



***Babilangan* in the Marriage Traditions of the Banjar Community  
in South Kalimantan: A Legal Pluralism Perspective**

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**Abstract:** *Babilangan* is an effort by the people of South Kalimantan to find out a person's compatibility with their potential partner, before getting married. However, in North Hulu Sungai Regency, *Babilangan* has been responded to with prolonged pros and cons. The main problem studied in this research is the practice of *babilangan* in pre-wedding Banjar communities in South Kalimantan. This research uses empirical legal methods with a legal pluralism approach. Data was collected by means of in-depth interviews and literature study. The informants interviewed were religious leaders, traditional and community leaders, while the literature study referred to journal articles, books and supporting references. This research concludes that although there are pros and cons to *Babilangan*, they are resolved using *al-jam'u wa at-taufiq* and legal pluralism. The way *Babilangan* works and the dialogue with other scientific theories means that *Babilangan's* function today is relevant as research through inner channels into the profile of a potential household partner. If we refer to the theory of legal pluralism, then *babilangan* is in accordance with Islamic law because it has *mashlahat* value and no legal violations have been found, in fact, *babilangan* can be categorized as '*urf* sahih', namely a custom that is acceptable by the Islamic law. Its function is as part of a prediction regarding the profile of a prospective partner before the marriage takes place, which can still be used today. Meanwhile, in customary law, the *Babilangan* tradition is a cultural practice with the aim of a happy marriage and physical and spiritual prosperity.

**Keywords:** *Babilangan*, inner investigation, life partner, marriage, Islamic law, legal pluralism

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**Abstrak:** Babilangan merupakan upaya masyarakat Kalimantan Selatan mengetahui kecocokan seseorang dengan calon pasangannya, sebelum melakukan perkawinan. Namun di Kabupaten Hulu Sungai Utara babilangan ditanggapi secara pro kontra berkepanjangan. Masalah utama yang dikaji dalam penelitian ini adalah bagaimana praktik babilangan dalam pra-perkawinan masyarakat Banjar di Kalimantan Selatan. Penelitian tersebut menggunakan metode hukum empiris dengan pendekatan pluralisme hukum. Data dikumpulkan dengan cara wawancara mendalam dan studi literatur. Informan yang diwawancarai adalah tokoh agama, tokoh adat dan masyarakat, sedangkan studi literatur mengacu pada artikel jurnal, buku dan referensi yang mendukung. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa meskipun terjadi pro dan kontra terhadap babilangan tetapi dalam diselesaikan dengan cara *al-jam'u wa at-taufiq* dan pluralisme hukum. Cara kerja babilangan dan dialog dengan teori-teori ilmiah lainnya maka fungsi babilangan di masa sekarang relevan sebagai penelisikan melalui jalur batin terhadap profil calon pasangan rumah tangga. Jika mengacu pada teori pluralisme hukum, maka babilangan sesuai dengan hukum Islam karena memiliki nilai *mashlahat* dan tidak ditemukan adanya pelanggaran hukum, bahkan babilangan dapat dikategorikan sebagai *'urf sahih* yaitu kebiasaan yang dapat diterima oleh syariat. Fungsi sebagai bagian dari prediski terhadap profil calon pasangan sebelum perkawinan dilakukan yang sampai saat ini masih dapat digunakan. Sedangkan dalam hukum adat, tradisi babilangan merupakan praktik budaya dengan tujuan perkawinan yang bahagia dan sejahtera lahir dan batin.

**Kata Kunci:** Babilangan, penelisikan batin, pasangan hidup, perkawinan, hukum Islam dan pluralisme hukum

## Introduction

Islamic law recommends choosing a prospective husband or wife who is comparable, especially with regard to religion.<sup>1</sup> The technical application of this teaching in Indonesia is translated into various methods with different terms, aimed to observe the religious aspect, determine whether or not a relationship is good, suitable, and equivalent,<sup>2</sup> determine a person and his/her future partner, and

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<sup>1</sup> Atun Wardatun, "Ampa Co'i Ndai: Local Understanding of Kafā'a in Marriage among Eastern Indonesian Muslims," *al-Jamiah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 54, No. 2 (2016). Muhammad Khusaini, et. al., 'Creating a Harmonious Family Through Social Media Facebook in West Lampung', *El-Mashlahah* 12, no. 2 (2022), p. 142–45. Abu 'Abdillah Muhammad ibn Isma'il Al-Bukhari, *Shahih Al-Bukhari* (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kasir, n.d.), 1958.

<sup>2</sup> Sarif Hidayat and Nawawi, "Cultural Tradition of Calculating Dates and Days in Determining Wedding Events in Muslim Communities Selakambang Traditional Village, Purbalingga, Central Java", *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research* 6, no. 8

even select an auspicious day to get married.<sup>3</sup> If the potential couple is compatible and can develop good communication,<sup>4</sup> then it helps support the realization of a happy and harmonious household.<sup>5</sup>

In the Banjar community of South Kalimantan, especially in Hulu Sungai Utara District, the way to figure out a person's character, to determine an auspicious time to celebrate an event, or to explore a person's compatibility with a potential partner is carried out by *babilangan*.<sup>6</sup> *Babilangan* can also suggest changing someone's name to suit the partner. The method is by converting or calculating the name according to the alphabetical rules of Hijaiyyah Arabic letters with predetermined values and conditions.<sup>7</sup>

In reality, however, *babilangan* has been facing pros and cons among the people of South Kalimantan, especially in Hulu Sungai Utara. The main cause is highly likely due to differences in local community perspectives. Perspective is the way each person views or describes an object, and since perspective is related to method, it is possible that each person has a different way of viewing the object or phenomenon. In general, differences in perspective can be influenced by several factors such as differences in background, culture, customs, social, language, values held, and life experiences.<sup>8</sup>

Theoretically, *babilangan* is a cultural practice observed by society, and it can influence the way people think and act, in terms of processing information

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(2023), p. 51-57. Dwi Arini Zubaidah, "Penentuan Kesepadan Pasangan Pernikahan Berdasarkan Perhitungan Weton," *Volksgeist* 2, no. 2 (2019), p. 208.

