



Welcome to the ICMCR-2

11th August 2018

**Stimulating Intercultural
Communication On The
Authenticity Tongkonan of
North Toraja**

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The Tongkonan in North Toraja, Indonesia

The word "*to ria ja*" meaning "**people from above**"

These "isolated" communities are protected from outside cultural influences, which make their traditional settlements and cultures **original and authentic**.

- UNESCO Cultural Heritage nomination award, 2009.
- Indonesia Tourism Award, 2017.

There are about 10 Tongkonan as cultural heritage, but **Kete' Kesu (North Toraja)** is **the most popular** *tourism objective* in South Sulawesi Province, East of Indonesia.



Research Objective

Questions:

How does proxemic sharing that build the sociopetal cultural understanding increase the societal wellbeing of tourist activity in North Toraja?

Proxemic – or the way people perceive space on their cultural background - have three spaces: fixed-feature space, semi-fixed-feature space, and the person-to-person space (Hall, 1966). One of the eight dimensions of proxemic is Sociopetal and Sociofugal Axis.

Sociopetal Space - a space that is able to facilitate social interaction - can increase the intensity of interaction and the passion of communication. **Sociofugal Space** - the opposite of sociopetal space - can reduce the intensity of communication (Laurens, 2004).

Tongkonan is a centre culture of Toraja ancient beliefs "*Aluk Todolo*" which filled with symbols of the death as the beginning of new life.

Many symbols in Tongkonan, s.a. buffalo horns, human skulls and jaws of animal victims - could be **increase the intensity of intercultural interaction (sociopetal)** and builds tourism in Indonesia.

Methodology

Semi-structure interviews were conducted with six local informants and two international informants while visiting Tongkonan Kete' Kesu (November 25-27, 2017).

Secondary data are interviews with the Head of North Toraja Tourism Office (November 24, 2017), documents, books and websites.

Triangulation was carried out when composing transcripts of interviews, through whatsapp and email by the interviewer (February-March 2018).

All of the data processed by coding gradually: 1) open coding; 2) axial coding; and 3) selective coding (April-June 2018).

Presentation of research findings has conducted in Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Kristen Indonesia, Jakarta (July 29, 2018).

Findings 1. Toraja Cosmology in Proxemics

The Tongkonan as an authentic cultural space can be a medium for sharing the culture of North Toraja.

It based on the values of indigenous called *Aluk Todolo*, which views the cosmos in **vertical perspective**:

1. **Upper World**, The head of the sky, '*Ulunna Langi*'
2. **Middle World**, Space between upper world and lower world, '*Padang*'
3. **Underworld**, Under water or subordinated.

