support each other when we stray, stumble, or fall; when we make mistakes, let us remind each other. Nothing can save our brotherhood, whether on the mountain or the ground. When the misery that will destroy the nation occurs the day after tomorrow and can no longer be averted, circumvented, or stepped over, let us take a firm decision as mighty warriors fighting for the country with all our might (Rahman, 1988).*

The excerpt shows various literary interpretations of the Treaty of Tammajarra, a treaty that was not made only once. However, no one disputes the fact that the seven Amara'diang were brothers. *Itta' ilalangna Pitu Babana Binanga, masaq bulo-buloi tau ilalangna pasemandarang*, as Tomepayung said throughout the meeting (meaning that we who are in Babana Binanga are in one bloodline that will not be separated). Because both of them come from Tokombong Dibura, this fact not only deepens their bond of brotherhood but also helps in co-operation for improving each other's welfare and peace. This arrangement was also maintained due to fears that Passokkorang would return and undermine Mandar's tranquillity. This was because some of Passokkorang's troops had fled and were protected by other Mandar kingdoms as *manribag* (war escapees) (Limbugau, 1987).

If you look closely, the Tammajarra Treaty also contains excellent principles, such as mistakes being a reminder to each other, like "falling wakes each other up, and drifts ashore." If you make a mistake, you should forgive each other, show no ill will, and refrain from blaming each other. There should be no mutual reprimand; virtue is nourished together; evil is rejected together; it is not called good if only one benefits; one sick person should get six gifts, two sick people should get five gifts, and so on. This shows that in addition to the ideals of unity, the agreement also contains the values of brotherhood, tolerance, and solidarity. Therefore, Balanipa not only played an essential role in forming the Pitu Babana Binanga alliance, but it is also proof that this amara'diang contributed significantly to building and further strengthening unity in diversity in Mandar.

Balanipa's important role in the alliance is also evident in the position of its amara'diang as chairman with the status of the father (husband), Sendana as vice chairman with the status of mother (wife), and others as members with the status of children. This position is based on the maturity and strength of each

amara'diang who joins the alliance. Balanipa was appointed as a father because he was considered the most powerful and extensive amara'diang. Sendana was appointed as the mother, as it was considered the most prosperous amara'diang and had previously formed the Bocco Tallu (Sendana, Alu, and Taramanu) alliance. This position is closely related to the adjudication of problems that arise within a country or between amara'diang, as follows:

> *If individuals or citizens of the country disagree, talk to Sendana like you are a mother. Send him to Balanipa as the royal father if he does not want to because he can be fixed if he is already in Balanipa. Similar to Babana Binanga, she sends her first to Sendana in her capacity as a queen mother. Return it to Balanipa if it has not been scorched because it can be extinguished if it is there if it is not (Syah, 1991).*

The Tammajarra Treaty was renewed after Todiboseang became *mara'dia* of Balanipa VI. This renewal reaffirmed the treaty and set out the rules for each amara'diang and how to resolve any problems between them. In the renewal of the treaty, among other things, it was stated:

> *Any problems that develop in their respective areas the day after tomorrow are intended to be resolved by themselves. If this cannot be fulfilled, your biological mother will become the target of conflict (Sendana). Suppose this has not been completed in seven days and nights. In that case, you can visit your traditional father (Balanipa) with your biological mother, and they will both work together to resolve all these issues correctly. (A. M. Mandra, 1987)*

The renewal of the agreement further strengthened Balanipa's position and role in Mandar's political arena. This is because, in addition to being the chairman, he also became the final arbiter if Sendana could not resolve the problems faced by members of the alliance. Balanipa is considered the supreme judge or the highest authority in deciding cases (Saharuddin, 1985). In addition, Balanipa was also responsible for the alliance's external affairs, in dealing with and preventing external attacks and cooperating with other kingdoms. Of course, this position did not make things difficult for Balanipa's development, especially regarding conflicts with other powers.