<sup>3</sup> Anwar Sadat, et. al., "Determination of Auspicious Days in Wedding Traditions in Mandar, West Sulawesi: Perspective of Islamic Law," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 7, no. 3 (2023). Zein Firdaus, et.al., "Banjar Cultural Marriage Taboos and Analysis of the Prohibition of Marriage in Kitabun Nikah by Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad Al-Banjari," *El-Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 6, No. 1 (2023).

<sup>4</sup> Ikrami Jazmi, et. al., "Communication Patterns of Husband and Wife as Educators in Fostering a Harmonious Household in the Perspective of Islamic Education," *Ijlrhss.Com* 5, no. 7 (2022), p. 77.

<sup>5</sup> Eka Suriansyah and Rahmini Rahmini, "Konsep Kafa'ah Menurut Sayyid Usman," *El-Mashlahah* 7, no. 2 (2017), p. 36-38. Nor Ipansyah, "Determination of Sekufu in The Kitabun Nikah Al-Banjari," *Syariah: Jurnal Hukum dan Pemikiran* 21, No. 1 (2021).

<sup>6</sup> Interview with MH, Traditional Leader, Hulu Sungai Utara District, July 15, 2023.

<sup>7</sup> Rozana Zulfa Arina, 'Babilangan Dalam Penentu Jodoh Pada Masyarakat Banjar (Relasi Hukum Adat Dan Hukum Agama)' (UIN Antasari Banjarmasin, 2021). Arni and Nurul Djazimah, *Babilangan Nama Dan Jodoh Dalam Tradisi Banjar* (Banjarmasin: Antasari Press, 2011).

<sup>8</sup> 'Ali Al-Khafif, *Asbab Ikhtilaf Al-Fuqaha* (Cairo, Mesir: Dar al-Fikr al-'Arabi, n.d.), p. 29-102. Abdul Helim, *Menelusuri Pemikiran Hukum Ulama Banjar Kontemporer: Akad Nikah Tidak Tercatat, Poligami, Cerai Di Luar Pengadilan Dan Nikah Di Masa Idah* (Malang: Inteleginsia Media, 2018), p. 10-11.

obtained, solving problems, and making decisions.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, it is unsurprising that there are differences in each person's perspective due to differences in their respective cultures. Likewise, in law, different points of view will also lead to different legal opinions.<sup>10</sup>

The results of legal products that are responded to differently by *ulema* (Muslim scholars) or the public are due to differences in perspective, including *babilangan*. The pros and cons to *babilangan* are due to differences in perspective, one of which could be due to cultural or legal differences. The proponents of *babilangan* have known this practice since childhood and are used to hearing, seeing, and even doing it. Yet, for the Banjar people known to be religious, the practice of *babilangan* does not make them associate partners with God. This is because the people are accustomed to such a practice that it eventually becomes a culture or part of their lives. Thus, it is important to distinguish between people with culture and are religious and those with culture only.

In light of the descriptions above, this study is important to conduct for its interesting facts, and to this day, the *babilangan* is still enforced even though not every prospective couple does it. Having pros and cons of an issue should be a normal occurrence as each person has a different view; however, these should not ultimately affect the mindset of future generations. Therefore, this current study concerns with the way to solve the conflict between the pros and cons of *babilangan* and to function *babilangan* for today's life.

Research on this issue seems to be limited as follows. A study by A'an Anida Lathifah examined the determination of prospective partners in the book of *Taj al-Mulk* by Sheikh Ismail bin Abdul Muttalib.<sup>11</sup> Rozana Zulfa Arina researched the *babilangan* tradition in terms of customary and religious laws.<sup>12</sup> Sitta Nur Karimah explored the implementation of *babilangan* in the *basulusuh* tradition viewed from the 'urf'.<sup>13</sup> Due to the limited number of previous studies, little is known to the topic under study.

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<sup>9</sup> Richard Nisbett and Ara Norenzayan, 'Culture and Cognition', in *Stevens' Handbook of Experimental Psychology*, Third Edit, 2022.

<sup>10</sup> Abdul Helim, "Pemikiran Fikih Muhammad Asywadie Syukur," *Miqot: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 43, no. 1 (2019), p. 68.

<sup>11</sup> A'an Anida Lathifah, Munib, and Baihaki, "Karakteristik Perhitungan Nama Calon Pasangan Suami Istri Menurut Kitab Tajul Muluk Karya Syekh Ismail Bin Abdul Muthalib," *Jurnal Ilmu Syariah Dan Hukum (JISYAKU)* 2, no. 1 (2023), p. 71–85.

<sup>12</sup> Arina, 'Babilangan Dalam Penentu Jodoh Pada Masyarakat Banjar (Relasi Hukum Adat Dan Hukum Agama)', p. 1–213.

<sup>13</sup> Sitta Nur Karimah, "Praktek Babilangan Pada Tradisi Basasuluh Suku Banjar Presfektif Urf," *Justisia : Jurnal Ilmu Hukum, Perundang-Undangan Dan Pranata Sosial* 7, no. 2 (2022), p. 346–61.