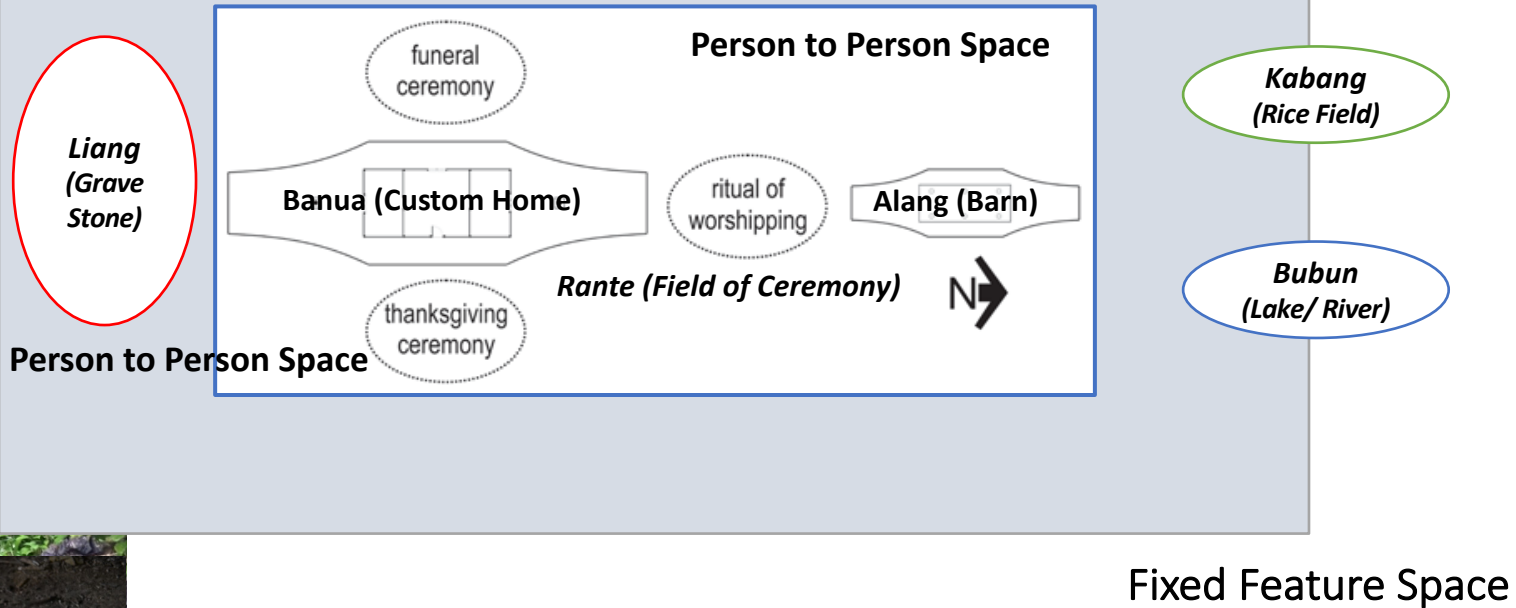
Toraja cosmology in Proxemic (Hall, 1966) is related to a **horizontal perspective** in The Tongkonan complex (picture):

1. **The fixed-feature space** - a natural environment surrounding the Tongkonan.
2. **The semi-fixed-feature space** - the placement of cultural elements inside Tongkonan.
3. **The person-to-person space** – flexible space or the movement that support the Tongkonan (moveable).

Findings 2. The Tongkonan in Microcultural Level of Proxemic



Semi Fixed-Feature Space



Findings 3. Proxemics Sharing of The Tongkonan

In the fixed space feature, *International tourists* are very fond of the silhouette of the green Tongkonan scene and the almost non-problematic access; *Local tourists* tend to overlook the common scenery in a number of Indonesian tourist sites, and choose access that is easily accessible.

In the semi-fixed space feature, *Local tourists* enjoy a row of custom houses (*Banua*) in pairs with a granary (*Alang*) in accordance with the picture in various booklets and photos about Toraja, hundreds of buffalo horns are lined up causing an interest in local culture, the information is dug through associates and merchants around the site, the interaction intensified as it entered the stone cemetery, past souvenir shops and *Patane* statues;

International tourists love to explore the traditional house associated with the cultural story of the tour guide who is very master of Toraja custom.

In the flexible space feature, *Local tourist* found deepens interaction and better understood with their local guides' friends and groups. Most *International tourists* have private tour guides, so intercultural understanding will be more intensive.

Conclusion

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- 1) The Tongkonan (Middle World) has the value of the Toraja cosmology which implies the teachings of *Aluk Todolo*, as a place where the universal power that reigns in the sky (Upper World) and in the earth (the Underworld) meets.
- 2) Three pairs of artifacts in tongkonan: *Banua* and *Alang*, *Rante* and *Liang*, *Kabang* and *Bubun*, have cultural symbols related to the value of death that raises tourists' curiosity about local culture that spurs intercultural understanding (sociopetal space).
- 3) Knowledge and understanding of local culture obtained through the proximate space in Tongkonan undoubtedly adds to the desire of tourists by visiting other cultural tourism locations that are available, so as to increase the time of visit in North Toraja.
- 4) Local residents, local traders, and tour guide professional services significant in providing information related to cultural differences.
- 5) The societal wellbeing of tourist activity in the Tongkonan would be increasing the number of day trips in North Toraja or another trips to Indonesia.

Thankyou