3.3 Allamungan Batu: Strengthening unity and diversity

The conflict between Balanipa and other powers in Mandar was, among other things, based on the geopolitical policy of territorial expansion and the escape of Passokkorang troops called *jangan-jangan manribag* (fugitives of war) (Limbugau, 1987, p. 8; A. M. Mandra, 1987, pp. 36-39). These 'fugitives' always received protection from other kingdoms, especially in the ulunna salu (upstream) or inland areas, but Balanipa always pursued them. This often led to conflicts and wars between Balanipa and other Mandarese powers. For example, the Lahakang, Sungkiq, and Damadamaq Wars. Although the wars ended with a peace treaty, the treaty was not fully adhered to, so conflicts continued between them. One major dispute arose from the disparity between the laws of the interior (ulunna salu) and the coast (babana binanga). Babana Binanga adheres to ade' mate, or the death penalty, while Ulunna Salu adheres to ade' tuho, or the law of life (A. M. Mandra, 1987, pp. 36-39). That's why war refugees always seek safety in the *Ulunna Salu* region. On receiving this information, Tomepayung, chairman of the Pitu Babana Binanga alliance, requested a meeting with Londong Dehata (Tomakaka Rantebulahan), chairman of the Pitu Ulunna Salu coalition, to resolve differences and establish friendly relations.

When Tomepayung arrived at *Ulunna Salu*, he was welcomed by Londong Dehata and the region's rulers. The Mara'dia of Balanipa then conveyed Todilaling's (his father's) message, that "Lolongmi uai, lolottomi ada'" (meaning, humans develop from *Ulunna Salu* to *Babana Binanga*, while rules develop from *Babana Binanga* to *Ulunna Salu*) (Lontarak Mandar) (Amir, 2011). What Tomepayung said was well received because they were brothers whose origins were from one grandmother, namely Pongkapadang and Torijeqne. Therefore, they agreed to hold a meeting, and the agreed-upon place was Luyo. This place was the border between the two alliances of *Pitu Babana Binanga* and *Pitu Ulunna Salu*.

The process of reconciling these divergent legal traditions — *ade' tuho* in the interior and *ade' mate* along the coast — reveals a deeper tension between local autonomy and collective order. At a conceptual level, this dynamic parallels the later Soekarno–Hatta debate on how unity should be structured in Indonesia: whether through a more integrative national framework or through a community-rooted autonomy that preserves local sovereignty. The Mandar case demonstrates that cohesion was achieved not by centralising authority but through negotiated agreements, a practice that resonates more closely with Hatta's communitarian vision of governance.

All members of the alliances of *Pitu Babana Binanga*, *Amara'diang* Balanipa, Sendana, Banggae, Pamboang, Tappalang, Mamuju, and Binuang attended the meeting in Luyo. Rantebulahan, Aralle, Mambi, Tabulahan, Matanga, Tabang, and Bambang were members of the *Pitu Ulunna Salu* coalition. The meeting between the two alliances resulted in the Allamungan Batu agreement at Luyo (Luyo Agreement). This *allamungan batu* (stone planting) symbolizes their spirit of togetherness because it is embedded in the earth. Allamungan batu is accompanied by breaking eggs and ceramic plates and throwing them onto the stone that has just been embedded. Anyone who breaks the agreement, like the egg and plate, will be destroyed. There seem to be several versions of the allamungan batu narrative, including:

1. *Lontarak Pattappingan*, translated by A. Mandra (1991), as follows:

> *Based on the testimony of the Gods above, below, to the right, to the left, to the front, and the back, it has been established that the ancestors of many of their grandchildren in Pitu Ulunna Salu and Pitu Babana Binanga work together to support each other. Unstretched, unlimited pillows with bed linen, bandages for the palate, not feeding each other skeletons, not offering each other poisonous drinks, not ignoring each other's problems, and not forgetting each other's kindness. Respect each other's laws and regulations, including the Pitu Ulunna Salu Law of Life and the Pitu Babana Binanga customary husband's Law of Death. In Pitu Ulunna Salu, headband; in Pitu Babana Binanga, bun. Pitu Babana Binanga guards the shark, and Pitu Ulunna Salu guards the snake. Pitu Ulunna Salu and Pitu Babana Binanga separate after the white eye and black eye are separated. Anyone who fantasizes about wanting a boy who will sell him Pitu Ulunna Salu with Pitu Babana Binanga, then throw him away and wash him so that he does not reappear will never come true. (A. M. Mandra, 1987; Sjariffudin, 1989)*

2. Manuscript from Tahir in Lampoko Village

> *The kings gathered in Luyo and agreed to pitu ulna salu and pitu ba'bana binanga, the terms of which were as follows: The next day, if someone violates the customary order that has been established by the state in Balanipa, the customs that have been made become customary laws and rules, customs for puang and arajang. The wood held down by the fallen wood and the ground trodden down by the crushed earth is where the egg is decorated on the crushed stone. If the plate could touch, he would not feel the event of his humanity. At this point, it was decided to salute Pitu Ba'bana Binanga. The day after, you (pitu ulunna salu) are summoned and notified, and you rush down to help when a great enemy is approaching from the sea, fully equipped and valiant. In addition, if a large opponent with strong equipment is climbing the mountain the day after tomorrow, don't you (pitu babana binanga) be contacted, informed, and come directly to help? (Rahman, 1988)*