This study used the empirical legal method with a legal pluralism approach.<sup>14</sup> Legal pluralism is a scientific perspective that recognizes the following legal systems i.e., Islamic law, customary law, and national law. Data were collected by means of in-depth interviews with traditional leaders, religious leaders, and the Banjar people in South Kalimantan. Documentation included data obtained through literature review such as *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) books, journal articles, and the opinions of *ulema*.<sup>15</sup>

### ***Babilangan* Practice in the Banjar Community, South Kalimantan**

*Babilangan* is carried out by converting or calculating the number of characters of a person's name based on the Hijaiyah Arabic letters with predetermined values and conditions.<sup>16</sup> In practice, some method comes from the book *Taj Al-Mulk* while another is the legacy passed down from generation to generation.<sup>17</sup> The descriptions of *babilangan* from the book *Taj al-Mulk* are as follows.

**Table 1: Hijaiyah Letter and Its Value in *Babilangan* in the *Taj al-Mulk* Version**

Letter	Value	Letter	Value	Letter	Value	Letter	Value
ا	1	ح	8	س	60	ت	400
ب	2	ط	9	ع	70	ث	500
ج	3	ي	10	ف	80	خ	600
د	4	ك	20	ص	90	ذ	700
ه	5	ل	30	ق	100	ض	800
و	6	م	40	ر	200	ظ	900
ز	7	ن	50	ش	300	غ	1000

(Source: Interview results with Mr. MR, 2023).

The rule for the combination of two outcomes between men and women can be seen in the following table:

<sup>14</sup> Jonaedi Efendi and Johnny Ibrahim, *Metode Penelitian Hukum Normatif Dan Empiris* (Jakarta: Kencana Prenada Media Group, 2020), p. 153. Mukti Fajar ND and Yulianto Achmad, *Dualisme Penelitian Hukum Normatif & Empiris*, V (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2019), p. 48–49.

<sup>15</sup> Salma and Syahril, Marlojong sebelum Perkawinan: Kiat Adat Menghadapi Wali ‘Adal di Ranah Batahan, Pasaman Barat, *Al-Ahkam: Jurnal Pemikiran Hukum Islam*, Vol 29 No 1 (2019), p. 61.

<sup>16</sup> Arni and Djazimah, *Babilangan Nama Dan Jodoh Dalam Tradisi Banjar*, p. 32.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with MR, Traditional Leader, Hulu Sungai Utara District, August 7, 2023.

**Table 2: Calculation Results of Couple Compatibility in the *Taj al-Mulk* Version**

Final Results	Result Explanation	Final Results	Result Explanation	Final Results	Result Explanation
1:1	Compatible	2:8	Less Compatible	5:5	Less Compatible
1:2	Compatible	2:9	Compatible	5:6	Compatible
1:3	Less Compatible	3:3	Incompatible	5:7	Compatible
1:4	Less Compatible	3:4	Incompatible	5:8	Compatible
1:5	Incompatible	3:5	Incompatible	5:9	Less Compatible
1:6	Compatible	3:6	Less Compatible	6:6	Compatible
1:7	Incompatible	3:7	Compatible	6:7	Less Compatible
1:8	Less Compatible	3:8	Compatible	6:8	Compatible
1:9	Less Compatible	3:9	Less Compatible	6:9	Compatible
2:2	Less Compatible	4:4	Incompatible	7:7	Less Compatible
2:3	Incompatible	4:5	Incompatible	7:8	Incompatible
2:4	Less Compatible	4:6	Less Compatible	7:9	Less Compatible
2:5	Less Compatible	4:7	Less Compatible	8:8	Compatible
2:6	Incompatible	4:8	Compatible	8:9	Compatible
2:7	Compatible	4:9	Less Compatible	9:9	Less Compatible

Source: Interview results with Mr. MR, 2023.

In this *Taj al-Mulk* example is the couple Nor Kamilah and Sarbani. Nor Kamilah consists of letters *nun* = 50, *waw* = 6, *ra'* = 200, *kaf* = 20, *mim* = 40, *lam* = 30, and *ta marbutah* = 5, gaining a total of 351. Sarbani consists of letters *sin* = 60, *ra'* = 200, *ba'* = 2, and *nun* = 50, gaining a total of 312. These two total values are each reduced by 9 continuously until they cannot be subtracted by 9 anymore. The number 351 minus the number 9 continuously results in 9. The number 312 minus the number 9 continuously results in 6. The results of combining the

numbers 9 and 6, or 6 and 9 as in table 2 above, belongs to the compatible or harmonious category.<sup>18</sup>

In contrast to the rules above, HS uses a table of characters and rules obtained through a legacy from generation to generation.<sup>19</sup> The table used by HS is as follows:

**Table 3: Hijaiyah Letter and Its Value in *Babilangan* in the Legacy Version**

Letter	Value	Letter	Value	Letter	Value	Letter	Value
ا/ ء	1	د	4	ض	4	ك	4
ب	2	ذ	4	ط	4	ل	6
ت	4	ر	8	ظ	4	م	4
ث	12	ز	3	ع	3	ن	2
ج	3	س	12	غ	3	و	6
ح	5	ش	12	ف	4	ه	5
خ	5	ص	4	ق	4	ي	10

(Source: Interview results with Mr. HS, 2023).

HS explains that the name of a person and his/her potential partner is matched according to the value of the character table. Each letter value of a person's name is added. This calculation is carried out for both prospective husband and wife. The total result for each name will be calculated on the five fingers of the hand. The method starts with the little finger, ring finger, middle finger, index finger, and thumb. If it comes to the thumb, then it returns to the index finger, middle finger, ring finger, and little finger. If the count is still available, it starts again after the little finger to the ring finger, middle finger, index finger, and thumb, and continues until the total of the results is calculated. The compatibility of a person with his/her partner can be figured out in the following rules:

- 1) If the calculation results for both potential partners end on the same finger, then they are considered *satihang* (well matched and compatible).
- 2) If the calculation results of the two prospective partners end on different fingers, but are close together and are not obstructed by other fingers, such as the thumb with the index finger or the index finger with the middle finger, then they are still considered compatible. The two can still live in a married life despite having differences in personality or obstacles in life. If both of them can overcome their problems, they will

<sup>18</sup> Interview with MR, Traditional Leader, Hulu Sungai Utara District, August 7, 2023.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with HS, Local of Hulu Sungai Utara District, August 9, 2023.

live in harmony. Therefore, both of them must be able to maintain their domestic life.

- 3) If the calculation results for the two prospective partners end on different fingers and their positions are blocked by other fingers, such as the index finger and the ring finger blocked by the middle finger, then it is possible that both of them are not suitable for married life.

In this legacy example is the couple Radhiati and Amrulah. Radhiati consists of letters *ra'* = 8, *dad* = 4, *ya* = 10, and *ta* = 4, gaining a total of 26. Amrulah consists of letters *alif* = 1, *mim* = 4, *ra'* = 8, *lam* = 6, and *ha* = 5, obtaining a total of 24. The final total for each name is calculated using the five fingers of the hand as explained above. Radhiati's total *babilangan* result is 26 ending on the ring finger and Amrulah's total is 24 ending on the ring finger, indicating that the two are compatible.

In this study, there are two different ways of *babilangan* practice. Some people use the *Taj al-Mulk* version while others utilize their legacy version. The difference in these two versions is likely to yield different results. However, it is interesting that when the two versions are compared, they seem to gain the same results. For example, the names Nor Kamilah and Sarbani, which were calculated using *Taj al-Mulk*, showed a compatible result. Afterwards, these names were calculated again using the legacy version and the results also indicated compatibility, despite having some obstacles between the two. Likewise, the names Radhiati and Amrulah, which were initially calculated using the legacy version, obtained a compatible result, and when they were recalculated using the *Taj al-Mulk* version, it also yielded compatibility.

Public opinions vary regarding the practice of *babilangan* in Banjar society. Those who are pro argue that *babilangan* is a long-standing tradition and even has classic references from the *ulema* and other developments from these references.<sup>20</sup> *Babilangan* is also a form of business and hope for the good of married life.<sup>21</sup> In contrast, those who are against this practice have different reasons. *Babilangan* is considered preceding God's provisions.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, studies that have taken part in several communities describe that *babilangan* has no basis, and only relies on tradition. Even though there are references from the *ulema*, as they are never included in the Qur'an and hadith, these references remain baseless.<sup>23</sup> This strengthens the counter argument that the calculation results from *babilangan* are not scientifically proven. There are couples who were

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<sup>20</sup> Interview with TJ, Religious Leader, Hulu Sungai Utara District, July 25, 2023.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with AN, Religious Leader, Hulu Sungai Utara District, July 27, 2023.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with MD, Traditional Leader, Hulu Sungai Utara District, July 23, 2023.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with AB, Traditional Leader, Hulu Sungai Utara District, July 28, 2023.

previously believed to be compatible, but after living together for some time, they eventually divorced.<sup>24</sup>

### ***Babilangan in the Perspective of Legal Pluralism***

There are at least two ways to deal with the pros and cons of *babilangan*, i.e., the *al-jam'u wa at-taufiq* model and the model of awareness that society is pluralistic. It is possible to use a legal pluralism perspective, which accommodates Islamic law and customary law that develops in society.<sup>25</sup> These two models are described in the following:

#### **a. *Al-Jam'u wa at-Taufiq Model***

The *al-jam'u wa at-taufiq* model is one of the theories in the science of *ushul fiqh* (principles of Islamic jurisprudence),<sup>26</sup> deliberately employed to resolve the issue of the pros and cons of views about *babilangan*. The *al-jam'u wa at-taufiq* technique focuses on collecting and reconciling, or compromising, two propositions that appear to be contradictory in order for this technique to reach a solution in dealing with a problem<sup>27</sup> such as *babilangan*.

The conflict in *babilangan* is not a conflict between propositions, but rather a conflict between pro and con opinions. Yet, the pros and cons of the *babilangan* practice are not completely independent of the arguments. The prolonged pros and cons imply that each opinion adheres to the proposition even though it is not an explicit proposition. Due to the same reason, i.e., the conflict, it does not seem wrong if the *babilangan* conflict and debate is tried to be resolved using *al-jam'u wa at-taufiq*.

The *al-jam'u wa at-taufiq* model is applied by collecting and compromising two contradictory propositions by means of specifying the general or limiting the absolute and carrying out *ta'wil* as long as it does not make the conflict escalate further.<sup>28</sup> Hence, the technique for solving the *babilangan* issue is specifically aimed for those who are already familiar with it, in which the practice of *babilangan* has become part of their life and they are allowed to

<sup>24</sup> Interview with RH, Masyarakat Kabupaten Hulu Sungai Utara, 25 Juli, 2023.

<sup>25</sup> Ali Abubakar, et al., "The Postponement of the Implementation of Inheritance Distribution in The Seunuddon Community, North Aceh in The Lens of 'Urf Theory and Legal Pluralism," *El-Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 6, no. 2 (2023). Dri Santoso, et.al., "Harmony of Religion and Culture: Fiqh Munākahat Perspective on The Gayo Marriage Custom," *Ijtihad: Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam dan Kemanusiaan* 22, No. 2 (2022).

<sup>26</sup> Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, *Ushul Al-Fiqh Al-Islami*, vol. 2 (Damaskus: Dar al-Fikr, 2001), p. 1210.