3. Manuscript from Saharuddin

> *Ulu Salu has eyes in the sawa, Baqba Binanga has eyes in the pearappeanna mangiwang, sisaraqpi mata malotong anna mata mapute, anna sisaraq Pitu Ulunna Salu anna Pitu Baqbana Binanga (After separating the black eye from the white eye, Pitu Ulunna Salu separated from Pitu Baqbana Binanga to guard the snakes in the rice fields (enemies from the mountain) and the stranded sharks (enemies from the sea)) (Saharuddin, 1985).*

Based on these sources, the central theme was a mutual agreement to maintain peace in Mandar. *Allamungan Batu in Luyo* codifies the responsibilities undertaken by each alliance; specifically, Pitu Ulunna Salu must repel enemies from the mountains or interior, while Pitu Babana Binanga is in charge of repelling enemies from the sea. This agreement is compared to the pupil of the eye, which combines black and white colors to allow the eye to function. It means that the agreement not only contains the value of unity and integrity but also strengthens unity in diversity or diversity in organizing life together in Mandar. That is why some authors argue that it is this allamungan batu or agreement that underlies the term "sipamanda", which means mutual strengthening or strengthening unity and integrity (Hamzah, 1987; Poelinggomang, 2012, p. 6).

This case once again highlights the role of external threats, such as the possibility of attacks from the mountains or the sea, as a key incentive for the Mandar polities to maintain cohesion and avoid internal conflict. While the initial impetus was defensive, the Allamungan Batu agreement also institutionalised cooperation in areas that could yield mutual benefits, such as securing trade routes and fostering economic exchange between inland and coastal regions. Such dynamics resonate with the patterns of alliance formation found in other parts of Sulawesi, particularly the Ajatappareng Confederation, Tellu Limpoe, and Tellu Poccoe, where cooperation emerged from a combination of shared vulnerability, economic interdependence and negotiated political balance, as discussed by Druce (2009) in *The Lands West of the Lakes*. They also align with the broader Nusantara traditions of “sekutu dan seteru,” in which polities forged alliances not merely for survival but also for mutual advantage within a fluctuating landscape of rivalry and cooperation. In this sense, the Mandar alliances embodied a synthesis of collective self-preservation and shared prosperity, grounded firmly in regional historical patterns rather than modern analogies.

In terms of governance, the available sources suggest that the Mandar confederations were neither fully despotic nor fully democratic but operated through a participatory framework mediated by kinship-based councils and agreements like the assitalliang. While individual rulers such as the mara’dia held considerable authority, their power was constrained by collective decision-making and by the need to maintain legitimacy among the amara’diang and customary councils. This structure limited the risk of purely personal wars of conquest yet conflicts such as those with Passokkorang may indeed reflect the destabilising ambitions of an overreaching ruler. In that sense, the Mandar experience shows how federative arrangements can balance leadership authority with participatory elements to preserve unity in diversity while mitigating both internal rivalry and external aggression.

Underlying both the defensive and cooperative dimensions of the Mandar confederations was a shared normative framework, most prominently embodied in the principle of *sipamanda*. The principle of *sipamanda*, which means mutual strength, is the main foundation of Mandar’s political and social stability. This concept is reflected in the Pitu Babana Binanga and Pitu Ulunna Salu alliances, government practices, and social interactions. In the political context, *sipamanda* is realized through deliberation and consensus mechanisms in decision-making. This is evident in the *Assitalliang Tammajarra* and Allamungan Batu agreements in Luyo, where each amara’diang is given equal rights in negotiations, although Balanipa remains the central leader. This principle ensures that there is no single dominance in Mandar’s confederative government so that each member still feels they have a role in governance. In a social context, *sipamanda* also regulates relations between people, especially in conflict resolution and economic cooperation. The tradition of *gotong royong*, customary laws based on deliberation, and the alliance system in trade are concrete examples of how the principle of *sipamanda* is applied in the daily lives of the Mandar people.