<sup>27</sup> Abu Zahrah, *Usul Al-Fiqh* (Cairo: Dar al-Fikr al-'Arabi, n.d.), p. 247. 'Abd al-Wahhab Khallaf, *Ilm Usul Al-Fiqh* (Kuwait: Dar al-Qalam, 1978), p. 230.

<sup>28</sup> 'Abd al-Karim Zaidan, *Al-Wajiz Fi Ushul Al-Fiqh* (Beirut: Mu'assasah ar-Risalah, 1987), p. 397.

preserve *babilangan* in their life. The reasons are that they have well understood the nature and use of *babilangan* and it is irrelevant to their belief in the oneness of Allah. Apart from these reasons, *babilangan* is a national asset and must be protected to prevent loss and infiltration by opposing ideas.

On the other hand, those who are against *babilangan* are allowed to stand their ground and refrain people with the same thoughts from joining the practice of *babilangan*. The reason is that they are worried that it will affect their own beliefs because they have rejected *babilangan* on the grounds that it precedes God's destiny. Hence, if they observe this practice, they will feel as what they have previously thought.

One of the rules of *ta'arud al-adillah* has inspired this solution, which states:

إعمال الدليلين أولى من إهمالهما<sup>29</sup> أو أحدهما مأمكناً<sup>30</sup>

Meaning: “Practicing two (conflicting) propositions is more important than rejecting both or one of them.”

Based on the rules above and *al-jam'u wa at-taufiq*, the way to resolve this issue is by allowing *babilangan* to remain within the framework of pros and cons. Both views may walk their respective paths with their respective practitioners without disturbing each other, let alone bringing each other down. The priority is to find a solution amidst the chaos of conflicting thought debates. This offer is the best solution for all parties to understand. This is based on one of the rules of *fiqh* “الخروج من الخلاف مستحب”<sup>31</sup> i.e. “leaving a dispute is preferred or recommended”. This also indicates that allowing the pros and cons of *babilangan* to remain with mutual respect without claiming which one is better is more recommended.

### Pluralistic Community Awareness Model

This model seeks to explain to people that humans are essentially created differently, and thus, attitudes become pluralistic due to various customs or cultures. A cultured society is fully aware that in reality society's daily life is faced with pluralistic problems. Moreover, the diversity of ethnicities and cultures strengthens and even shows that Indonesia, including South Kalimantan, is a pluralistic society. Therefore, the law that lives (i.e., living law) in society

<sup>29</sup> Az-Zuhaili, *Usul Al-Fiqh Al-Islami*, vol. 2, p. 1205.

<sup>30</sup> Muhammad ibn Rasyid ibn Fauzan Al-Fauzan, ‘*At-Tatbiqat Al-Fiqhiyah 'ala Qa'idah 'I'mal Ad-Dalilain Aula Min Ihmal Ahadihima*’ *Fi Fiqh Al-Usrah Wa Al-Hudud*’ (Jami'ah al-Imam Muhammad ibn Sa'ud al-Islamiyah, 1432), 14.

<sup>31</sup> Jalal ad-Din 'Abd ar-Rahman As-Suyuti, *Al-Asybah Wa an-Naza'ir Fi Qawa'id Wa Furu' Fiqh Asy-Syafi'iyah* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1983), 136.

becomes the law that society follows in their respective places, which ultimately, with various differences, creates what is known as legal pluralism.<sup>32</sup>

Legal pluralism generally occurs because humans possess different thoughts. Therefore, in Islam itself, pluralism is recognized as *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (a mercy to all creation), which is mentioned in the Qur'an and implemented by the Prophet. This includes cultural diversity, ethnicity, and social levels, among others, and it has long been known in Islamic law.<sup>33</sup> In other words, legal pluralism is the existence of two or more legal systems that coexist in the same social field.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, in legal pluralism, each community is given the freedom to organize and manage its life using different legal provisions and methods.<sup>35</sup> Currently, a more updated mindset is to lay down various laws as explained above. This suggests that there is more than one law circulating in the same field and simultaneously playing their respective roles. Those who accept the *babilangan* are allowed to continue carrying it out at any time, and for those who refuse it, it is their right to do so, without having to declare that others' view is wrong. These two views go hand in hand, following the peaceful journey of human life without disturbing each other.

If the arguments above can be accepted, from a different perspective, especially for the proponents of *babilangan*, this practice can be categorized as a community tradition. This is because this tradition has long been known by the community and has been performed repeatedly, throughout various generations. In *ushul fiqh*, such a tradition can be referred to as '*urf*' or custom, as this theory also discusses the habits carried out by a society.<sup>36</sup> In the rules of '*urf*', it is stated "*العادة محكمة*"<sup>37</sup> that a custom can be used as a guide in determining laws. Therefore, *babilangan*, a tradition among the Banjar people in South Kalimantan, can be

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<sup>32</sup> Nilna Aliyan Hamida, 'Adat Law and Legal Pluralism in Indonesia: Toward A New Perspective?', *Indonesian Journal of Law and Society* 3, no. 1 (2022), p. 6. Mursyid Djawas, et.al., "Harmonization of State, Custom, and Islamic Law in Aceh: Perspective of Legal Pluralism," *Hasanuddin Law Riview* 10, No. 1 (2024).

<sup>33</sup> Dedy Sumardi, 'Islam, Pluralisme Hukum Dan Refleksi Masyarakat Homogen', *Asy-Syir'ah: Jurnal Ilmu Syari'ah Dan Hukum* 50, no. 2 (2016), p. 483.

<sup>34</sup> Geoffrey Swenson, "Legal Pluralism in Theory and Practice," *International Studies Review* 20, no. 3 (2018), p. 438.

<sup>35</sup> Rr Dewi Anggraeni, "Islamic Law and Customary Law in Contemporary Legal Pluralism in Indonesia: Tension and Constraints," *Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 23, no. 1 (2023), p. 27-34.

<sup>36</sup> Moh Rosyid and Lina Kushidayati, 'Anticipating Disaster: The 'Urf Perspective of Rebo Wekasan Ceremony in Kudus, Central Java', *Al-Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum Dan Pranata Sosial* 17, no. 1 (2022), p. 103-104.

<sup>37</sup> Muhammad Bakr Isma'il, *Al-Qawa'id Al-Fiqhiyah Baina Al-Asalah Wa Al-Tawjih* (Dar al-Manar, 1997), p. 152.

used as material for legal determination with several considerations in terms of its object, scope, and validity.<sup>38</sup>

Based on the object, *babilangan* is part of 'urffi'li, which is the 'urf carried out by the community through actions or practiced by the community for generations.<sup>39</sup> Based on its scope, *babilangan* is included in the category of special 'urf or a local culture practiced only by Banjar people in certain communities.<sup>40</sup> Based on the validity, it seems that *babilangan* is a well-recognized tradition, at least by the Banjar people. In this practice, there are no words that forbid what is *halal* or make lawful what is *haram*, or there are no actions that cancel what is *wajib* (obligatory) or vice versa. No legal violations are found in *babilangan*. Thus, *babilangan* can be categorized as 'urf *sahih*, i.e., customs accepted in Islamic law.

In light of the various perspectives above, it can be reaffirmed that *babilangan* is a culture of the Banjar people of South Kalimantan which must be preserved. Differences in perspective regarding *babilangan* are natural; however, no one should say that *babilangan* is a prohibited practice because the standard for stating this argument is also based on a perspective. In fact, *babilangan* remains and exists continuously side-by-side and alongside views that oppose it. Such legal pluralism shall be accepted because similar issues have also existed in Islam. Therefore, being different is a normal occurrence in Islamic society, especially since *babilangan* is not only a traditional action, but also value rationality as well as instrumental rationality. This suggests that this practice is very reasonable to be applied in the lives of the people of Banjar, South Kalimantan.

### **The Function of *Babilangan* in the Present Time**

This study has generated a logical argument built from various theories that *babilangan* is an effort made to assess the profile of a prospective married partner through inner channels. On the other hand, outer investigation has already existed with its own terms and methods. However, there has been no information on the term 'outer investigation', or even more so the term 'inner investigation'.

In this study, the term 'inner investigation' can be put forward and *babilangan* even become part of social culture and law. In other words, this study

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<sup>38</sup> Abdul Helim, *Metodologi Penetapan Hukum Islam: Ushul Fiqh Praktis (1)* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2023), p. 106-107.

<sup>39</sup> Siti Muna Hayati, et, al., Religious Tradition and Technology: Debate among Penghulus about Online Marriage Law in Banjarmasin, *Journal of Islamic Law*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2024, p. 111.

<sup>40</sup> Erie Hariyanto, et. al., "The Communal Democracy of Yogyakarta Special Region's Government on the Islamic Law Eclecticism Perspective," *Al-Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum Dan Pranata Sosial* 18, no. 1 (2023), p. 215.

has found the term investigation carried out through external and visible channels, as well as another investigation carried out through inner, mystical, and supra-rational channels with logical argumentation. However, before arriving at this conclusion, it is necessary to examine the important aspects related to the foundation of *babilangan*. After obtaining studies that strengthen the position of *babilangan*, it is indicated that *babilangan* is a tool for reading a person's compatibility with his/her potential partner. This study seeks to reveal that *babilangan* is an inner assessment of the profile of a potential life partner.

Based on the way *babilangan* works or operates, this practice uses hijaiyah letters and even or odd numbers. It is highly possible for *babilangan* to be called a science because concerning the terms or characteristics of a science; *babilangan* is an objective, systematic, universal, methodical, and useful science.<sup>41</sup> It is objective because this science uses formulas, and so the way it works is fixed and unchanging and with a measurable process. The way *babilangan* works is systematic, i.e., starting from knowing the name of each pair, and then writing it down and looking for the value of each letter of the name being calculated until a conclusion is determined. The letters and numbers used are also letters and numbers that are evenly known by every community so that the applicability of this knowledge can be universal. Regarding the way it works, it is certain that *babilangan* has its own method, as reflected in its systematic work. The results of this calculation also have some benefits, particularly for the persons being assessed.

Nevertheless, *babilangan* is a science used to predict the future, and thus, it is classified as numerology. Numerology is a science that discusses about the meaning stored behind numbers, and this meaning has a spiritual influence on human life. People who are involved in this science believe that birth dates and names can be translated into numbers, including those related to personality, life path, challenges faced, and lucky opportunities obtained.<sup>42</sup>

As numerology, the scientificity of *babilangan* is debatable. Some even argue that numerology is not scientific at all. Yet, even mystical knowledge can be scientific due to its own epistemology.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, numerology has its own method, as described previously; hence, it should be scientific. Nowadays, numerology is also used in information technology. The use of numerology through technology is to assist the process of recruiting and placing people according to their tendencies and competencies and in accordance with the

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<sup>41</sup> Kosimova Mukammalxon Umaraliyevna, "The Characteristics of Scientific Style," *ACADEMICIA: An International Multidisciplinary Research Journal* 12, no. 5 (2022).

<sup>42</sup> Dawne Kovan, *Secret of Numerology* (London, United Kingdom: Ivy Press, 2018), p. 6–9.