Since the *allamungan batu*, the coastal area (*babana binanga*) and the inland area (ulunna salu) have geopolitically become one, namely Mandar. But culturally, these areas remained diverse in unity because each amara’diang or country remained independent, had the same or equal position, was autonomous and free to follow its customs. In addition, allamungan batu also spells out the values of brotherhood, tolerance, solidarity, and help. In terms of brotherhood, for example, it is noted that “Grandmother in Pitu Ulunna Salu, grandson in Pitu Babana Binanga”. The value of tolerance is expressed in *Sipatuppu diadaq sipalete dirapang, adaq tuho* in Pitu Ulunna Salu, *adaq mate in Pitu Baqbana Binanga* (mutual respect’s laws and regulations, namely the law of life (*ade’ tuho*) in Pitu Ulunna Salu and the law of death (ade’ mate) in Pitu Babana Binanga). These principles, while articulated in the specific cultural language of Mandar society,

resonate strongly with what are today considered universal human values. Much like the contemporary notion of a rules-based international order, the Allamungan Batu agreement framed political relations within a shared ethical code that transcended mere strategic alliances. This suggests that the idea of grounding politics in values such as mutual respect, solidarity, and human dignity is not a recent innovation, but a recurring feature of human societies across different times and places, rooted in the shared needs and instincts of humanity.

This description proves that Amara'diang Balanipa played an important role in building cooperation and the realization of Allamungan Batu in Luyo. Therefore, Balanipa made an important contribution to building unity and integrity in realizing peace and collective prosperity in Mandar and in strengthening unity in diversity. *Allamungan batu* is not merely a symbolic meeting between kingdoms or amara'diang in Mandar but also an agreement or pledge that became a guide in organizing relations between kingdoms, both within Mandar and with kingdoms outside Mandar. The community remembers several pledges or friendship agreements as norms for organizing life together, and relations between kingdoms were born of these relationships. For example, according to the agreement between Amara'diang Balanipa and Bone, a Balanipa (Mandar) person who spent the night in Bone became a Bone person; and if a Bone person spent the night in Balanipa, he became a Mandarese person. Identical pacts are found between Balanipa and Gowa, Luwu, Sawitto, and other South Sulawesi kingdoms.

4 Conclusions

The historical trajectory of the Mandar Confederation shows that political cohesion emerged from its ability to manage concrete structural conditions at the local level. Geographically, Mandar was divided between inland highlands and coastal plains, a landscape that made centralised authority impracticable and required coordinated but differentiated responsibilities, later formalised in agreements such as the Assitalliang Tammajarra and the Allamungan Batu (Poelinggomang, 2012; Syah, 1997). Culturally, unity depended on reconciling distinct legal traditions — ade' tuho in the interior and ade' mate along the coast — whose tensions appear repeatedly in the lontarak (A. Mandra, 1991; Syah, 1991) and were explicitly regulated through inter-polity agreements (A. M. Mandra, 1987; Sjariffudin, 1989). Politically, the balance between the authority of the mara'dia and the autonomy of each Amara'diang, maintained through the assitalliang, ensured that governance operated through deliberation and negotiated legitimacy rather than centralised coercion (Amir et al., 2022; Nurkidam et al., 2020).

At the regional level within Mandar, these structural arrangements enabled the formation and sustainability of the Pitu Ba'bana Binanga and Pitu Ulunna Salu alliances. Their cooperation—initially forged in response to shared threats such as the power of Passokkorang—was subsequently strengthened by a shared normative framework rooted in sipamanda (mutual reinforcement). The Allamungan Batu at Luyo exemplifies this evolution: an agreement that not only coordinated defence responsibilities between inland and coastal polities but also institutionalised values of mutual respect, solidarity, and the preservation of local autonomy. In this respect, Mandar's unity was not merely symbolic but embedded in concrete practices of dispute resolution, shared security, and ritualised political commitments.

These findings clarify that Mandar's unity in diversity was a historically grounded, regionally specific political achievement — neither accidental nor purely moral. It was the product of negotiated autonomy, shared norms, and institutionalised cooperation that allowed culturally distinct polities to coexist within a stable confederal framework. While the world today faces far more heterogeneous and complex political landscapes, the Mandar case provides a reminder that durable political unions often emerge not from uniformity, but from deliberate efforts to manage difference through dialogue, shared responsibilities, and mutually recognised constraints.

Ultimately, the experience of Amara'diang Balanipa demonstrates that governing diversity requires neither the erasure of local identities nor the imposition of centralised authority. Instead, it rests on the continual negotiation of relationships — between coast and interior, rulers and adat, autonomy and collective security. This insight, grounded firmly in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Mandar history, offers a locally rooted perspective on how communities craft stability in the midst of internal plurality and external pressures.

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Compliance with ethical standard

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