<sup>43</sup> Ahmad Tafsir, *Filsafat Ilmu* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2016).

principle of ‘the right man on the right place’. The science of numerology has now undergone a digitalization process that has turned out to be very helpful for stakeholders in the human resource recruitment process.<sup>44</sup>

Based on one of the *ushul fiqh* theories,<sup>45</sup> i.e., *al-maslahah*, the use of numerology contains beneficial values. By virtue of these benefits, this science is included in the category of *maslahah al-mursalah*,<sup>46</sup> and potentially falls into the category of *maslahah al-mu'tabarah*.<sup>47</sup> As part of *maslahah al-mursalah*, whether or not numerology is supported is not explained explicitly by the *nash*; however, considering its benefits, it is logical that implicitly these benefits are in line with the will of sharia. Correspondingly, having the potential to be part of *maslahah al-mu'tabarah*, numerology can be identified as a form of effort that should be made by humans (*ikhtiar*). This indicates that the benefits of numerology are in line and even have the potential to be supported by sharia. If numerology can obtain the aforementioned position, then so will *babilangan*. This implies that the benefits of *babilangan* are also in accord and even supported by sharia.

The next consideration is based on the process of using *babilangan*, which starts from counting the names of the two potential partners and later produces a conclusion about the compatibility or incompatibility of a couple's household relationship. The existence of *babilangan* is inseparable from reflections on the traditions of past generations who did not recognize direct interaction between people of the opposite sex. When parents think that their children have reached marriageable age, they will try to find a partner for their children. These parents generally have acquaintances, colleagues, or distant relatives who also have children of marriageable age, and so they believe that their children will be compatible. Along with conducting investigations and even observations of their children's potential partners, they will firstly conduct *babilangan*.

This background reveals that parents or those who are interested have tried to conduct early reading on the profile and even the future of their children's potential partners. These parents, aiming to find a mate for their children and even prospective partners, will each carry out investigation into the profiles of the persons who might be their children's potential partners.

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<sup>44</sup> Nonot Wisnu Karyanto, et. al., "Digitalisasi Konsep Numerology Sebagai Alternatif Tools Untuk Rekrutmen SDM Di Bidang Konstruksi," *LKOMNIKA: Journal of Computer Science and Applied Informatics* 5, no. 1 (2023), p. 51–53.

<sup>45</sup> Kamrani Buseri, *Spiritual Culture Of Banjar Sultanate (Historical, Hermeneutic and Educational Approach)*, *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun: The Indonesian Journal of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2017, p. 311.

<sup>46</sup> Muhammad Hasan Haitu, *Al-Wajiz Fi Ushul at-Tasyri' Al-Islami* (Beirut, Lebanon: Mu'assasah ar-Risalah, 2020), p. 511.

<sup>47</sup> Muhammad ibn Husayn ibn Hasan al-Jizani, *Ma'alim Ushul Al-Fiqh 'inda Ahl as-Sunnah Wa Al-Jama'ah* (Al-Riyad: Dar Ibn al-Jauzi, 1996), p. 243.

Early reading seems to be related to predictions or borrowing the fuzzy time series theory that makes readings of something that will happen in the future based on existing historical data.<sup>48</sup> This fuzzy time series theory is applicable in various fields, some of which are in computer technology<sup>49</sup> and in business economics.<sup>50</sup> If the fuzzy time series theory can be accepted as a tool for predicting future events, *babilangan* should also be recognized as a tool for reading a person's compatibility with his/her potential partner.

Similarly, other sciences also offer a theory called the scenario planning theory. This theory is used when there is conceptual and methodological uncertainty, including the difficulty of proving the success of a problem; thus, this theory is useful to read the possibilities that will occur in the future.<sup>51</sup> Accordingly, even if one evaluates *babilangan*'s concept and methodology and there is no clear evidence of whether or not *babilangan*'s predictions are successful, still *babilangan* has made an effort. The purpose is none other than to help succeed the relationship or the realization of compatibility in the couple's household so that the couple can experience harmony. On the one hand, harmony is also a goal in Islamic marriage law. Therefore, before the marriage contract called *mitsaqan ghalizan* (solid agreement) takes place, efforts must be made for the common good. Making weaknesses or mistakes are basic human nature; however, trying to reduce mistakes is a valid action and should be carried out, including by performing *babilangan* as an effort to reduce mistakes in selecting a partner.

Making such efforts has no other purpose than to strengthen and provide confidence that future predictions have been made in any fields. The difference with *babilangan* lies in the packaging. Some are wrapped in technology while others are wrapped in social science and culture, among others. However, no studies have been found that state those other theories involve predestination. Thereupon, *babilangan* should also receive the same view that it has no influence on preceding God's provisions, but is merely an effort.

The effort made through *babilangan* is the maximum effort that exceeds others since *babilangan* has a dual role. Apart from its role in reading the compatibility of relationships with potential partners, related to the events in the future, *babilangan* also includes investigation activities.

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<sup>48</sup> Bindu Garg, et. al., "Fuzzy Time Series Prediction Model," in *International Conference on Information Intelligence, Systems, Technology and Management*, 2011, p. 126–27.

<sup>49</sup> Kristiawan Nugroho, "Model Analisis Prediksi Menggunakan Metode Fuzzy Time Series," *Infokam* 12, no. 1 (2016).

<sup>50</sup> M. Ridho Ramadhan, et.al., "Implementasi Fuzzy Time Series Pada Prediksi Jumlah Penjualan Rumah," *JUSTIN (Jurnal Sistem Dan Teknologi Informasi)* 8, no. 4 (2020).

<sup>51</sup> Kathy Cordova-Pozo et al., "Types of Scenario Planning and Their Effectiveness: A Review of Reviews," *Futures* 149, no. 5 (2023), p. 1–2.

The actual investigation for potential partners in Banjar tradition has been around for a long time,<sup>52</sup> known as the term *basasuluh*.<sup>53</sup> However, no one has found anything that describes this term yet. *Basasuluh* is an investigation to study and observe a woman who is expected to be the future wife of a man. The people who carry out *basasuluh*'s duties come from the male side of the family or even elders in the family. They are entrusted to find information about the life of the woman in question.<sup>54</sup> Another purpose is to inquire about the origins, personality, and other detailed matters relating to a woman who is a potential partner of a man. In *basasuluh*, information can be obtained from the parents or family members representing each family or through people close to the candidate being inquired.<sup>55</sup>

A similar practice to this *basasuluh* model also exists in other regions, for example, the terms *bibit*, *bebet*, and *bobot* (i.e., origin, status, and quality).<sup>56</sup> These three words are an attempt made by families before their children or other relatives marry their prospective partners. All aims towards choosing a compatible partner. The term *bibit* (origin) is related to the information about the lineage of the prospective partner. In the aspect of *bebet* (status), the information sought is about the socio-economic conditions of the potential partner while *bobot* (quality) concerns with the personality or education of a potential partner.<sup>57</sup>

In implementing *basasuluh*, especially when represented by family, elders, or even neighbors, the translation and interpretation of the prospective partner's profile follows those made by people practicing *basasuluh*. The party given the information does not seem to be violating customary rules if they wanted to convince themselves by performing *basasuluh*. However, regardless of the reason, the *basasuluh* still relies on translations and interpretations of what one sees and hears during the *basasuluh*.

Based on the above descriptions, it seems that the results of *basasuluh* are nothing more than a collection of information, which is then processed, analyzed,

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<sup>52</sup> Alfani Daud, *Islam & Masyarakat Banjar Deskripsi Dan Analisa Kebudayaan Banjar* (Jakarta, Indonesia: Raja Grafindo Persada, 1997), p. 74.

<sup>53</sup> Karimah, "Praktek Babilangan Pada Tradisi Basasuluh Suku Banjar Prespektif Urf", p. 347.

<sup>54</sup> M. Suriansyah Ideham, et. al., *Urang Banjar Dan Kebudayaanannya* (Banjarmasin: Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan Daerah Provinsi Kalimantan Selatan, 2005), p. 59.

<sup>55</sup> Eka Suriansyah, "Perkawinan Adat Banjar Dalam Perspektif Struktural Mitos Levi-Strauss," *El-Mashlahah* 9, no. 1 (2019), p. 92.

<sup>56</sup> Muhammad Ngizzul Muttaqin and Nur Fadhilah, "Hak Ijbar Wali Tinjauan Maqashid Syari'ah Dan Antropologi Hukum Islam," *De Jure: Jurnal Hukum Dan Syar'iah* 12, no. 1 (2020), p. 103,

<sup>57</sup> Umi Masfiah, "Bobot, Bibit, and Bebet in Choosing a Mate", *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Religious Literature and Heritage (ISLAGE 2021)* 644, no. Islage 2021 (2022), p. 343

and concluded. However, the results of *basasuluh* play a role in determining the future lives of the two prospective partners. Likewise, *babilangan* has a similar role. The difference is that *basasuluh* is conducted empirically by means of the senses while *babilangan* examines the prospective bride and groom mentally using fixed counting techniques.

These two methods appear to be able to work according to their respective methods without having to ignore either of them and can even be carried out together as a way to optimize the efforts. For example, when the result in *babilangan* shows compatibility, it should be continued with *basasuluh*, and vice versa, if incompatibility is produced through *babilangan*, then *basasuluh* can be further utilized to confirm the result.

These *babilangan* and *basasuluh* methods can also be understood the other way around. *Basasuluh* is part of an external action while *babilangan* is an internal action despite being applied externally. This suggests that sometimes relying on external actions only is insufficient: success is often also determined by internal actions or by a synergy with one another. It is necessary to practice these two methods accordingly as a marriage relationship is sacred and serious. To this end, thorough preparation is required before advancing towards marriage.

## **Conclusion**

*Babilangan* is a tradition observed by the Banjar people to determine potential marriage partners. *Babilangan*'s position is in the midst of a conflict of perspectives, both pros and cons. The solution to overcome this problem is either by applying the *al-jam'u wa at-taufiq* technique or the awareness of a pluralistic society. A number of studies on the work of *babilangan* and the dialogue with other scientific theories have revealed that the function of *babilangan* at present is relevant as a way to investigate through inner channels the profile of prospective marriage partners. From the perspective of its validity, *babilangan* is a well-recognized tradition among the Banjar people. In this practice, there are no words that forbid what is *halal* or make lawful what is *haram* and there are no actions that cancel what is *wajib* or vice versa. Therefore, based on the theory of legal pluralism, especially Islamic law, no legal violations are found in *babilangan*. In fact, *babilangan* can be categorized as '*urf sahih*', i.e., a habit that is acceptable for its beneficial values, functioned as part of a prediction on the profile of the prospective partner before the marriage takes place. On the other hand, in customary law, *babilangan* is a cultural practice, which is still observable today with the aim of realizing a happy marriage and physical and spiritual prosperity.

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### **Interviews**

Interview with TJ, Religious Leader, Hulu Sungai Utara District, July 25, 2023.

Interview with AN, Religious Leader, Hulu Sungai Utara District, July 27, 2023.

Interview with MD, Traditional Leader, Hulu Sungai Utara District, July 23, 2023.

Interview with AB, Traditional Leader, Hulu Sungai Utara District, July 28, 2023.

Interview with RH, Local of Hulu Sungai Utara District, July 25, 2023.

Interview with MH, Traditional Leader, Hulu Sungai Utara District, July 15, 2023.

Interview with MR, Traditional Leader, Hulu Sungai Utara District, August 7, 2023.